

Paradigm Explorer



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The Great Re-Think



The Scientific &
Medical Network

NETWORK CALENDAR 2021

Friday Jan 22, 7.00-8.30 pm	with Institute of Noetic Sciences, Dr Steve Taylor – <i>How Oneness Leads to Goodness: The Spiritual Source of Compassion and Altruism</i>
Wednesday Jan 27, 7.30-9.30 pm	Githa Ben-David (Denmark) – <i>Healing the Pineal Gland</i>
Wednesday Feb 3, 7.30-9.30 pm	Prof Bob Hesse (US) - <i>Neural Correlates of Memories of Near-Death and Mystical Experiences</i>
Friday Feb 5, 4.00-6.00 pm	Lord Richard Layard FBA – <i>Can we be Happier?</i>
Wednesday Feb 10, 7.30-9.30 pm	Dr Suzanne Zeedyck – <i>The Science of Connection</i>
Wednesday Feb 17, 7.30-9.30 pm	Prof Paul Gilbert – <i>Creating a Compassionate World through Caring and Sharing</i>
Wednesday Feb 24, 7.30-9.30 pm	Dr Karen Wyatt (US) - <i>What Really Matters: The Transformative Wisdom of the Dying</i>
Wednesday March 3, 7.30-9.30 pm,	Mark Gober (US) – <i>An End to Upside Down Thinking and Living</i>
Wednesday March 10, 7.30-9.30 pm	Dr Siegmund Gerken (US) - <i>Love, Light and Consciousness - and its Integration into the Body-Mind Field</i>
Wednesday March 17, 7.30-9.30 pm	Melinda Powell – <i>Lucid Surrender and the Hidden Lives of Dreams</i>
Wednesday March 24, 7.30-9.30 pm	Satish Kumar – <i>The Great Regeneration: Protest, Protect and Build</i>
Wednesday March 31, 7.30-9.30 pm	Dr Sally Goerner (US) – <i>On the Cusp of Great Change: How Science 2.0 can Support Enlightenment</i>

LONDON - CLAUDIA NIELSEN

0207 431 1177 or preferably email claudia@pnielsen.uk

Until further notice our talks will be online. Bookings are made on the London Group page of the SMN website and the Zoom link will be sent out 30 minutes before the talk. Cost is £10 for a regular ticket and £5 for concessions. Information is circulated to the London Group as well as a wider list. Friends and non-members are always welcome.

For more comprehensive information on presentations (to include synopsis and biographies) plus summaries of past ones, go to the London Group page of the SMN site at www.scimednet.org.

Please note that sometimes talks have to be rescheduled and information is sent via email so even if you are not in London but would like to be kept informed of changes, please send me an email and I will put your address on the circulation list.

UPCOMING EVENTS - 2020

JANUARY

Monday 18th Dr. EDI BILIMORIA *The Unfolding of Consciousness*

FEBRUARY

Monday 15th Dr. SIMON DUAN *Parallel Universes: can we model them theoretically and explore them experimentally?*

MARCH

Monday 15th Dr. IAIN MCGILCHRIST *How Compatible are Science and Religion?*

APRIL

Monday 12th DAN FALK *The Enigma of Time*

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Notice to Contributors

All proposed contributions should be sent to the Editor by email as a Word and/or PDF file.

For further guidelines please email: dl@scimednet.org

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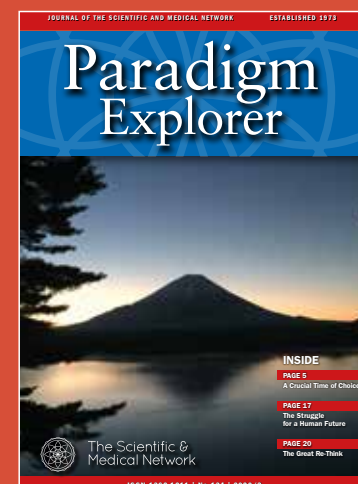
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Dr Peter Fenwick



Members Matter

Paul Filmore, Chair - chairman@scimednet.org

Because of recent events, as mentioned in the last editorial, the Scientific and Medical Network has undergone a process of transformation. There seems to be a parallel process where we as individuals and as an organisation are facing the crisis of the pandemic, by acknowledging the challenges, assessing how we are affected by the challenges, then, perhaps most importantly, responding and adapting in new ways.

At the start of the pandemic, as an organisation well versed in presenting face to face talks and conferences, the SMN could have mothballed, for safety and financial reasons, all our activities and furloughed our staff. Instead, we realised that 'people mattered'. A number of our members were living in isolation and in a degree of uncertainty. Here was an opportunity to respond to our present situation, and meet in a creative way. So, instead of shutting up shop (conferences providing a substantial part of our income), we decided to promote quality online activities within a regular weekly framework. We made sure that a number of these activities could directly address the pandemic, giving members the opportunity to engage with pertinent issues, rather than staying solely within a traditional conference format of listening to others in discourse.

I would like to thank the team who have risen to the occasion in hosting this programme. Weekly, usually on Wednesday, we present a contemporary webinar with invited major speakers, thanks to David our Programme Director. Friday brings Paul Kieniewicz's 'wine bar' discussions. On Sundays, Peter Fenwick (our emeritus President) leads a meditation session, and on Mondays there are the 'Dialogue' evenings, facilitated by myself. In addition, David Lorimer gives a monthly book review briefing, and every six weeks we collectively present an open forum entitled 'Meet the Board'.

Within the structure of these activities strong, emergent, self-supporting groups are now beginning to grow. In the Monday Dialogue sessions, for example, a large number of regular attendees contribute

from all over the world, happy to greet each other at the start of the session, willing to engage with ideas, often being playful and having fun within a challenging and stimulating setting. Members, it is clear, are valuing this form of SMN contribution within their lives.

This level of engagement can usually only happen within a safe space, which, indeed, we endeavour to provide in the weekly sessions. The concept of the safe space, or safe place, is one of the fundamental tenets we have tried to embrace over the years, in all our organised activities. Our organisational responsibility extends also to the wider community (via our informative webinars) and to engaging parts of the professional community (via the Galileo project).

So what happens 'when we all get vaccinated'? Do we go back to where we were as if nothing has happened (the elastic band analogy) or have we changed for all time? Many, under the present trying circumstances, strain at the leash to return to old familiar ways. Here, as individuals and within the SMN, I feel we have a responsibility to 'face the sun', continuing to grow and share together within a strong community of like minds, developing further new approaches. To support this, it would be helpful to have a searchable repository of talks, papers and information (perhaps enhanced with AI) which members can access. Hopefully by the time you read this we will have partly achieved this, with a new website hosting extra functionality. We hope to have embedded new software called BuddyBoss, allowing multiple interest, subject, local and professional groups, to enable members to discuss (via forums and chat), share links and documents, develop collaborative papers or activities, amalgamate with other groups and so forth. In fact, the opportunities would appear to be unlimited!

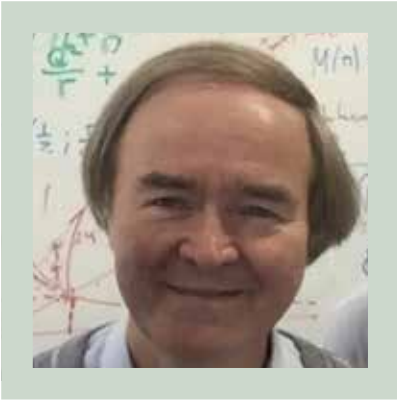
'Start by doing what's necessary, then do what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible'

St. Francis of Assisi

At this point, I would like to thank our officers and board for embracing change in many areas and, in particular, moving to a collaborative management structure. As an example of this, behind each webinar now, instead of two people managing everything, Jess and Nikolay produce marketing material; Andrew co-ordinates, hosts and manages administration, and supports David in chairing the session; Chiara looks after book keeping; Louise Livingstone has recently joined us to support and help administer the growing membership and their queries, and in the future will manage short courses; Kevin Ashbridge, we hope, will be joining us both to continue to edit videos of the webinars and make these available to members soon after each event, and to guide the SMN into a new level in intelligent resource accessibility. In addition, Olly Robinson, and many others, should be thanked for organising the very successful Beyond the Brain conference, and thanks are due also to David and Andrew, for promoting, developing and taking the SMN to be recognised as a global player through Galileo and other initiatives.

With all this change, and the exciting prospect of new functionality via our new website, we would like to hear from you, if you have expertise, or would like to get more involved (for example, host or moderate an interest or professional group). There are many opportunities, more than we have yet imagined. This is, of course a natural outcome of a world that has changed with the pandemic. It is up to us, for our part, via our strengthening and growing SMN community, to do what we are able to contribute to the world changing for the better. To restate part of our SMN vision statement: 'We invite you to join us to help heal our fractured culture by co-creating new paradigms to bring truth, beauty, health and well-being into harmony.'

I wish you all strength in building a new and better 2021, in peace, knowledge, compassion and love.



Two Luminaries of Consciousness Studies

Bernard Carr

LAWRENCE LESHAN (1920-2020)

Lawrence LeShan, who died in November just a month after his 100th birthday, was an American psychologist and educator. He lived in New York City and taught at Pace University. He also worked as a clinical and research psychologist for more than 50 years, including six years as a psychologist in the US Army. He was an Honorary Member of the SMN and gave a number of presentations, including one at a Mystics and Scientists conference in Winchester.

He authored around 75 academic articles and thirteen books on a diverse range of topics, including psychotherapy, cancer treatment, psychical research and meditation, with his practical guide *How to Meditate* becoming a best-seller. He also wrote science fiction under the pseudonym Edward Grendon.

In the 1960s and 1970s, he conducted extensive research in parapsychology and was best known for his work with the medium Eileen Garrett. In his 1974 book *The Medium, the Mystic, and the Physicist: Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal*, he investigated the link between mysticism and physics and advocated his hypothesis of “clairvoyant reality”. He also claimed that he could heal with his mind and train others to do the same. In his 2009 book, *A New Science of the Paranormal*, he advanced his paranormal ideas

further, claiming that psychic abilities such as clairvoyance, precognition and telepathy can be explained using quantum theory.

Like Alfred Russel Wallace, he noted that there are no impossible facts, so if your theory cannot explain them, then it is the theory that needs revision rather than the facts. In the 1980s, his focus shifted to the psychotherapy of cancer support, a field which he helped to pioneer.

Lisette Coly, President of the Parapsychology Foundation, is the grand-daughter of Eileen Garrett and knew him particularly well. In her memories of him, she includes an excerpt from the last chapter of *A New Science of the Paranormal*, entitled “What Dare I Hope”, and it seems appropriate to repeat the excerpt here because it is so timely.

“All the human search for understanding and meaning”, wrote the philosopher Immanuel Kant, “is contained in four questions: What can I know? What ought I do? What dare I hope? What is a human being?” As the study of psi becomes a mature science and its existence becomes a part of our cultural world-picture, becomes “common sense,” what can we legitimately expect to happen? What dare I hope for is a time when psi becomes as widely accepted as was the unconscious after Freud, or global warming after enough scientific research had been done on the subject.

What can we legitimately expect to happen to us and our society after the existence of large-scale psi events becoming part of the background assumptions in our culture?

(1) The view of ourselves and others as locked within our own skins, communicating with others only through physical movements of our body, will be loosened. (2) A new view of ‘What am I?’ and ‘What are other people?’... seeing ourselves simultaneously as individuals and as part of something larger. This will be close to the concept of most esoteric schools and spiritual development groups. (3) This new concept will affect our behavior. Belief systems are true in their effects. Among those effects will be changes in how we treat ourselves, others and the planetary nest in which we live. (4) The changes will be large enough and soon enough they that will help move the human race off the Endangered Species List.

When the world is confronted with so many crises, we may share his hope that everyday acceptance of large-scale psi events will lead to personal and cultural changes that will help us overcome the great problems that now threaten to destroy us. We may share his dream “that with the new picture of what a human being is, we can learn how to stop killing each other and poisoning our only planet, our nest and home.”

ERLENDUR HARALDSSON (1931-2020)

Erlendur Haraldsson was an Icelandic academic psychologist and psychical researcher. He was interested in many areas of parapsychology and his publications covered a wide range of religious and psychological topics, including mediums, reincarnation, deathbed phenomena and Sathya Sai Baba. He published more than a hundred papers in mainstream as well as psi journals and seven of his eight books describe some aspect of psychical research. He was a member of the SMN for many years and spoke to us on several occasions.

He was born near Reykjavik in 1931 and had several psychic experiences in his childhood and early youth, one of which is described in an interview with Michael Tymn:

When I was around 15, I became like reborn to myself, and became aware of some inner reality that was also mysteriously external, and so immensely greater than anything I had experienced or been aware of before. It started suddenly in heavy rain during the middle of the day, near some banks of pebbles on the seashore that lit up as the sun suddenly shone and reflected on them. Then I had the experience of being filled with light that was immensely delightful and beyond words. After a while this faded away but a vivid trace of it remained with me and would sometimes – especially in my youth – sweep over me again. After that there was never a doubt that there existed a superior/supernatural reality that was sometimes closer and sometimes further away from my normal self.

I include this quote because many scientists are interested in the field because of some personal experience and the ones who dismiss it have usually never had such an experience.

Erlendur first studied philosophy at the universities of Copenhagen, Edinburgh and Freiburg. In Freiburg he also attended the lectures of Professor Hans Bender on parapsychology and was so impressed by the significant amount of research being done that he decided to pursue parapsychology for his doctorate under Bender.

He also corresponded with the pioneering psi experimentalist J B Rhine and worked with him in various periods between 1969 to 1971, conducting experiments on physiological measurements of ESP. Later he went to the University of Virginia in Charlottesville for a year's internship in clinical psychology with Robert van de Castle. There he came to know Ian Stevenson, leading to their life-long association and many joint papers. From 1973 to 1974, he was a Research Associate at the American Society for Psychical Research (ASPR) in New York, working with Karlis Osis. They collaborated on a large-scale study of deathbed visions reported to doctors and nurses in India, extending the work Osis had already conducted in the USA, and this resulted in their 1977 book *At the Hour of Death*.

He was appointed an assistant professor at the University of Iceland in psychology in 1973, becoming a full professor in 1989. He spent a sabbatical year in 1982-83 as guest professor with Stevenson and he was a visiting professor at the Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie und Psychohygiene in Freiburg from 1993 to 1995. He retired in 1999 and became Emeritus Professor but he remained active as a researcher, writer, and lecturer. In 2007, he helped establish an endowment at the University of Iceland to support research into psychic experiences.

Erlendur is one of the few parapsychologists who have made significant contributions both to the experimental side of the field and to case studies. He studied performance on psychokinesis tests using a random number generator and how this was affected by participants' psychological characteristics. He found that religiosity and belief in postmortem survival were better predictors of positive scoring in psi experiments than the belief in ESP.

He wrote extensively about psychic experiences and beliefs in Iceland. In 1975, he conducted a large national survey of psychical and religious experiences and beliefs there. The reports of contacts with the dead prompted him to undertake another survey exploring

after-death communications and this provided the basis of his 2012 book *The Departed Among the Living*. He also wrote about both mental and physical mediumship in Iceland, reviewing the extensive historical and archival material in his 2015 book with Loftur Gissurarson, *Indridi Indridason: The Icelandic Physical Medium*.

Whilst Erlendur and Karlis Osis were researching deathbed visions in Indian hospitals, they learnt of and visited the religious leader Sathya Sai Baba, who was reputed to produce miraculous phenomena. During later visits to India, Erlendur made more extensive studies of Sai Baba, leading to his 1987 book *Miracles are my Visiting Cards: An Investigative Report on Psychic Phenomena Associated with Sathya Sai Baba*. He approached the alleged miracles with a critical but open outlook and one critic recommended it as 'the most balanced book ever written on the topic'.

Children's past-life memories were another topic to engage Erlendur's attention. He became involved in this research in 1988, when Stevenson asked him to look into new cases to see if they were comparable to those he had investigated. Erlendur went to Sri Lanka and Lebanon to examine such cases and he devotes several chapters of his last book to this topic, as well as his 2017 book with James Matlock*, *I Saw a Light and Came Here: Children's Experiences of Reincarnation*. Erlendur himself had what he suspected were past-life memories and concluded: "Unbelievable as it may appear at first sight, the reincarnation theory best fits the data and the various features of the cases".

Erlendur died in November of cancer, at a hospice in Reykjavik. He had just passed his 89th birthday. A memoir of his experiences and activities in parapsychology, *Towards the Unknown: Memoirs of a Psychical Researcher*, will be published next Spring. He was a very kind man and a good friend to many SMN members.

* Some of this account comes from Matlock's entry on Erlendur in Psi Encyclopedia.



A Crucial Time of Choice

Anne Baring Ph.D.

The following series of articles provide different lenses on our current systemic global crises and how we might best respond to create a humane future. In this first article, Anne Baring sheds considerable historical and psychological light on underlying issues, which she also addressed in her October webinar, which I strongly recommend. Members can access this on our webinar library page.



As a Jungian analyst, I would like to offer an archetypal overview of why the current crisis may have come into being; showing when, where and how the masculine and feminine archetypes – reflected in the image of a God or Goddess – became separated, and why this separation has had such a deep impact on Western civilisation. I am not speaking only of the pandemic but the far greater challenge of climate change.

We live in a world that has been governed by the masculine archetype for some 5,000 years, with no feminine archetype to balance it, no sacred marriage between them. ⁽¹⁾ As a result, world culture and the human psyche have become dangerously out of balance, out of alignment with the Earth and the Cosmos. Forty or so years ago I had a visionary dream of a Cosmic Woman. Since then, my life has been focused on the recovery and restoration of the feminine archetype — the archetype that stands for our *relationship* with Nature, the Earth and the Cosmos. It also stands for a totally different perspective on life, a perspective which recognises that we live on a sacred planet: that our human lives participate in a Sacred Cosmic Order and that our role as humans is to care for the life of this planet. The Feminine stands for the soul, for the heart, and for compassion and justice — the two primary values which protect and serve life. It is summed up in this statement by a Council of the Indigenous People of North America:

“All Life is sacred.
We come into Life as sacred beings. When we abuse the sacredness of Life we affect all Creation.”

Today we are faced with a choice — a choice that will determine whether or not we survive as a species. Through ignorance, hubris and the belief that we could dominate nature to the advantage of our species alone, we have interfered so disastrously with the organism of the planet, that over the last 50 years, our growing numbers and our mindless exploitation of its resources have brought about not only the destruction of 60% of all species but also the crisis of climate change. ⁽²⁾

The imperative of change

We have somehow to change our attitude to life, to relinquish the myth of limitless growth, progress and consumption that dominates our culture and cease our ongoing assault on the life and resources of the planet. This is a time of great peril, but also of unparalleled opportunity. Never before in our species memory has there been this collective opportunity to change course before it is too late. We need to understand why we have lost touch with Nature and why we have learned so little from our spiritual traditions that we are prepared to destroy God’s creation with our nuclear weapons, whose very existence pollutes the Earth. ⁽³⁾

Two thousand years ago this prophecy was recorded in the Fourth Gospel of the Essenes. This Gospel, and three others, were discovered by Edmund Szekely in the secret archives of the Vatican in the 1930’s and translated from the Aramaic by him:

“But there will come a day when the Son of Man will turn his face from his Earthly Mother and betray her, even denying his Mother and his birth right.”

Then shall he sell her into slavery, and her flesh shall be ravaged, her blood polluted, and her breath smothered; he will bring the fire of death into all the parts of her kingdom, and his hunger will devour all her gifts and leave in their place only a desert.

All these things he will do out of ignorance of the Law, and as a man dying slowly cannot smell his own stench, so will the Son of Man be blind to the truth: that as he plunders and ravages and destroys his Earthly Mother, so does he plunder and ravage and destroy himself. For he was born of his Earthly Mother, and he is one with her, and all that he does to his Mother even so does he do to himself.”

Every word of this prophecy has come true. Believing ourselves to be separate from and above Nature, and having no idea of why we are on this planet, we have grossly interfered with the harmony of the natural world and are bringing disease and possible extinction upon ourselves.

In the words of an American philosopher, William Ophuls, “What the impending ecological crisis forces us to confront is that we have sacrificed meaning, morality, and almost all higher values for the ‘sordid boon’ of material wealth and worldly power. To keep drinking from this poisoned chalice will bring only sickness and death.”⁽⁴⁾

Origins of our world view

In order to transform our present view of reality we need to understand the ideas and beliefs that have created it. When did we lose the awareness that all life is sacred? Why did we lose the feminine archetype that connected us to Nature?

Owing to the researches that I and a number of women have made over the last 40 years, we now know that in the Palaeolithic and Neolithic eras, the principal deity worshipped was the Great Mother. In this forgotten cosmology, *there was no Creator beyond creation.*

Creation emerged from the womb of the Great Mother. All species, including our own, were her children. Everything on Earth and in the Cosmos was connected through relationship with her, part of a sacred Web of Life.⁽⁵⁾

Then, around 2,000 BCE in the Middle East, there was a change so great that its repercussions are still felt today because it has been the major influence on Western civilisation.⁽⁶⁾ This change was the replacement of the Great Mother by the Great Father, preceded by a period when there were both goddesses and gods. As the monotheistic Father God brought creation into being as something separate and distant from himself, so Nature gradually became split off from Spirit and was no longer sacred. Simultaneously, the rise of powerful city states in the Middle East led to conflict between them and to the creation of a succession of vast empires ruled by powerful kings and emperors: Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman. The theme of conquest, domination and the pursuit of power laid down so long ago continues to this day with the leaders of the current great empires — China, Russia and America.⁽⁷⁾

Although the architectural, artistic and literary creations of the last four thousand years were extraordinary, the suffering endured was unimaginable. Millions of young men lost their lives and died in atrocious pain. Millions of women and children were raped and sold into slavery in the same way that the tragic Yazidi women were raped and sold by Islamic State. Deep traumas were created in the collective psyche of humanity that are unhealed to this day. During these thousands of years of war, we forgot about Nature and our relationship with her. Gradually, we developed the idea that we were above Nature, entitled to control and dominate her for the benefit of our species alone. To summarise: the change in the image of deity was a primary factor in separating Nature from Spirit. It led to a polarising dualism that henceforth structured our concept of reality.

The lost goddess

There was a second factor that, in my view, contributed to the loss of the sacredness of nature: a forgotten event that has had a devastating influence on patriarchal culture, the oppression of women, and our relationship with the planet. The story of it has been told by the Old Testament scholar, Margaret Barker, and by Dr. Betty J. Kovacs in her recently published book, *Merchants of Light*.⁽⁸⁾

What happened was this: the Jewish people once worshipped both a Goddess and a God, a Queen and a King of Heaven, who together created the world. But in 621 BCE under a king called Josiah, a powerful group of priests called Deuteronomists took control of the First Temple in Jerusalem. They removed every trace of the Goddess Asherah, the Queen of Heaven, who was worshipped as the Holy Spirit and Divine Wisdom and also as the Tree of Life — a cosmic Tree that connected the invisible and visible worlds, and whose fruit was the gift of immortality. The ancient shamanic rituals of the High Priest which had honoured and communed with the Queen of Heaven as the Tree of Life, Divine Wisdom and the Holy Spirit were replaced by new rituals based on obedience to Yahweh’s Law. Margaret Barker writes:

In the most ancient tradition of Israel, Yahweh was both female and male, and it was they who co-created the world. The feminine side of Yahweh was called Wisdom, the consort of Yahweh, the Queen of Heaven, the bright and radiant one whose teaching was like the light of the dawn. But Wisdom was abandoned by her husband.”⁽⁹⁾

In another book, she says that it was the First Temple that was remembered by many as the true Temple – and Wisdom, the Queen of Heaven, was at the heart of that temple tradition.⁽¹⁰⁾

But the Deuteronomists didn’t stop there. They also created the Myth of the Fall (Genesis 2 & 3) with its punishing God and its grim message

of disobedience, sin, guilt, suffering and the banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. They demoted the Queen of Heaven – whose title was ‘Mother of All Living’ – into the human figure of Eve, giving her the same title as the former Goddess and placing two Trees in the Garden of Eden instead of one. They blamed Eve for the sin of disobedience that brought about the Fall and for bringing sin, suffering and death into the world. Henceforth, all women would be contaminated by Eve’s sin and would have to be under men’s control lest they create further disasters.

Speaking as a therapist, I cannot begin to tell you the catastrophic effects of this myth on Christian civilisation and how deeply it affected men, women and children, imprinting them with a conviction of guilt and sin. From it there developed the pernicious idea that the whole human race was fallen, tainted by sin, punished for a primordial act of disobedience to God. The created world was no longer sacred – a manifestation of the Tree of Life – but was viewed as contaminated by the Fall. A woman was initially to blame for all this and woman’s long oppression, even persecution, stems directly from this myth. Her voice was silenced for millennia and is just beginning to be heard.

Yahweh was left as the sole transcendent Creator God: The Divine Feminine aspect of God was deleted from the god-head. The only place where the concept of the sacred marriage survived was in the mystical Jewish tradition of Kabbalah, known as the Voice of the Dove.⁽¹¹⁾ The presence of the Divine Feminine in the god-head was not only banished from Judaism, but also from Christianity because it took its image of God from Judaism. At the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, the Trinity was defined in wholly male imagery and the Holy Spirit lost its previous feminine identity.⁽¹²⁾ Islam from the seventh century CE also had a sole male creator god.

The end-result of this new polarising cosmology was that life on earth was split off from the

divine world: Nature was split off from Spirit. Men defined themselves as the superior gender and unconsciously identified themselves with Spirit. They identified women with Nature. Body was split off from mind and mind from soul. Sexuality came to be regarded as sinful, the main impediment to spirituality.⁽¹³⁾ St. Augustine’s conviction (in his *City of God*) that original sin was transmitted through the sexual act deeply imprinted the Christian psyche with guilt and shame.⁽¹⁴⁾ The patriarchal religions defined woman’s only role as one of obedience and service to man and the carrier of his seed. All this was a complete reversal of the earlier cosmology focused on the Great Mother.

Mary Magdalene

There is one further factor that needs to be included in this story. This was the deliberate decision by the Roman Church to eradicate all trace of Jesus’ marriage to Mary Magdalene⁽¹⁵⁾ and create the vicious calumny of Mary as a penitent whore⁽¹⁶⁾ that was not removed until 1969 by Pope Pius VI. In the four canonical gospels the female companions of Jesus are cited on only seven occasions. In six of these Mary Magdalene is the first woman named. In the seventh Jesus’ mother comes first. Why would Mary’s name appear first of a group of women in all but one of these lists if she were not the wife of Jesus? It is inconceivable that Jesus, a Rabbi, would have an unmarried woman following him during his Mission. He frequently stayed at the house of Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany. In all four gospels, Mary is described as present at the crucifixion of Jesus, standing with his mother and sister at the foot of the cross. She would not have been allowed access to the sepulchre, with or without other women accompanying her unless, as his wife, she had come to anoint his body, as was the burial custom at that time—a custom which is alluded to in Mark 16:1.

To get a truer picture of their relationship, we need to turn to the Nag Hammadi texts discovered in 1945 and to the gnostic Gospel of Philip and a text called *The*

Dialogue of the Savior.⁽¹⁷⁾ Finally, there is an extraordinary Greek text called *The Gospel of the Beloved Companion*, said to have been brought from Alexandria to the Languedoc area of France in the early to middle of the first century CE and passed down from hand to hand in a community for generations. It has been translated from the Greek by Jehanne de Quillan and published in 2010. It reads like an eye-witness account of someone who was very close to Jesus and who was given a hidden aspect of his teaching that is missing in the Gospel of Mary that is known to us and was evidently not divulged to some of his closest disciples.⁽¹⁸⁾

Think what it would have meant for the development of Western civilisation if the union of Jesus and Mary Magdalene had been celebrated by the Church founded in his name. Had their marriage been recognised and Jesus not turned into the celibate Son of God,⁽¹⁹⁾ Christianity would have had a totally different history, without a celibate male priesthood harbouring a deep suspicion of and contempt for women and without the persecution of women in the witch trials that scarred Europe for five centuries and resulted in the death at the stake of an estimated 100,000 women.⁽²⁰⁾ The long addiction to absolute power and control on the part of the Catholic Church laid down the pattern of domination and the extermination of heretics and other innocents which found its ultimate expression in the ‘Final Solution’ of Nazi Germany.

Returning to the wider picture, the monotheistic cosmology of the three patriarchal religions has led to the situation where the Earth is no longer viewed as sacred and we are confronted with the catastrophic effects of the loss of the Divine Feminine. They did not teach reverence and respect for a sacred Earth. They supported endless wars, conquests and brutal conversions in the name of their God. They treated other races as inferior and subject to the white race and the God they worshipped. A series of Papal Bulls from 1493 gave the European nations permission to invade, capture, subdue and enslave

the indigenous populations and to seize all their lands and possessions. ⁽²¹⁾ Because of this history, we have been on the wrong path for more than two thousand years, out of alignment with the Earth and the Cosmos. It has led us to this time of crisis and awakening and to the need for a New Story, a story that tells us that we are the life and breath of the Divine in human form and that all life is infused with Divinity. ⁽²²⁾

Domination and alienation

For a very long time now, the primary experience of human consciousness has been one of increasing alienation from Nature, culminating in the ideology of technological progress and limitless growth that is unrelated to the needs of the planet and our utter dependence on the viability of its life. Our current worldview, whether West or East, rests on the premise of our mastery of Nature, where the diminishing resources of the planet are unthinkingly plundered to serve the ever-growing numbers and needs of our species alone.

Materialist or reductionist science – a further example of a powerful, dominating ideology – built on the flawed or unbalanced foundation bequeathed to it by patriarchal religion and has dispensed with both God and the soul. It tells us that the universe is without life, purpose or meaning. When the physical brain dies, that is the end of us. The highest authority is the rational mind. We are separate from the world around us. The Master Story is technological progress. I think this explains why, in a worldwide culture deeply influenced by this secular philosophy, we have come to believe that it doesn't matter what we do to matter – that Nature and matter are not sacred, that we are not part of that sacredness. This is why there is no foundation for morality in our relationship with the Earth. What we think we need, we take.

The psychiatrist, C.G. Jung, could see the dangers of this materialist philosophy and commented: “As scientific understanding has grown, so our world has become



dehumanised. Man feels himself isolated in the cosmos, because he is no longer involved in nature and has lost his emotional “unconscious identity” with natural phenomena... No voices now speak to man from stones, plants, and animals, nor does he speak to them believing they can hear. His contact with nature has gone.” ⁽²³⁾

In another passage, he describes how, as the conscious mind gained more and more autonomy and independence from the deeper matrix of the psyche, the whole super-structure of consciousness became disengaged from the age-old instinctive ground out of which it has developed. “Consciousness thus torn from its roots...”, he said, “possesses a Promethean freedom but it also partakes of the nature of a godless *hybris*.” ⁽²⁴⁾

Once, long ago, the world was experienced as alive with spirit. Nature was part of a sacred cosmic whole. In spite of horrendous persecution, the Indigenous peoples of the world have kept alive this awareness of the sacredness of nature and the idea of our kinship with all creation. They also have preserved what Riane Eisler calls a Partnership society rather than one based on Domination. ⁽²⁵⁾

The cosmic web

The New Story emerging in quantum physics tells us that the whole universe is a unified field. Our lives are part of a cosmic web of life which connects all life forms in the universe and on our planet. Every atom of life interacts with every other atom, no matter how distant. We are not only connected through the Internet but through the infinitesimal particles of sub-atomic matter. We are part of an ‘Infinite of Consciousness’ ⁽²⁶⁾ which sustains not only our world, but the entire universe. This restores the original cosmology of the Great Mother at a new level of understanding.

A new vision is struggling to be born; a new vision of our profound relationship with an intelligent, living and interconnected universe. The realisation is dawning that we are participants in a Cosmic Consciousness or Intelligence which is present in every atom of our being and every particle of matter.

We are called to a profound process of transformation that is manifesting as a new planetary consciousness: a consciousness which recognises that we are part of a Sacred Web of Life. As Sir

David Attenborough has shown us, we are part of the biodiversity of the planet and whatever we do the planet, affect us. ⁽²⁷⁾ Thousands, even millions of us, are joining groups like Humanity Rising, working together to create a new civilisation based on different values and a different relationship with the planet. ⁽²⁸⁾ We need a science and a technology that does not seek to dominate nature but works *with* nature, humbly respecting its harmonious order. ⁽²⁹⁾ We need enlightened men and women, who are not driven by the will to power, to restore the values and the practices that could transform our relationship with the planet into one of love and care. ⁽³⁰⁾

This pandemic carries an urgent message for us to wake up to the small window of opportunity we have to change course before it's too late. This means change in every sphere of life: change in the very concept of what it means to be human and living on this extraordinary planet — change above all, in our relationship with the planet and all the species it sustains. We tread a path which is on the knife-edge between the conscious integration of a new vision on the one hand and the virtual extinction of our species on the other. Which path will we choose?

References

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2. see the warning given by Sir David Attenborough BBC 1, 13/9/20
3. There are currently (2020) over 14,000 nuclear weapons in the world, many of them primed and ready for launch in minutes. \$100 billion per year is spent designing, developing and deploying nuclear weapons.
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5. see *The Dream of the Cosmos*, Chapter 4 *The Great Mother*
6. One major example of this change was the influential Babylonian Epic of Creation (*The Enuma Elish*) ca 1700 BCE where the god Marduk kills the Mother Goddess Tiamat and creates heaven and earth from her split carcass. This was the model for future myths of the hero's fight with the dragon. See Chapter 7, *The Myth of the Goddess*
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8. Kovacs, Dr. Betty J. *Merchants of Light: The Consciousness that is Changing the World*, Chapter 11 and p. 254
9. Barker, Margaret, *The Great High Priest*, 2003, p. 236. In *Temple Theology*, she comments that the most important result of Josiah's purge was the introduction of monotheism. p. 7
10. Barker, *The Great Angel*, p. 14. See also *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 2000, pp. 15-17 and Chapter 13 *The Woman Clothed with the Sun*.
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12. At this Council the Christian Trinity was rendered entirely masculine. The former feminine gender of the Holy Spirit, described in the Book of Proverbs and in the *Apocrypha* (the Books of Ben Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon), was permanently lost to Christianity. The Hebrew word for Spirit was *ruach*, a feminine noun. Translated into Greek, it became a neutral noun, *pneuma*. Translated from Greek into Latin, it became the masculine *Spiritus Sanctus*. In this way, the former feminine identity of the Holy Spirit was erased, assisted by St. Augustine's treatise on the Trinity: *de Trinitate*.
13. For the attitude to sexuality and the virulent misogyny of the Early Christian Fathers, see *The Dream of the Cosmos*, Chapters 7 & 8
14. This conviction passed into Church Law at a Council in Carthage (418 CE) which formulated the Doctrine of Original Sin.
15. The books of Laurence Gardner provide detailed evidence that the Vatican moved heaven and earth to conceal the fact of their marriage and that it holds a document called the *Desposyni* Chart that provides evidence of their marriage and the existence of their children. *The Magdalene Legacy*, Element, London, 2005 and *The Grail Enigma* 2008 HarperElement, London. Mary Magdalene was recognised as the consort of Jesus by the religious orders in France, where she lived and taught for twenty years, and by the Knights Templar as well as by the Cathar Church of the Holy Spirit, established in France in 1157 and destroyed by the Albigensian Crusade of 1209 and the Inquisition.
16. In a sermon given by Pope Gregory the Great in 591 CE
17. Robinson JM (ed.) (1977) *Nag Hammadi Library (NHL)*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 'Dialogue of the Savior', pp. 230–238, 235 and The Gospel of Philip, pp. 135–36. The Greek word *koimonos* used in these texts can have the meaning of consort or wedded partner as well as partner, friend or companion in faith.
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19. From the Church's point of view, Jesus, as the Son of God, had to be celibate or the whole foundation of the Church as the Bride of Christ, served by celibate priests, as well as the authenticity of the Apostolic Succession, would have been compromised.
20. The practice of priestly celibacy in the Western Church was imposed in the two Lateran Councils held in 1123 and 1139, when a rule was approved forbidding priests to marry. The Catholic Church still will not allow women to become priests. The figure of 100,000 is taken from Eisler and Fry, p. 263. A Decree of July 2010 stated that the ordination of women was one of the most serious crimes in Canon Law. See *The Dream of the Cosmos*, Chapter 8, p. 170
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25. Eisler, Riane & Fry, Douglas P. *Nurturing Our Humanity*, 2019
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27. In a programme on BBC1 on 13/9/20
28. An online initiative started in Spring 2020 by Jim Garrison, Founder and President of Ubiquity University
29. as in Merlin Sheldrake's *Entangled Life* 2020.
30. By this I mean women who are not taken over by the desire for dominance and the will to power and whose primary concern is service of life

This article was originally given as a talk for Jim Garrison's 'Humanity Rising' Series, Day 82, August 11th, 2020.

For a computer-aided reconstruction of the face of Mary Magdalene from her skull and a lock of hair preserved in the Basilica Saint-Maximin-La-Sainte-Baume, the third most important Christian shrine after St. Peter's and the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, see

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6343449/>

Also reported in the National Geographic Magazine, September 2017



Preparing for the Covid-19 Bifurcation and Great Reset Choice Point

Robert Verkerk PhD

In this radical and outspoken article, the author gives voice to rising concerns relating to the post-Covid 'new normal' articulated by proponents of the World Economic Forum 'Great Reset'. Our Enlightenment inheritance of free speech and expression is now at stake. In the words drafted by James Madison in the 1791 First Amendment to the US Constitution: 'Congress shall make no law prohibiting...or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.' Voltaire passionately defended this same freedom in his 1763 Treatise on Tolerance, the freedom to follow one's own reason and judgement, to allow a plurality of views, to dissent from authority. Dissenting or supportive responses to this article will be printed in the next issue.

For many self-declared, free-thinking people, the length to which governments have gone to try to evade or mitigate the effects of a single virus, namely SARS-CoV-2 that causes Covid-19, appears disproportionate, irrational and destructive. The global, inter-governmental decision-making process that unfolded in early 2020, strategically directed by organisations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Economic Forum (WEF), has caused, knowingly, extensive collateral damage to economies and livelihoods.[1] The global response has been initiated following the suspension of democratic process by what is increasingly described as a governing elite, many of whom have been evolving plans for increasing global governance of human life on Earth at consecutive annual meetings of the WEF in Davos.[2,3]

Disproportionate but acceptable to most

Despite the absence of a consistent logic structure in the global response to Covid-19, many find themselves dismissing the evident irrationality on the basis of brazen support for it. With so many world and business leaders, businesses and media channels repeating or supporting the same narrative, acceptance by a majority of the

public is a given, especially when so many are subdued by fear of the virus. Such is the power of repetition, as Hitler [4] and others found, it can make deeply self-serving, absurd and even inhumane behaviours appear reasonable.

During the first quarter of the year, when it was clear that certain population groups, notably the elderly and those suffering multiple underlying conditions (comorbidities) were highly vulnerable to the new virus, radical and extreme action on the part of governments seemed easier to accept.

However, as the pandemic progressed into the northern hemisphere autumn and winter of 2020, the approach has become more open to question. It became harder to claim that lockdowns and related measures that greatly impacted social and economic functions were all about preventing hospitals from being overrun. It was increasingly difficult to demonstrate that the majority of the population was at direct risk of disease caused by the new virus. Deaths caused by Covid-19 were rapidly substituted for a new statistic, deaths occurring within the same month as a positive molecular test for a fragment of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, despite this providing no evidence of disease or even transmissible infection.[5]

Then another change: the revised focus on Covid-related deaths and hospitalisations had to be exchanged yet again. This time the focus shifted to case rates based on flawed mass antigen testing programmes reliant on a molecular biology tool (reverse transcriptase - polymerase chain reaction or RT-PCR) that was never designed for mass testing of disease.[6]

Widespread fear of the virus and hysteria over the consequences of testing positive, including facing further social isolation, provided the environment that caused economies to disintegrate further and the social fabric of societies to be worn thin. While unquestioning acceptance may have been the norm, an ever-increasing number have been 'waking up' to the absurdity of it all, creating more division, more polarisation. It is arguable that this has been deliberately orchestrated to engender just the right amount of tension and social instability to justify a transition from democratic to authoritarian regimes.

The 'perfect storm' for the Great Reset

There appears to be one particularly plausible explanation for why things have panned out the way they have. It is the brainchild of the WEF and it is called the Great Reset. [7] While the Great Reset was launched in June 2020, along with a book [8] co-authored by the WEF's octogenarian founder, Klaus Schwab, it is clear that the global plan has been years in the making. The kind of future the Great Reset entertains is radically different to the one that led us to this point following World War II. In fact, it represents a concerted effort to deviate from the social democratic and economic systems and norms that have taken human development this far. The proposed transition touches almost every aspect of our lives, and aims to usher in an altogether new relationship between humans and technology. It involves enormous changes to the way we are governed, what we eat, how we work, how we get paid and pay for things, what kinds of medicines we need or are forced to take, how and when we are monitored, how we share information, and how we travel.



Klaus Schwab, founder and executive director of the World Economic Forum

The merits of some of the new cyber technologies are likely unassailable, and carry little in the way of concerns over potential misuse or abuse. An example is the development of cortical implants and brain machine interfaces that would allow an amputee to control a neuroprosthetic device. But every new technology can have a darker side, depending on who controls its use. Experimental research, described by Schwab and co-author Dr Thierry Malleret,[8] already allows humans, via machine to brain interfaces, to control the behaviour of rats. But the end-game for this kind of technology is to have humans controlling the brains of other humans, an application that could be used by police or border controls to triage members of the public at seaports, airports, railway stations, sports stadiums, entertainment venues, office buildings, and an almost limitless array of other situations.

Much of the thinking incorporated into the Great Reset was already in existence prior to the arrival of the pandemic. The Great Reset is, in effect, a rebrand for what was previously described as the 'new world order',[9] a notion that was heavily challenged by dissenters that have now been largely marginalised and blacklisted as 'conspiracy theorists'. The lack of public appetite for a new world order was in part linked to permissive attitudes, at least in the West, that supported freedom of expression. Additionally, the public was reticent to give up freedoms and prosperity it had been enjoying. That was before Covid-19.

Everything has now changed. Freedoms have been greatly curtailed, and social, economic and health inequalities have widened. The average person is now more prepared to accept change. The Great Reset is akin to pushing the 'shut down' button on a global computer, an action – radical as it might be – that has been justified as necessary given the failures that have been exposed by Covid-19. The plan, of course, is not just to reboot. But to reboot with a new operating system.

What makes it more remarkable, the conspiracy has not been hidden from view, marginalised by 'fact checkers' or, this time, relegated to a 'conspiracy theory'. It is out there in full view, on the WEF website,[7] backed up by an 'official' book [8] and supported by a regularly updated podcast.[10] At the same time, it has not yet received wide attention from the mainstream media. Probably deliberately so, given that its implications are so far reaching and require such seismic changes to human life that they may not be viewed favourably by the majority of free-thinking people.

While the media has been in overdrive to keep the public paralysed by fear of the virus, virtually every global corporation or association on the planet, from Accenture, the American Heart Association and Amazon to the Zenith Bank and Zurich Insurance Group, has got behind the Great Reset.[11] Even Pope Francis is an advocate, calling for a "global reset" while taking a swipe at the rise of so-called neo-liberalism and laying down a new dogma, that goes well beyond most interpretations of Catholicism, in his October 2020 encyclical, *Fratelli tutti* (in English, 'All Brothers') [12]. In his third and most recent encyclical, the Pope examines the way the world has failed to cooperate during the Covid-19 crisis. The finger is firmly pointed, whether directly or insinuated, at those who have not played the game. Most expressly in the cross-hairs were the Trump administration at the White House, lockdown sceptics, mask deniers and anyone who dared question the safety or effectiveness of any of the

new generation of synthetic biology-based Covid vaccines.

While the vaccine was originally hailed as the vehicle to allow society to return to normal, the narrative is beginning to backtrack. Dr Anthony Fauci, head of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, informed the public in November 2020 that masks and social distancing would still be required following mass vaccination.[13]

If any return to ‘normal life’ continues to be suspended or delayed, perhaps indefinitely, while people adjust to a ‘new normal’ (whatever that might imply) – dissension becomes less of a problem. Economic and social shocks induced by government policies claimed to protect the populace from a ferocious virus will make an ever-larger proportion of society more malleable, a state that might be described as a form of Stockholm syndrome.

Ushering in the Fourth ‘Cyber’ Industrial Revolution

The Great Reset has been unabashedly referred to by the WEF as “a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.” [14] Schwab’s vision of ‘what’ underpins the Great Reset and his vision of the future is captured in his 2016 book, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*. [15] Schwab’s 2018 book [16] tells us ‘how’ he expects to make this happen. And of course, the ‘when’ is provided for by the perfect storm of Covid-19. A growing band of global leaders are using a repurposed slogan, that originated from United Nations’ post-disaster efforts such as the Indonesian earthquake of 2016, as the rally cry for the Great Reset. It includes three simple words: ‘Build Back Better’. Among the many leaders who have found utility for the slogan during the Covid era are Boris Johnson (UK), Joe Biden (USA), Kevin Trudeau (Canada), Imran Khan (Pakistan), Prince Charles and Pope Francis.



Four world leaders who are firmly behind the *Build Back Better* slogan: Boris Johnson (top left), Joe Biden (top right), Justin Trudeau (bottom left), Imran Khan (bottom right).

Schwab was born in Ravensburg, Germany in 1938 at a time when the Nazi regime had risen to power and went onto create a regime built on brainwashing, fear, eugenics and extreme authoritarianism. It is impossible to say how this early life experience may have influenced Schwab’s desire to create the kind of new world order that he is now masterminding. But as one delves into his writings, it becomes clear that Schwab makes key assumptions about human beings and their relationship to the world around us that appear to demonstrate a disconnect with what might be described as the essence of what it is to be human.

Schwab is far from unique in having recognised that the path the world has been on since the end of World War II would lead to destruction of the world around us and to society as we know it. That way of human life, many would agree, is *not* sustainable. Changing course requires disruption – and the WEF’s reports on global risks released each January [17] have increasingly recognised the emergence of factors and processes that can bring about that disruption.

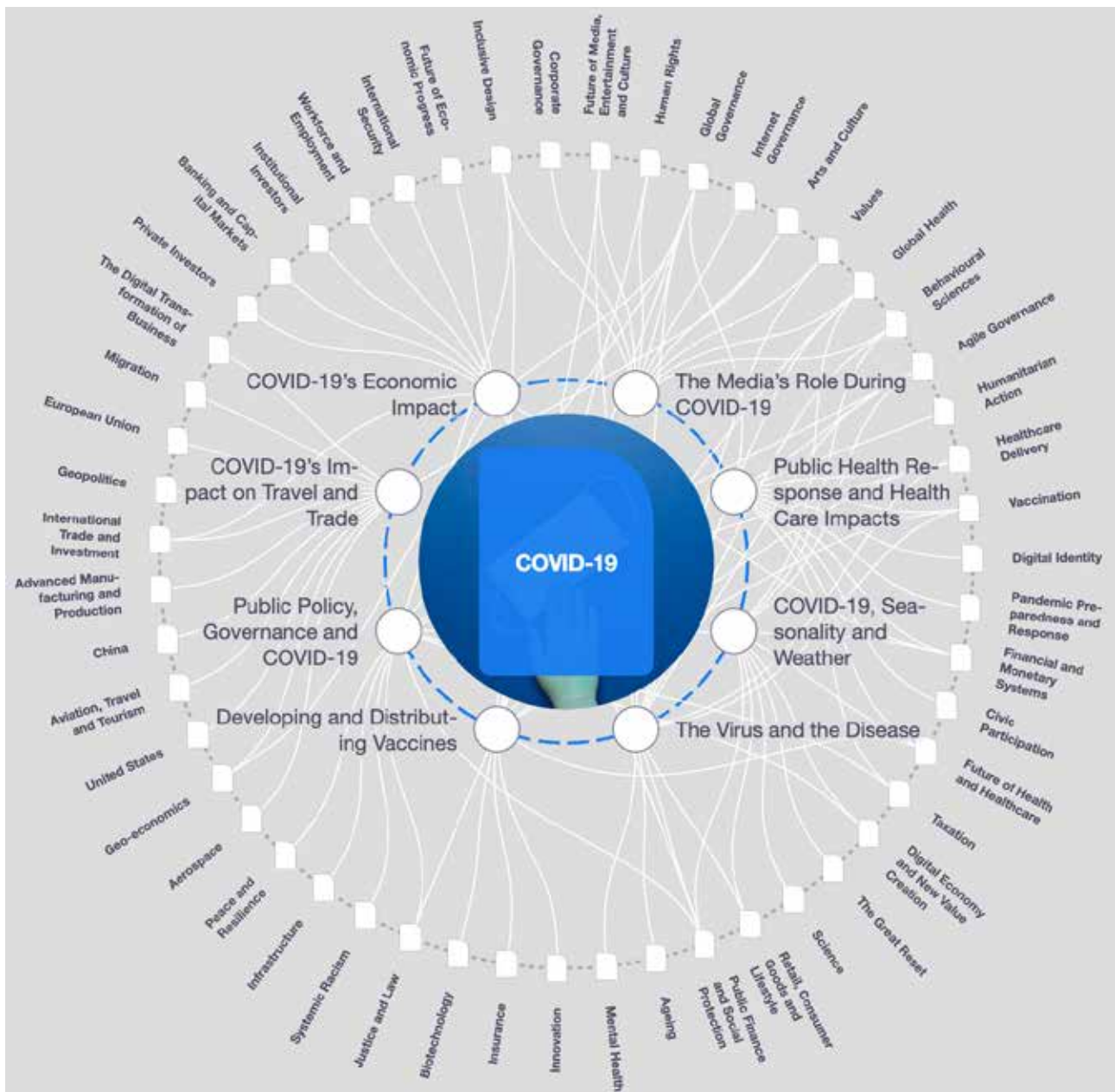
They include the meteoric pace of innovation that has morphed into an innovation arms race; climate change coupled with habitat destruction and loss of biodiversity that is triggering the

sixth mass extinction and the end of the natural world as we know it; widening social and health inequalities between different parts of the world; geopolitical instability; and the rise of populist culture alongside a growing resistance to globalisation.

That, of course, leads to what Schwab refers to as ‘profound social instability’ which can now perhaps be seen as a prerequisite for the transition towards the totalitarian and tyrannical regimes that have emerged since the pandemic was declared by the WHO in early March.

Despite the immensity of all these factors, they have not been enough to create the tipping point Schwab and his colleagues have been looking for. A game-changing event superimposed on top of all of this was needed. And in 2020, the last piece of Schwab’s jigsaw, one that was both anticipated and predicted, finally arrived: a pandemic.

The Covid-19 crisis that Schwab likens to a world war because it affects all parts of all social and economic systems in all parts of the world, now serves as the catalyst for Schwab’s Great Reset. Albeit, the most disruptive elements of the crisis have been the result of government responses to the virus, not the direct effects of the virus itself which was felt primarily during the initial wave.



The World Economic Forum's COVID-19 transformation map

The power of Schwab's vision is that along with the massive disruption it requires to take form, it also dangles enough carrots in front of us to make at least some of it seem appealing. Take, for example, solving three of the current super-issues of our time: poverty, inequality and climate change. These are all close to the top of the priority list of anyone with a social and environmental conscience, regardless of their political allegiances.

As widely supported as Schwab's vision might be among the Davos elite who have had the pleasure

of being exposed to many aspects of it over the last few years, its premises do not seem to resonate in the same way with the relatively small proportion of the public that has been exposed to it. This is evidenced by the predominantly negative public comments made on articles, social media and videos on the subject.

This lack of resonance may stem from the fact that the Great Reset includes a number of false assumptions or flaws. In order to simplify this discussion, the most important three are considered below, these being so deep-seated and integral to the vision, they render it, in the author's view, not fit for purpose:

False assumption 1: Social Contracts

Schwab wants us to form social contracts [18] with each other so that we can all tow a specific line, one largely dictated by those who share Schwab's values. The underlying notion is that we must, in all our endeavours, do good in ways that ultimately benefit others and future generations. Society, with such a viewpoint, can be likened to a buzzing ant colony where righteous behaviours are programmed into ants to benefit the colony as a whole, rather than each individual. It may seem like an enchanting idea to some, but building consensus on what is good and right, or bad and wrong, as

many religions have discovered to their cost over the last millennia, is not something that can be easily done. Does Schwab wish for us to engage in social contracts with those who share views that are the polar opposite of our own – regardless? And what are the consequences of not signing up? Would we have to pay a price or have privileges withdrawn? Scientific discourse and debate have been fundamental to the progression of science up until this point, so why is it now acceptable to marginalise the growing number of doctors and scientists who support positions that are at odds with the global pandemic response plan, such as the Great Barrington Declaration?[1] One can see how, under a Schwabian social contract, dissident scientists might lose their funding, and mask-wearing in certain circumstances along with vaccination might be mandated, alleged for public benefit, even if robust scientific evidence is absent.

False assumption 2: Social & environmental conscience does not necessitate a cyber, trans-human future

Schwab and his team have misjudged a significant proportion of the public when they assume that those with a social and environmental conscience, who also support the idea of moving towards a more sustainable future, must also be, or become, advocates of Schwab's Fourth Industrial 'Cyber' Revolution. Included in this cyber, near-future, are: 'mobile phone' implants, advanced and pervasive biometric surveillance, fast-tracked synthetic biology vaccines (the Covid vaccines being the first prototypes) and even the development of designer beings born with deliberately edited genetic codes. The cyber future does not just involve technology, it also includes transitioning the Western world, and followers of it, from shareholder-based capitalism to stakeholder-based capitalism, a concept that can be hard to distinguish from cronyism or the particular form of capitalism endorsed by the Chinese Communist Party.

Many environmentally-aware people are supporters of technology that works with, rather than against, both nature and humans. They support the use of technology to facilitate human lives, but not necessarily to control humans. Schwab's vision is so uncomfortable to many of us because he sees an increasing blurring between the biological and technological world. Losing any clear delineation between humans and the tools we create risks us losing the very senses and consciousness that help us protect the world around us – for the sake, not only of ourselves, but for the other organisms with which we share our planet, now and into the future.

False Assumption 3: Using coercion to force humanity into a disruptive, high risk future

Many of us will agree that the 'old normal' created a gamut of problems, socially, economically and environmentally – and was not sustainable. But as Schwab himself recognises repeatedly in his books and interviews, as he positions a cluster of rapidly emerging, largely untested cyber technologies, these all carry huge risks and uncertainty. In the wrong hands, as Schwab freely admits, they could destroy humanity and even the natural environment. Seemingly oblivious to the intentions of the business tycoons who surround him, he talks of needing to develop harmonious agreement on what is ethically acceptable and unacceptable to avoid these technologies being used to no good purpose for the benefit of a few.

The decision appears to have been made on our behalf, without consultation. With no transparency with respect to any risk/benefit assessments that may have (but probably have not) compared a range of options, including those incorporated within the Great Reset. It seems it is the WEF way, or the highway.

The coercion that is currently in play courtesy of Covid-19 drives a coach and horses through rights that have been won through hundreds of years of wars, upheavals, protests, treaties and campaigns. Democracy had to be

suspended, we are told, because of the need for globally coordinated emergency measures to protect the world's population from Covid-19. This situation could only be maintained by the excessively broad definition of a pandemic created by the WHO [19] that allows the freeze-framing of normal life, the amplification of public fear and the assumption of authoritarian powers by governments.

To many of us, this is simply unacceptable, not least of all because we live in a world in which the public distrust of governments and large corporations has never been so high – often for very good reason.

The choice

Many of us feel passionately that the new vision of global governance, developed by non-governmental organisations like the WEF, billionaire tycoons and some of the biggest business stakeholders on the planet, is not for us, or for humanity itself. We do not support the notion of using a newly adapted virus as the excuse to decimate lives and futures, in order to undertake the claimed Utopian, seemingly Dystopian, Great Reset. Especially not if it can only be achieved through coercion and the sacrifice of hard-won human rights.

As Ervin László proposed in this journal [20], Covid-19 has induced a *bifurcation* for humanity, one of those major episodes of evolutionary change that occur periodically in all complex ecological systems. But he makes clear the new, rapid change in direction can be towards a better world, one in which humans live in greater harmony with each other and the natural world around us. László also argues that the transition is not predetermined; it is a choice.

However powerful and influential the likes of Klaus Schwab and his associates might be, there is no certainty that the Great Reset will materialise. We cannot and should not be railroaded and we must understand all of the feasible choices available to us, including the tenets and drivers behind

the option being presented to us by Schwab and the majority of influential national governments, given that this is the default.

A different, perhaps more appealing, choice, will require decisive and coordinated action by millions of people around the world. Doable it is, but it is also a monumental undertaking, one that can only be accomplished with concerted resistance to the Great Reset.

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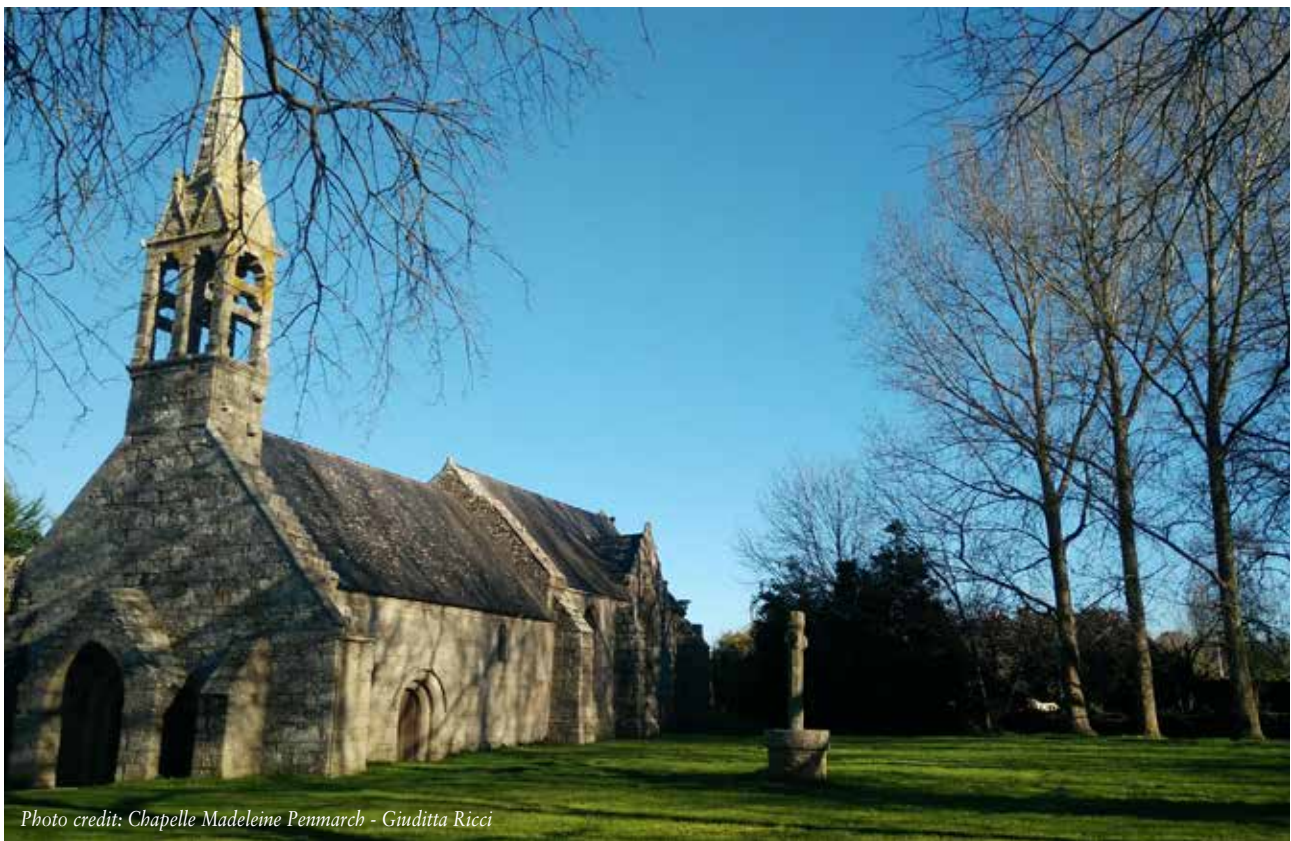


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The Struggle for a Human Future

Jeremy Naydler

In this article, Jeremy Naydler offers a spiritual view of the existential and civilisational choices we face, urging us to return to the still centre and reconnect with our core identity at a time of increasing distraction, acceleration and fragmentation of attention. He reminds us of our spiritual heritage and the centrality of contemplation.

Remembering the Totality of Who We Are

In the Western wisdom tradition, there is a recurrent theme of humanity's self-forgetfulness. We find it, for example, in Plato, in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, in Boethius's *The Consolation of Philosophy* and in Gnostic texts such as the *Hymn of the Pearl*, to which we shall turn in Chapter Two. This self-forgetfulness is a forgetting of our spiritual origins, and of the fact that human nature has a transcendent source. The person we ordinarily identify with is not the totality of who we are. This totality includes a spiritual kernel of which we are for the most part unconscious, and yet is nevertheless the foundation of our being, and our relationship to it is the secret of true happiness.

The wisdom traditions of both West and East have perennially sought to inculcate awareness of this spiritual kernel, in order to counteract the tendency of humans of all cultural epochs to forget and to neglect our spiritual origins. But where we today differ from cultures of the past is that not only do we suffer from the forgetfulness that is part of the human condition, but we also pay scant attention to the wisdom traditions that seek to rouse us to remembrance.

Instead, the whole thrust of contemporary culture is towards distraction, fragmentation and dispersion of consciousness.

The Digital Revolution has carried this tendency to an extreme, so much so that if we had deliberately set out to design technologies to induce the distractedness and self-forgetfulness that traditional spirituality has always endeavoured to save us from, then we could hardly have done better. This in turn has led to many of us failing to notice just how corrosive these developments can be to the essential human task of remembering the totality of who we are.

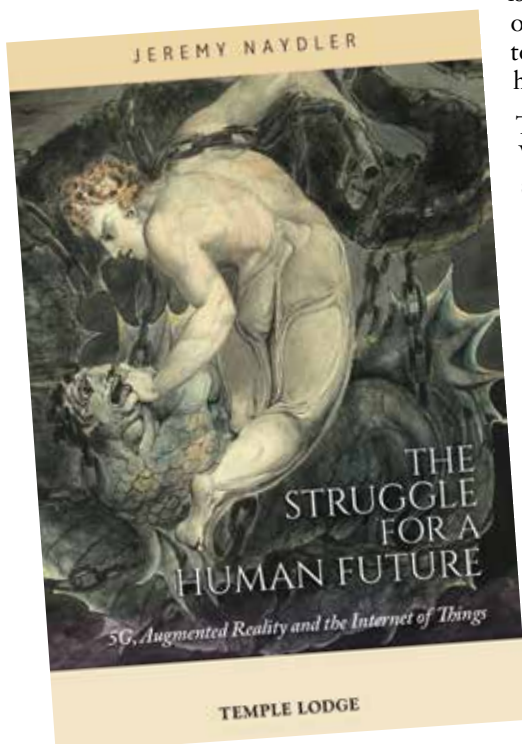
But as well as inducing distractedness and self-forgetfulness, our technologies are the vehicles of something else, potentially far more detrimental to our wellbeing.

The Inhuman

Towards the end of his life, the post-modernist thinker Jean-François Lyotard formulated a question that haunts the times we live in. It lurks beneath the surface of our consciousness, for most of us unarticulated and for that reason all the more menacing. Lyotard had the sensitivity to understand its profound importance, and hence the need to raise it to conscious awareness. The question that he formulated is this:

‘What if what is “proper” to humankind were to be inhabited by the inhuman?’¹

By the ‘inhuman’ we should understand that which is essentially hostile to the human. Lyotard distinguished two kinds of ‘inhuman’ – one is the inhumanity of our social, political and economic systems. The other is the ‘infinitely



secret' inhumanity that invades the soul and holds it hostage.² It is this latter kind of inhumanity that is the more insidious of the two, and it is this that, as our relationship with our digital devices becomes ever more intimate, poses the greatest danger to us. For the inhuman is carried towards us by our technologies.

While we can stand back from and critique the inhumanity of the social, political and economic systems in which we live, our personal susceptibility to the ingress of the inhuman puts us in far greater jeopardy. This susceptibility has been exploited by the direction that our digital technologies have taken, which has been unwaveringly towards accommodating themselves within the sphere of the human. As they have evolved, they have adapted themselves to the human body as well as to the human soul, becoming physically smaller and lighter and at the same time more powerful and capable.

The first computers were so large we had to stand in front of them or walk around them in order to operate them. With the invention of desktop computers it became possible to sit in front of them and engage with them, as it were, face to face. Then it became possible to put computers in our pocket, and now it is possible, with smartwatches and smartglasses, to wear them. At each stage the interface between them and us has become more 'human friendly', while at the same time humans have inwardly adjusted to relating to them on a day-to-day, hour-by-hour and even minute-by-minute basis.

While the computer has been moulding itself to the contours of the human body and soul, the inner life of human beings has slowly but surely been moulded towards a greater degree of computer-compatibility – affecting our language, our thought-processes and our daily habits. In this evolving symbiosis, in which we have become ever more intertwined with the computer, we have also become more dependent on it. Biological integration is not far away. It is the logical next step.

It is of utmost importance, therefore, that we open our eyes to the fact that even though human beings are the inventors, manufacturers and eager consumers of digital technologies, the driving force behind the Digital Revolution is not simply human: the 'inhuman' is also seeking to be realised within the human.

How are we to characterise this spectre of the inhuman? Human beings have always had the tendency to fall away from their essential nature. For pre-industrial humanity, the danger was conceived in terms of our descending to the animal or bestial level, captives of our untransformed instinctual drives and passions. That, we could say, is to fall beneath the human level: to fall into the sub-human. In our industrial and post-industrial age, the primary danger to our humanity lies less in succumbing to instincts and passions than in succumbing to the cold inhumanity of the machine and the unfeeling, compassionless algorithm. That is to fall into the inhuman.

Both tendencies live within us, and both work to undermine the possibility of realising our true human potential, but today it is the peril of the inhuman that we must especially guard against. Its aim is to totally supplant the human, and it will surely succeed, should we fail to ground ourselves in the authentically human. We must wake up to the prospect of the colonisation of the human by the inhuman and, in full awareness of the gravity of the threat posed by the inhuman, consciously take on the challenge of living humanly.

To Live Humanly

What does it mean to live humanly? If the totality of who we are includes a spiritual kernel of which we are for the most part unconscious, then it follows that to live humanly must be to live in greater consciousness of it. It is incumbent on us to strengthen our sense that this spiritual kernel is our deepest and truest self, and therefore the part of us with which we should seek to identify. This requires that we engage in the arduous work of inner

transformation, so that those desires, inclinations and deep-seated habits of thought, which draw us away from that essential remembrance, are slowly changed, and become inwardly aligned with what the wisdom traditions tell us is the true centre of our being.

This moral effort of turning towards, and rooting ourselves in, the spiritual kernel of who we are also involves a shift in the quality of our thinking. This shift is from reliance on a result-oriented, discursive thinking that runs along from one thought to another, towards giving more value to the stillness and open receptivity of the act of contemplation. Boethius gives the beautiful image of the seekers of truth having to bend their wandering consciousness into a circle, and teach their souls 'to lodge in the treasure house' at its centre. For there they will find a light, stronger even than the light of the sun, which will illumine their minds from within.³

This 'contemplative turn' has always been regarded as the foundation of the spiritual life, but it is of especial relevance to us today. Our technologies are based on the automation of logical analysis, calculation and problem solving, and are fundamentally discursive and result-oriented: they are hyperactive and aim always to output results. By contrast, the act of contemplation brings the mind to a standstill: it is not result-oriented, it cannot be automated, and it can only be engaged for its own sake. It enables us to gain insights into the deeper meaning of things, about which machine thinking knows nothing. These insights can well up from the imaginal world as powerful archetypal images, for contemplative thinking borders on imaginative vision. But equally they can take the form of ideas or intuitions that, like rays of light, illumine a question or life situation from a more comprehensive standpoint.

Contemplation is often described as involving the opening of an inner eye of the soul. It is referred to as 'the mind's eye' or 'the eye of the heart', and through it we become aware of what is invisible to the physical eye.⁴

This more interior source of knowing, which is unconditioned by habits of thought and opinion, could also be described as entailing an opening of the ‘inner ear’ of the soul to the voice of conscience. It can guide us towards a sense of moral certainty about what it is we should or should not do, and to the ideals that can inspire our actions.

Aristotle maintained that an action is only fully our own when we have ‘carried back the origin of the action’ to this contemplative part of ourselves, referred to as the *nous*, or ‘the centre of spiritual intelligence’ within a person.⁵ Once it has been carried back to this source, then the action is entirely free because it has been chosen from the centre, rather than from the periphery, of ourselves.

In the Western wisdom tradition, the defining characteristic of any action that is truly human is that it is free, precisely because it stems from this originating source. In Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas and Rudolf Steiner, we find this vital tenet reiterated: that we cannot adequately conceive of what it means to live humanly if we exclude freedom. Freedom belongs to the essence of human nature.⁶ That is not to say we necessarily live from the essence of ourselves every moment of the day. Far from it! But the trouble is that our digital technologies, because of their tendency to scatter the soul, don’t help us to do this. Rather they introduce a dark undertow with which we must constantly contend, if we are to carry back the origin of our actions to the centre of ourselves.

This movement back to the centre is the premise of true freedom. It is not given to us on a plate: it has to be won. To become free, we must engage in the work of inner transformation previously referred to, which involves permeating the everyday self and its fantasies, obsessions and desires with the clearly conceived aims that spring from the inmost source of who we are. In Christian mysticism this inner work is called *theosis*, or ‘making divine’.⁷ Another word used to describe it was coined by the Italian poet Dante, who called this inner work ‘to transhumanise’

(*trasumanare*).⁸ The verb ‘to transhumanise’ well expresses the fact that our core human striving must be to overcome ourselves, so that we go beyond the ‘merely human’ life lived at the periphery of who we are. It is a sign of our times that today ‘Transhumanism’ is a materialistic ideology that seeks to technologically ‘enhance’ the human being. Contemporary Transhumanists fail to grasp that to go beyond the merely human can only be achieved by grounding ourselves in the transcendent, and this requires dedicated soul-work, sustained by the spiritual discipline of coming back to the still point at the centre of the circle.

As one of the most influential ideologies steering the Digital Revolution, the contemporary Transhumanist movement shows us the price that the Digital Revolution threatens to exact from us. The price is that we lose our ability to know the meaning and purpose of the spiritual life, we lose even our ability to understand the language that the wisdom traditions use. And ultimately we lose our humanity as, overcome by the collective amnesia regarding what it means to realise our deeper human potential, we succumb to the inhuman.

The Interiority of Nature

From nature, too, a price is exacted by the Digital Revolution, which has swamped the natural environment with a complex mix of artificially generated electromagnetic fields. As a result, not just human beings but all living organisms are exposed to levels of electromagnetic radiation far in excess of natural background levels.⁹ It would be unwise to assume that this does not have any adverse effect on the wellbeing of living organisms and the ecosystems to which they belong. A growing number of studies show that many organisms are highly sensitive to electromagnetic fields, and that increasing their exposure to them can indeed have demonstrable negative effects.¹⁰ It seems appropriate, at the very least, to extend the remit of the question originally posed by Lyotard to nature and ask:

‘What if what is “proper” to nature were to be inhabited by that which is hostile to nature?’

What if the living world were to be infiltrated by a force inimical to life?’

The rollout of 5G is premised on a further significant increase in the overall amount of radiofrequency radiation to which the planet will be subjected. 5G will help to establish a global ‘electronic ecosystem’ that, in addition to servicing the technological desires and aspirations of city-dwellers living in their ‘smart homes’, will also enable greater monitoring and control of natural ecosystems and living creatures. It involves the insertion of the electronic ecosystem into these natural ecosystems, in order to create a ‘smart planet’.

The Western wisdom tradition has long acknowledged two aspects of nature: visible and invisible, or manifest and unmanifest.¹¹ The physical forms that we perceive in the world around us arise from non-perceptible creative and formative forces, which must be taken into account if we are to grasp things in their wholeness. It is these forces which carry the energies of life, just as surely as electromagnetic radiation opposes them. One of the challenges we face today is to overcome our collective de-sensitisation to these subtle life-forces.

One step towards doing so is to free ourselves from the dominant utilitarian stance towards nature, which prioritises data-collection and analysis and ever seeks practical results, but is closed to nature’s interiority just as it is closed to the interior of our soul-life. A different kind of consciousness is needed – more receptive, open and empathetic. Regarding this different kind of consciousness, Goethe advised:

‘Our full attention must be focused on the task of *listening to nature*, to overhear the secret of her process.’¹²

All of creation speaks of a transcendent spiritual intelligence at its source, if only we are able

to hear it.¹³ The mystical path to union with God has long been understood to lead from the loving contemplation of creatures to the contemplation of this greater spiritual intelligence from which they issue, and on which they, like we, ultimately depend.¹⁴ For human beings to forget or neglect this relationship of nature to the divine is as serious a failing as it is for us to forget our relationship to the spiritual intelligence that dwells within us. To put it in Christian terms, the same Cosmic Logos lives at the very heart of both nature and the human soul.

Contemporary conditions make it very difficult for such perspectives to be taken with the seriousness they deserve. The incursion of the inhuman has allowed the utilitarian mind to break free of the moral and spiritual constraints that once kept it in bounds. But with the burgeoning electronics industry and the drive to forge a ‘smart planet’, a force hostile to nature insinuates itself into nature’s heart. These developments make nature vulnerable to increasing technologisation, one example of which is the fabrication of completely new synthetic organisms using computer programmes.¹⁵ Another example is the design of remotely controlled robot bees to replace the dwindling number of living bees. Such interventions are only the beginning of a vastly ambitious project to redesign the world to satisfy the requirements of a ruthlessly technological consciousness that has lost all connection with its spiritual roots. This consciousness has no sense of the sacredness of life, nor of the spiritual responsibilities of human beings towards nature.

Foremost amongst these responsibilities is the obligation to know things in the truth of their being. Of all creatures on Earth, it is human beings alone who have the possibility of selflessly entering into the inner nature of another creature, without seeking to use or exploit it for our own ends. We alone can place ourselves imaginatively and empathetically into the being of another and, through opening the inner eye of the mind, or heart, we have the possibility of beholding the other in their truth.

If we can regularly practice this, then we can help to build up a ‘spiritual ecosystem’ that can counterbalance the deathly ‘electronic ecosystem’ currently being established, for our mode of knowing can contribute something positive and life-affirming to the world. It can be a deed of illumination, which gives to nature the gift of our conscious recognition of its sacred ground.

Human beings and nature belong together. The struggle for a human future is at the same time a struggle for nature’s future. Just as we depend on nature for our survival, so too does nature depend on the quality of our knowing and relating, through which we may bring spiritual light to the world.

Notes

1 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p.2.

2 Ibid.

3 Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, 3.11, poem.

4 The concept of the ‘inner eye’ goes back to Plato’s *Republic*, 7.4: 518c-d, where he describes how this invisible organ enables us ‘to look straight at reality, and at the brightest of all realities, which is what we call the Good’. Through St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 9-13 (see especially 12: 22-24), Plato’s teaching concerning the inner eye entered the mainstream Christian tradition.

5 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 3.3.17 (1113a17).

6 Rudolf Steiner, *The Philosophy of Freedom* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1964), p.140:

‘We cannot, however, think out the concept of man completely without coming upon the *free spirit* as the purest expression of human nature. Indeed, we are human in the true sense only in so far as we are free.’

See also Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 3.3.15-18 (1112b32-1113a9); and Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae: 1.1-4.

7 ‘The whole of this transformation of the human being is summed up by the Fathers in the celebrated formula, “God became man in order that man might become God”.’ Olivier Clément, *The Roots of Christian Mysticism* (London: New City, 1993), p.263.

8 Dante, *The Divine Comedy: Paradise*, 1.70.

9 Alisdair Philips and Graham Lambourn, ‘Natural and Human-activity-generated Electromagnetic Fields on Earth’ *Bio-Electromagnetic Research Initiative Publications*, 7th October, 2012.

10 See Jeremy Naydler, *The Struggle for a Human Future* (Forest Row: Temple Lodge, 2020), pp.58-61.

11 A distinction was commonly made, from the early thirteenth century on, between *Natura naturata* (literally, nature ‘natured’) – the forms we perceive in the world around us – and *Natura naturans* (literally, nature ‘naturing’) – the invisible formative forces that unfold into manifestation.

12 Goethe, ‘Problems’ (*Probleme*, 1823), translated in Douglas Miller, *Goethe: Scientific Studies* (New York: Suhrkamp, 1988), p.44.

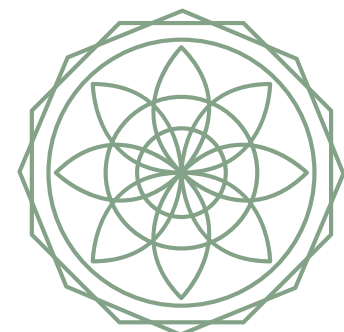
13 As Goethe said: ‘The works of nature are like a freshly spoken word of God.’ Letter to the Duchess Louise von Saschsen, 28 December, 1789, quoted in Rudolf Steiner, *Goethe the Scientist* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1950), p.198. Compare with Meister Eckhart who affirmed: ‘All things speak God. What my mouth does in speaking and declaring God is likewise done by the essence of a stone.’ *Sermons and Treatises*, edited by M. O’C. Walshe (Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1979), Volume 1, Sermon 22, p.178.

14 See, for example, Bonaventure, *The Mind’s Road to God*, pp.20-21. This ‘theophanic view of nature’ is discussed more fully in Jeremy Naydler, *The Perennial Philosophy and the Recovery of a Theophanic View of Nature* (London: Temenos Academy, 2018).

15 The creation of the first synthetic life-form was achieved in 2010 by Craig Venter, based on digitized DNA code. Venter tellingly said at the time: ‘It is the first species on the planet to have its parent be a computer.’ BBC News, 20 May, 2010.

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The above article is abridged from the Introduction to *The Struggle for a Human Future* (Forest Row: Temple Lodge, 2020).





The Great Re-Think

Colin Tudge

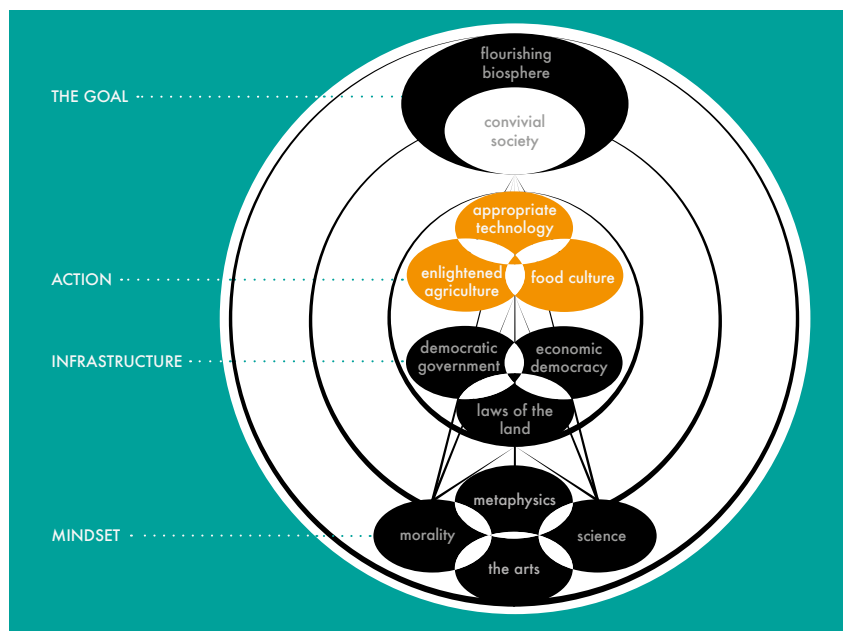
*In his latest book, **The Great Re-Think**, Colin argues that to put the world to rights we need nothing less than “a people-led Renaissance” -- focused on food and farming but rooted in metaphysics.*

I have been thinking seriously about food and farming for the past 60 years and it’s become more and more obvious (a) that nothing is more important; (b) that the world’s agriculture is disastrously off course; and (c) that because farming affects all other aspects of life, and is affected by all other aspects of life, we cannot put it to rights unless we re-think everything else as well. We need to abandon much of what we now take for granted, and where necessary – often, but not always – to re-construct. We need, indeed, to dig very deep, and go on digging. It all amounts to nothing less than a Renaissance: re-birth.

Because agriculture is so obviously all-important you might assume it would top the agenda of all serious governments but of course it does not. To the British governments of the past 40 years – ever since the capitalist offshoot known as neoliberalism started to dominate the global *Zeitgeist* – farming has been

treated as an economic also-ran, a lot of hassle but not very profitable; best left to the corporates, with advice from the big banks. We can be certain, then, that the present-day oligarchy of governments like ours, and the corporates and financiers on whom they depend, and those intellectuals who have chosen to support them, are not going to do what needs doing. Many (including, say, Donald Trump, and Jacob Rees-Mogg in Britain) deny that there’s anything seriously wrong with the world that cannot be put right with more of what we are doing already, and by appeals to a quasi-mythical past, when America seemed all-powerful and Britannia ruled the waves. In short: if we, people at large, want the Renaissance to happen – and it is desperately needed – then we, Ordinary Joes and Jos, have to lead it and drive it forward.

The cross-the-board re-think that’s now necessary is summarized in the diagram:



The Diagram.

The diagram shows all the main areas that need to be seriously re-constructed in a series of twelve “balloons”, arranged in four tiers. Crucially, all the balloons are connected to all the others – for *everything must be re-thought in the light of everything else*. In particular, economics should be seen as it once was as the practical arm of moral philosophy. The neoliberals are content to “let the market decide” what should be done -- so commerce becomes the moral arbiter. What people are prepared to buy is deemed *ipso facto* to be good, and what they won’t buy in great enough quantities is bad and goes by the board.

But to shrug off serious moral thinking in this way is to condemn much of humanity to misery and early death, and is the death knell of the biosphere, as recent history has shown only too clearly. Science, too, wondrous and necessary though it is, should never be taught without the philosophy of science. Conventional science teaching accentuates the positive and tends to give the impression that science is potentially omniscient. But the philosophy of science, though acknowledging its wonders (its insights are of huge spiritual significance, besides being useful), also points out its limitations.

The twelve balloons, then, between them, may be seen as an agenda: a summary of all the issues that we, humanity, need to address, seriously and as a matter of urgency, if we really care about the future. Very briefly:

An agenda for all humanity

Tier I: the Goal.

We – humanity – must define our goal. What do *we*, people at large, really want? What do we think really matters? As the Cambridge literary critic F R Leavis put the matter, by what do we stand?

And what are the world's most powerful and portentous governments, with all their high-profile global summits, actually trying to achieve? Some, it seems, beneath the rhetoric, seek simply to be richer, by whatever means. When people are too poor to live with dignity this may seem fair enough (in a money-dominated world) but the people who are already rich tend to be even more acquisitive than those who have too little. "Make America great again" is Trump's great rallying cry – and whatever that means, it sounds rather chilling. "Take back control" said Boris and the Brexiteers – but to what end exactly? Putin wants to restore the old USSR. He makes no bones about it. And then?

I suggest by contrast that humanity should be striving to create "*convivial societies in a flourishing biosphere*". Many doubt as Plato and Thomas Hobbes did whether human beings at large are capable

of conviviality. The Jeremiahs continue to tell us that we, people at large, are innately self-centred, always ready to put the boot in when the opportunity arises. Charles Darwin, kind and gentle soul that he was, is called as witness to this. After all, as he records in his seminal *Origin of Species* of 1859, he rooted his key idea of evolution by means of natural selection in Thomas Robert Malthus's assertion that human beings (and by implication all creatures) are bound to out-breed their resources and so are doomed to compete perpetually for what there is. "Nature red in tooth and claw" as Tennyson put the matter (some decades before Darwin). "Survival of the fittest" said Herbert Spencer. By "fittest" Spencer meant "best-suited" as in "fit for purpose" but nowadays "fit" is commonly taken to mean "strong", with commensurate vigour. Thus the idea has arisen that all-out competition is necessary, a perpetual battle for supremacy – and this is commonly perceived to be morally *right* because it is (allegedly) natural. Competitiveness is perceived as the greatest of virtues – not least, or especially, by modern, neoliberal governments from America to China.

In truth, all this is bad biology and even worse moral philosophy. For animals like us need not out-breed our resources – most people make sure they don't. Human populations would now be going down worldwide if it weren't for religious and political pressure from above, encouraging breeding. Putin is rabidly pronatalist. So we should not need forever to compete. Even more to the point, closer observation of nature has shown that for all kinds of reasons, the best survival tactic of all is not to fight everybody else but to cooperate. In intelligent creatures like us, which can choose whether to cooperate or not (unlike ants, which do what their genes and the surrounding pheromones tell them) cooperation must be underpinned by the *will* to cooperate – which requires empathy and compassion. Thus natural selection requires us to be cooperative which requires compassion – and cooperativeness and compassion are the prime

ingredients of conviviality. Conviviality therefore is a Darwinian prediction – the mindset and way of life most favourable to life. The idea that life must be one long punch-up is not merely "neodarwinian" as its adherents claim (including the neoliberals). It is "metadarwinian", where "meta" means "beyond".

Care of the biosphere is a matter both of self-interest -- if the world's ecosystems collapse then we collapse with them – and of morality and metaphysics. As Albert Schweitzer declared: "Ethics are responsibility without limit towards all that lives." In metaphysical vein we need to cultivate the principle of *oneness*, most evident in many indigenous religions and in the Eastern religions -- Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Shinto. (Christianity takes a more hierarchical view. St Francis is reported to have said that he regarded other living creatures as his brothers and sisters but his attitude towards them was primarily chivalric, as in *noblesse oblige*). Above all we need to restore the sense of the sacred. The mindset must be biocentric (or ecocentric) and not simply anthropocentric. The modern, now "conventional" idea that the biosphere can be protected by invoking neoliberal management-speak – "natural capital" and "ecosystem services" – is too crude by half. (Incidentally, "biosphere" is the proper term for the natural world. The term "environment" is entirely anthropocentric and simply means "surroundings" – stage scenery. In these neoliberal times it means "real estate").

But good intentions, even a sense of the sacred, are never enough. We cannot live harmoniously with and within the natural world unless, as far as possible, we know what we are doing. The science of ecology is vital. Indeed it should be seen as the queen of the biological sciences – although it is still treated as a Cinderella, some way behind biotech, which is flashier and more lucrative and concentrates power in the hands of those who can afford it, which is what is deemed to matter most. Thus is science misused and abused.

Yet it is a huge mistake to assume that science offers omniscience. *Scientism* still flourishes – the belief, the faith, that science can tell us all there is to know, if we spend enough on research. One of the great revelations of the 20th century has been to see that the insights of science, however wondrous, must always be partial and provisional. In our dealings with nature as with our own selves we must always proceed with caution. Overall I suggest that *all* our thinking – all politics and economics and everything else will be do – should be rooted in and guided by the “bedrock principles” of ecology on the one hand and morality/metaphysics on the other. Indeed, these are the only ideas that deserve to be called “principles” at all. What politicians call “principles” for the most part are ideologies, which is not the same thing at all.

Out of scientism has come the belief, espoused by many a politician, that the “high” technologies that arise from science will make us omnipotent. The realities of the present world show the folly of this. Scientism and such uncritical *technophilia* are a giant exercise in hubris, which the old Greeks were right to recognize as the most dangerous evil of all. Uncritical technophilia driven by the neoliberal desire for material wealth is threatening to kill us all.

So what in practice do we need to do?

Tier II: Action

All technology needs re-thinking. As Ivan Illich said in the 1960s, we need to devise “*Tools for Conviviality*”: technologies that are liberating, and potentially enable each and all of us to live life more fully, without wrecking the rest. The bicycle and the telephone were his favourite exemplars. E F Schumacher followed in 1973 with *Small is Beautiful*, in which he developed the idea that technology, whether ancient or ultra-modern, must be *appropriate* – helping us to achieve what is truly good for us and for the biosphere. Alas, in sharpest contrast, much modern technology tends primarily to rob us of our autonomy and place control

in the hands of corporates who, for the most part, are focused on short-term profit for their shareholders. Yet big and flashy technology of every kind is seen, in the most influential circles, as “progress”. Mountebank politicians and industrialists and their apologists are wont to speak of “Man’s destiny”. But in their hands, “Man’s destiny” means entropy.

All technologies need attending to – but outstanding are those of agriculture and food. A few years ago I coined the expression “Enlightened Agriculture”, aka “Real Farming”, informally but adequately defined as:

“Farming that is expressly designed to provide everyone, everywhere, with food of the highest quality, nutritionally and gastronomically, without cruelty or injustice and without wrecking the rest of the world”

As things are this may seem an impossible dream yet it should be eminently achievable, technically. Present-day agriculture as favoured by governments like ours might properly be called “Neoliberal-Industrial” (NI) and despite the hype it falls spectacularly short of what’s needed and what should be easily possible. Thus the UN tells us that nearly a billion still go hungry; two billion suffer diseases of excess -- the world population of diabetics is far greater than the total population of the United States; a billion including huge numbers of dispossessed farmers have been driven into urban slums; and neoliberal-industrial agriculture and all that goes with it is the greatest single cause of climate change and mass extinction. And it’s all getting worse.

Enlightened Agriculture is rooted in the twin ideas of *agroecology* – treating individual farms as ecosystems; and *food sovereignty* – that every society should have control of its own food supply. These principles lead us inexorably towards farms that are mixed and genetically various; low-input – organic is the default position; therefore complex; therefore “skills intensive” -- needing plenty of

farmers and growers; and which therefore (since such systems do not lend themselves to scale-up) should in general be small to medium-sized. Such farming too is geared to local economies. Demonstrably, too, small-scale farming with oodles of tender loving care, repeated in many different forms many millions of times the world over, can feed us all well, sustainably. But all this is almost the precise opposite of neoliberal-industrial agriculture – which is high-tech, high-input, and hyper-productive (producing massive surpluses), with minimum to zero labour, all on the largest possible scale; and all designed not to feed everyone well and keep the biosphere in good heart but to maximize short-term profit, and concentrate wealth and power in fewer and fewer hands – the inevitable outcome of a “free” and ultra-competitive market.

We need a new food culture too, geared to what such farms produce – which is –

“plenty of plants, not much meat, and maximum variety”.

These nine words summarize modern nutritional theory and describe the basic structure of the world’s greatest traditional cuisines on an axis from Italy to China. That is, agriculture that really works – which demonstrably can feed us all well and is or should be wildlife-friendly – also keeps us well-nourished and as a very considerable bonus underpins the world’s best cooking. Austerity (including veganism) and ultra-high-tech (as in ersatz meat) are not required. We just need to re-learn how to cook.

So why do we go on supporting governments and their commercial allies that do the precise opposite of what the world really needs?

Tier III: Infrastructure

In truth we need to re-think governance. If we need governments at all (we should not take this for granted) we need them above all to be *on our side*. I suggest that Keir Hardie-style socialism – designed to enact the fundamental moral principle of compassion – is the kind we need. Extremist hard-left

oppression has given socialism a bad name, but socialism that is cruel, top-down, and oppressive is not worthy of the name. The matching economy should be a variation on a theme of “Green Economic Democracy”, rooted in the “tripartite mixed economy”: public ownership, private ownership, and above all – the one that is underemphasized – *community* ownership. The whole must strive to be as egalitarian as is practical. Nothing can work if some people are hundreds or indeed thousands of times richer than others, which is the case in modern Britain and of course in the US. Land reform is essential. Quite simply, land *per se* should not be on the market. It should not, as now, be treated as a commodity. We should deem land to be sacred and see ourselves as guests, borrowing bits of it from time to time for agreed, benign purposes.

Tier IV: Mindset

Clearly, most of the above is out of kilter with today’s materialist, hierarchical, neoliberal thinking as embraced by governments like ours and their attendant intellectuals. Indeed it is the precise opposite – and accordingly is deemed to be “unrealistic”, even though the present mindset is suicidal and clearly needs transformation. The chief influences of mindset are, I suggest, science *sensu lato* which seeks to tell us how the world works (and does so brilliantly – but not exhaustively); and moral philosophy, which aspires to tell us what it is *right* to do. Both however are rooted in metaphysics – which, as an independent discipline, has largely gone missing and must be reinstated. Finally, everything we think and feel is constantly scrutinized by all the arts, the jokers in the pack, always questioning and profoundly influencing *attitude*, which in the end shapes all thought and action.

Science is indeed wondrous and vital (it’s my thing) but it should not, as now, be seen and valued only as a material and utilitarian pursuit. As ancient Islam and the modern Roman Catholic Church agree, and not a few modern scientists, the insights of science

should be seen to *enhance* our sense of the sacred. And morality is *not* simply “relative” as is now commonly maintained. All the great religions these past few thousand years have agreed in particular on three great, bedrock moral principles: compassion; humility; and true concern for the natural world (which requires a biocentric mindset).

Metaphysics asks what have often been called “the ultimate questions” which I take to be:

- 1: What is the universe really like?
 - 2: How do we know what’s true?
 - 3: What is the basis of morality; where does it come from?
- And:
- 4: How come? How come things are as they are?

Science *qua* science seeks to answer question 1 in purely materialist terms – by the laws of physics and the biological principle of natural selection. Metaphysics asks if this is adequate. Is the material world all there is? Thus it entertains the idea of *transcendence*; that there is indeed more to the universe than meets the eye, or indeed that science can ever get to grips with. Modern ideas on consciousness, pursued by the SMN, seem to me to bring the two threads together beautifully.

Science, too, re question 2, is rooted above all in *rationality*, based on material observation (“facts”), hypothesis (guessing), and (mathematical) analysis. Metaphysics emphasizes the at least equal importance of intuition, including “right brain intelligence” and (possibly) revelation.

My own short answer to question 3 is the concept of *dharmā*, in the Buddhist version: the idea of universal harmony (echoed in the idea of cooperativeness) which it is our task to maintain.

Question 4 is the great unanswerable. Though science may provide a wonderfully consistent description of the universe based on superstrings or whatever, we are still left asking, “But how come

there are superstrings?” In the end, as Einstein himself delighted in pointing out, all is mystery. Perfect understanding, whatever that may mean, is not in our gift.

Where do we go from here?

The world really is in a mess. If we care about the world, and ourselves, and our descendants, and the future of all life on Earth, then we do have to re-think from first principles, and in *The Great Re-Think* I offer at least a preliminary agenda for the re-thinking. The people-led Renaissance we need can and should begin, I suggest, with an Agrarian Renaissance: a re-think and re-structuring of global farming and food policy. Though food and farming seem sewn up, by a steadily diminishing short-list of corporates, in truth they are the *most* susceptible to a people’s takeover, not least by community takeover of farms and local markets (as in the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement).

My wife, Ruth, and some good friends, are now setting up the College for Real Farming and Food Culture to help develop and promulgate the necessary ideas. The venture is described on our website <http://collegeforrealfarming.org/> (though the website is now being re-vamped). In this we aim wherever possible to cooperate and collaborate with like-minded organizations including the Pari Centre for New Learning (which has published *The Great Re-Think*) and, I hope, with SMN. Overall the future looks grim but there is still hope. The sunlit uplands are still out there.

Colin Tudge is a biologist by education and a writer by trade who for some years worked for BBC Radio3, New Scientist, and Farmers Weekly, and is author of about 20 books on the life sciences, agriculture, and food – and is increasingly interested in metaphysics. He a co-founder of the Oxford Real Farming Conference and the College for Real Farming and Food Culture. His latest book, The Great Re-Think, is published by Pari Publishing and available on line from Blackwell’s and Waterstones.



Sir Roger Penrose's Nobel Prize

Bernard Carr

We are delighted to congratulate SMN Honorary Member, Professor Sir Roger Penrose, OM, FRS for his share in this year's Nobel Prize for Physics. Other SMN Nobel laureates have been Sir John Eccles (1963 neurophysiology), George Wald (1967 physiology), Brian Josephson (1973 physics) and Vicomte Ilya Prigogine (1977 chemistry), so Roger joins a very elite group.

He has received the prize for his role in the discovery of black holes, which are regions where gravity is so strong that nothing - not even light - can escape. The existence of such objects is a prediction of Einstein's theory of general relativity, as first realised by the German physicist Karl Schwarzschild on the battle-front of World War I in 1916. Ironically Einstein himself did not believe in them and it was not until the 1940s that Robert Oppenheimer (leader of the Manhattan project) and George Volkoff studied their formation at the endpoint of stellar evolution. So black holes have a long association with war!

The early work was on the assumption that the collapsing object is spherically symmetric and Roger Penrose's great contribution in 1965 (ten years after Einstein's death) was to show that general relativity leads to the formation of black holes more generally. He used ingenious

mathematical methods to show that the collapsing matter must form a singularity, which is a point of infinite density where relativity theory and all the known laws of nature break down. In what is called the 'cosmic censorship' hypothesis, he conjectured that this singularity would always be hidden from the outside world by an event horizon, which is the edge of the black hole, so that there are no 'naked singularities'.

A few years later Roger and Stephen Hawking used a similar (time-reversed) argument to show that there must have been a cosmological singularity at the start of the Universe (the Big Bang). Stephen was another pioneer of black hole research and, in the words of Lord Martin Rees, "Penrose and Hawking are the two individuals who have done more than anyone else since Einstein to deepen our knowledge of gravity". Indeed, if the award had been made a few years earlier, it is possible that they would have shared it.

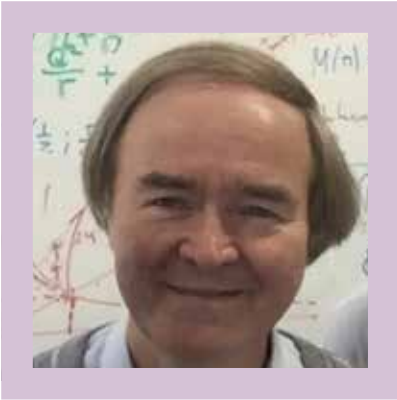
It was not until the 1970s that evidence for black holes was found with X-ray telescopes. Although one cannot observe a black hole directly, one can detect the emission of the hot gas falling through its event horizon after being accreted from a companion star. At around the same time it was predicted that supermassive black holes could form at the centres of galaxies but it was several more decades before this could be confirmed. Indeed, Roger has shared the prize with Reinhard Genzel and Andrea Ghez, who have led two groups showing that our own galaxy contains a black hole of four million solar masses in a region no larger than our solar system.

They demonstrated this by studying the orbits of the brightest stars there, the observations requiring an invisible and extremely heavy object.

In recent years Roger has made important contributions to another topic, which is closer to the SMN remit – the role of consciousness in physics. In his 1989 book *The Emperor's New Mind*, he says "our present picture of physical reality is due for a grand shake-up – even greater, perhaps, than that provided by present-day relativity and quantum mechanics". Later he developed the idea with Stuart Hameroff that the interaction with consciousness could come about through quantum effects on microtubules in the brain. Only a decade ago, "consciousness" was a taboo word in physics but it has now become almost mainstream and this is partly due to Roger's influence. This illustrates that it only needs a few eminent scientists to make a topic respectable and there can be no greater sign of eminence than winning a Nobel prize.

Two of Roger's talks to the SMN can be found in our archives. The first was his contribution to the "Roads to Reality" meeting in London in 2005; the second to the "Fashion, Faith and Fantasy in the New Physics of the Universe" meeting in Bath in 2018. As far as I'm aware, Roger is not mystically inclined, but the bridge between science and spirituality involves two steps – matter to mind to spirit – and his contribution to the first step has been crucial. Our only other living Nobel Laureate is Brian Josephson, who celebrated his 80th birthday earlier this year.

A report on this event follows.



Brian Josephson's 80th Birthday Celebration

Bernard Carr

Last February I was delighted to attend Brian Josephson's 80th birthday celebration at Trinity College, Cambridge. I've known Brian since I was elected a Fellow of Trinity in 1976 and we soon became natural allies through our mutual interest in psychical research and attempts to extend physics to accommodate consciousness. I believe that I was known as the "college mystic" in some quarters but that title might equally have applied to Brian.

More than 40 years later, we are still good friends and it was a great privilege to be invited to this most enjoyable occasion. Indeed, it was probably the last social event I attended before lockdown, so I recall it with particular nostalgia. The event included a celebratory dinner in a packed Trinity dining hall, culminating with an after-dinner talk by Brian himself. There is not space to report his speech in full but I will summarise some of the key points and include a few excerpts.

Brian is one of the SMN's most distinguished members, our only current Nobel Laureate and someone who has shown both brilliance and courage in advocating ground-breaking ideas in the face of mainstream opposition. One might regard him as the epitome of what the SMN stands for and he is a key player in the sort of reform of science advocated by the Galileo Commission project. Indeed, he recently participated in a Society for Psychical Research study day on this project – also featuring David Lorimer, Harald Walach and Evelyn Elsaesser.

His speech started with some general observations about how College life had changed during his lifetime. One change was that women were now admitted to Trinity – both as students and Fellows – and were allowed to attend such dinners. Indeed

Trinity's first woman Master (Dame Sally Davies) had proposed his toast. Brian had also been on the Committee which recommended a rule-change allowing female guests to stay in College. However, this had not prevented Professor Littlewood (the famous mathematician who was clearly unaware of the rule change) from challenging Brian's mother on one occasion when she was staying there.

Brian then reflected on his early years, explaining how he became interested in physics when his teacher at Cardiff High School lent him a book on quantum mechanics. As an undergraduate at Trinity, he initially read Maths but he swapped to Physics in his final year and it was during this period that he wrote his first paper. He then began his PhD, working on superconductivity under the supervision of Sir Brian Pippard at the Cavendish and this led to his discovery of the eponymous effect for which he won the Nobel prize. However, his account of this is not included here.

A few years later he moved away from physics and turned his attention to how the brain works. This was partly on account of his collaboration with one of our mutual friends, Hermann Hauser, who was at the Cavendish at the time and founder of Acorn Computers.

Brian also became interested in psychical research through his interaction with another Trinity Fellow, the mathematical geneticist and poltergeist expert, George Owen. Trinity has always had strong links with this subject and, for example, administers the Perrott-Warrick fund, which is the prime source of support for this area of research in the UK. However, this link is not welcomed by all the Fellows and doubtless some disapprove of Brian's involvement in the subject. He has also faced long-standing opposition from the Cavendish, who feared that research into psychokinesis by one of Brian's visitors would damage its reputation. So it has discouraged people from working with him and there are no funds to support his collaborators.

Of course, the opposition Brian has faced at Cambridge – within both his College and Department – are but a reflection of the situation in the wider world. At this point, it might be appropriate to quote Brian's own words:

"I sometimes refer to myself as the Resident Heretic, and have come to appreciate over the years that science is far from being the objective mechanism for discovering the truth that it claims to be. It has its dogmas, supported by arguments that don't hold up under close examination, that it is dangerous to challenge. Heretics are not burnt at the stake nowadays, but they can come under unwarranted attack, and on occasion have lost their jobs as a result."

As an example of this, he described how immunologist Jacques Benveniste lost his job as a result of an attack by John Maddox, the editor of *Nature*. Benveniste had been investigating the effects of high dilution and, much to his surprise, found positive results. He submitted a paper on his work to *Nature* and the referees could not find any problem with it, but Maddox told Benveniste that the paper could only be published if he agreed to an investigation being carried out afterwards. That was strange, because it would make more sense to determine if the work was sound before publication. But Maddox



Photo credit: Judith Driscoll

Brian speaking in Trinity College Great Hall with founder King Henry VIII looking on

wanted to attack Benveniste and – if an investigation revealed a flaw before publication – the paper would not be published and there would nothing in print to attack.

Brian ended his speech on more positive note, describing the progress made in his research despite the difficulties. He stressed that a number of people have concluded that present-day physics suffers through failing to account properly for matters related to the mind. It seems that biologists understand the subtleties of complex systems better than physicists and Brian's own published work indicates how a clear synthesis of the various approaches should be possible. The challenge is to persuade high-energy physicists to drop their present 'Theory of Everything' approach, which is not proving so fruitful except as a mathematical exercise.

Hopefully Brian's ideas will be studied and taken forward by other physicists.

One of the most delightful moments of his speech was when he read out a birthday poem by his daughter Miranda:

*"As we mark Brian Josephson's eightieth year
The professor deserves a big cheer!
He predicted with gumption
The Josephson Junction
And pursues other thoughts without fear."*

This seems an excellent note on which end this report and I'm sure members of the SMN will join me in wishing Brian another 20 years of his important 'heretical' insights, so that we can come together to celebrate his 100th birthday. By then perhaps the pandemic will be over and psychical research will itself have come out of lockdown!



Beyond the Brain 2020

Further Reaches of Consciousness Research

6-8 November 2020

Prof John Clarke

In his introduction to this online conference, David Lorimer recalled the first Beyond the Brain conference at St John's College Cambridge twenty five years ago. At that event the ideas of William James and Alister Hardy were amongst the names and ideas deployed to challenge the assumptions and practices of scientific materialism. David went on to remind us that the current conference continues that tradition, and is a manifestation of the SMN's continuing commitment to exploring the transcendent dimensions of life, citing the ongoing work of the Galileo Commission.

The first main speaker was Dr Iain McGilchrist who has become well known through his major work *The Master and his Emissary*. He explained to us in his talk *Matter and Consciousness* that he was working beyond the explicit theme of that work to explore its underlying assumptions about the relationship between matter and consciousness. Consciousness, he argued, represented only a narrow beam of attention under which there operated layers of the unconscious, as well as the world of matter. In the light of this it is easy to follow a reductionist line of argument, but he rejected all talk of ideas emerging from matter, and went on to suggest, to the contrary, that matter has in a sense emerged from mind and that everything is in a process of continual flux, a perception which led him in the direction of panexperientialism, the belief that everything manifests both sentient and physical dimensions. But the ultimate grounding of these he believed was the creative power of consciousness rather than of dead matter. This conjecture, he explained, helps us to gain a much greater understanding of our own meaningful, creative human activity, our search for meaning in the world, and the orderliness and beauty of nature itself.

In an interesting way the next speaker, Dr Tamara Russell in her talk *'Merging the mind and the brain to accelerate our contemplative practice'*, echoed this approach by arguing for the close relationship between mind and brain, but in her case specifically through the medium of contemplative practices. The practice of mindfulness, she argued, constituted a way of 'finding one's own path' through mental focusing, attention to the breath and appropriate movement. She gave special emphasis to the 'default mode network' which helped towards grounding attention in the present moment, in current spatial location, and the cultivation of the 'compassionate inner voice'. She recognised the need for encouraging a diversity of modes of practice, including the informal such as 'just going for a walk'.

In the two sessions on Friday afternoon, Prof. Janice Miner Holden, with Dr Noelle St Germain-Sehr, in *'After-death communication: a century of research – and exchange experiences'*, introduced the topic of after-death communication – ADC. In the first of these sessions the focus was on *spontaneous* experiences, the unexpected experience or

feelings of contact with the dead (the 'disembodied'), of which 50,000 cases had been recorded from 24 countries in the course of their research, and which involved a variety of types of communication from the direct visual to the indirect digital. The research concluded that: 1-3 persons out 100 experience ADCs in a lifetime, and 3-4 report ADCs immediately after the death of a loved one, and more women than men experience ADCs. A small number were recorded as experiencing distressing reactions, but most felt that the long-term the consequences were beneficial. We were left with the question, they asked: are such experiences real or imaginary?

The focus of the second session was on *induced ADCs: 'Induced after-death communication for grief: a randomised control study'*. The induction procedure, conducted by qualified counsellors, employed simple ritualised procedures such as moving hands in front of a subject who had been rigorously screened. In general the results, involving a fairly small sample, were seen to be beneficial for the clients, involving the sharing of grief and bereavement closure, and a promising basis for further investigation in support of ongoing grief counselling.

The continuation of the conference on the Saturday began with a talk by David Lorimer '*Gnosis in a science of consciousness*'. Citing the work of C.G. Jung and Peter Kingsley in the recovery of the Hermetic tradition – "All life comes from and returns to the sacred" – he noted that Gnosticism had historically often been effectively stamped out by being translated into traditional dogmatic language. He spoke of the 'perennial philosophy' with its attempts over the years to sustain the inner knowing of the gnostic tradition which had typically been downgraded by church, philosophy, psychology and the natural sciences. We now need for science to widen our explanations of the world beyond the official established paradigm, moving towards the lost vision of cosmic consciousness, a process of metanoia or transformation to give us hope.

Tim Freke, a 'stand-up philosopher' as he described himself, in his talk entitled '*Consciousness, and why I was wrong about it*', began with a confession: he had been wrong about consciousness, and in recent years had moved to a form of emergentism. Rejecting his earlier belief in pure consciousness, he came to feel strongly that we need to combine spirituality with science. We live in a world, not of eternity, but of change, evolution and emergence. Existence is the realisation of potentiality, and the foundation of this process lies in Being, the ground of all things, which transforms itself into becoming (a nod to Hegel here). Everything contains the accumulation of its whole past, and is evolving towards its full realisation in oneness.

Returning to the theme of meditation, Prof. J. Kim Penberthy spoke about '*Contemplative practices and extraordinary experiences*', beginning with her own experiences of personality disorders, and her transformation through various paranormal experiences. This led her to engage in investigations into altered states of consciousness, such as might be found in Buddhist practices, as well as in visions and in the experience of past lives. She discovered through these investigations that people with many different social and economic backgrounds underwent personal transformation through engaging in these practices in professionally directed contexts.

Retuning to a more theoretical approach, Prof Ed Kelly in his talk on '*Mind beyond the brain: towards a reconciliation of science and spirituality*' noted that much had happened in the recent past to overcome the worldview of materialism, mechanism and reductionism. This had involved the recognition of, for example, the evidence for post-mortem survival of consciousness, near-death experiences, mystical states, and many more. Science, he argued, cannot explain such phenomena, so we need to look beyond physicalism towards a new paradigm, seriously investigating the potential to be found in such areas as monistic idealism, panentheism, meditation

and psychedelic research.

Sunday began with a talk by Dr Peter Fenwick on '*Non-duality at the Time of Death*'. He spoke of the Western inhibition about talking of death, and went on to encourage us to be bold and curious on this subject, and to approach it, not as a dreadful tragedy, but as a transition to a state of non-duality, a state beyond Maslow's 'peak experience'. He explained how in his own medical experience, and that of others, it was not uncommon to witness the process of dying, not as one of final distressing agony, but one of transition, a moving on to a new more complete state of being. This could bring with it a joyous loosening of the sense of ego, and the serenity of a spiritual awakening, a process which did not necessarily involve a religious attitude, but could evoke recollections of life's loved ones.

Prof Harald Atmanspacher in his talk '*The Pauli-Jung conjecture and (some of) its implications*' drew attention to Jung's remarkable co-operative project with the quantum physicist Wolfgang Pauli who had originally sought help from Jung for psychological problems, but was eventually able to work closely with Jung in clarifying his need for a broader scientific context in which to elaborate his psychological theories. The outcome of this collaboration was a double aspect theory, a kind of 'neutral monism', which was to both of them an attractive alternative to dualism, idealism and physicalism. For Jung this approach dovetailed into his concept of *unus mundus*, the concept of an underlying world unity, and into his conjectures about the paradoxical aspects of synchronicity. For Pauli it helped to make sense of some of the strange paradoxical consequences of his investigations into the sub-atomic level of reality. For Prof Atmanspacher this one-world conjecture contained important implications for future developments in quantum theory.

Analaura Trivellato in her talk '*The effects of energy mindfulness in depression, anxiety, stress and subtle energy balance*' presented an exploratory study into the ways in

which the practice of mindfulness can advance good health. She spoke of the ways in which this type of method had been developed in the ancient religions of South Asia, and went on to describe her methodology which involved a well-ried questionnaire, and the range and background of participants who were mostly new to this practice. The results showed on the whole significant improvement in states of mind, except for some who had no previous experience in these methods. Improvements involved sleep patterns, blood pressure, energy levels, general well-being and happiness. Some OBEs were noted.

And finally something completely different by Prof Oliver Robinson with a talk entitled *'The solfeggio harmonics: talk with sonic meditation'*, a Pythagorean-inspired

exploration of the power of music to 'soothe the savage breast'. Olly reminded us, with mind-testing mathematical illustrations, that music is 'about' vibrations, as is the human mind-body-spirit and maybe the cosmos itself. We sat at home while the healing tone was played and were helped to absorb all the healing vibrations of that wonderful weekend.

David Lorimer struck the final chord of this event by summarising the varied yet concordant sounds of the conference, reminding us that we were still engaging with the important task of exploring 'the further reaches of consciousness research' in a series of conferences that had been begun at St John's twenty five years ago. The inevitability of zooming could have spelled disappointment,

yet even without the communal intimacy of our usual weekend events we achieved a high degree of concordance, not least because of the wonderful international complexion of audience and speakers. David, Olly and Andrew, with many others, composed and directed the conference with great skill as a significant intellectual and historic occasion which I have no doubt will be remembered and replayed twenty five years from now.

*Professor John Clarke taught philosophy at various universities abroad and in the UK, and retired some years ago as Professor in the History of Ideas. His most recent book, *The Self-Creating Universe: the Making of a Worldview*, is a study of emergentism as a way of bringing science and spirituality together in a philosophical synthesis.*



Photo credit: Mount Fuji, Dr Peter Fenwick



Beyond Flatland

A day on transformative ways of knowing

Nicholas Colloff

Edwin Abbott's satirical novella, which gave this day its title, imagines the perplexities of a square as it visits a one-dimensional world and is visited from a three dimensional one, being misunderstood and misunderstanding in turn. Abbott's principal aim was social satire but, in the process, raised profound issues about how we construct our realities and what happens when those constructs are broken into by new levels of experience, presaging other worlds, other possibilities.

The Network exists because it speculates that our present world is trapped betwixt a dated, 'knowing' scientific materialism and patterns of religion that feel socially performative at best, assertively fundamentalist at worst, is indeed flat, two dimensional and needs to be reimagined.

Reimagined is precisely the right word because underlying this day's explorations was the wager that imagination itself is a key pathway into truth; and, that its diligent, informed practice can unveil, to quote, Owen Barfield, 'the inside of the whole world', a world that is animated, multi-dimensional, profoundly interconnected; and, in which consciousness may not simply be an emergent epiphenomenon but constitutive of the reality that we know.

This imaginative, spiritual journey is both uplifting, revealing, and yet challenging. The truth may have to be withstood as well as understood.

We may have to breakdown as well as breakthrough. It carries not only a personal charge but a social one as well. If we are to navigate our present multiple crises, we need a new lens through which to see, new paradigms with which to work.

Where to go for inspiration?

First, as with the Renaissance, we might step back in time and revive a traditional way of interpreting the world that is rooted in wonder, acknowledges our sense of another world, enfolded in this one, that sees knowledge as leading from a marriage of sense, heart, and mind and which, as Angela Voss ably articulated, was rooted in a fourfold hermeneutical process that emerges from the neo-Platonic tradition of Proclus and was baptised by Origen.

In this, we move from the literal to the allegorical to the moral and finally the mystical or contemplative forms of knowing. It is not a linear process but a circular one and one that moves from what we appropriate through fact and association to the moment when what we study comes alive and begins to question us, realising that no knowledge is real until it lives and changes our being. Thus, the heart, for example, is a physical organ with increasingly recognised neural qualities, that can be allegorised as a sign of love, that can speak to us of courage



prompting moral change; and, that, as the sacred heart, is a living being that steps towards us and asks us, like Rilke's Torso of Apollo, to transform our lives by, in this case, dwelling in the heart the Christ in each other.

This approach was amplified in David Lorimer's presentation reminding us that this knowledge is not simply self-knowledge, it transforms our ontological view. The world is a place not simply to be appropriated, grasped but one that is alive, has its own purposes in which we are invited to dwell, quoting, as he did, Eckhart to effect: "The eye with which I see God is the same eye with which God sees me"; and, if we came to see through God's eye, we would recognise the deeper urgency of reconnecting, renewing and regenerating the world that is gifted to us.

The day proceeded then with Mary Attwood, Geoffrey Cornelius, and Louise Livingstone inviting us to practise these four dimensions of understanding with regard to a painting, Leonardo da Vinci's 'The Virgin of the Rocks' (in the National Gallery in London), through the practice of inductive divination with a principal focus on the I Ching and a contemporary reworking of a Goethean approach to scientific understanding attentive, in this case, to a particular maple tree in the full flame of autumn.

Each of these pathways has at its heart a way of inviting a sacred other into our practised reality, allowing a moment of turning when we the addresser become the addressee when we are invited to participate more fully in reality in full awareness of our responsibility towards it, with it. They are ways of knowing, as with divination, that can be playful and practical but always must be approached in awareness and humility. We must ask with care and be careful what we ask for!

With these illuminating and beautifully presented, groundings in imaginative ways of knowing, in the afternoon we turned to anomalous experience and with Jules Evans

and William Rowlandson in dialogue visited the neglected figure of F.W.H. Myers. Myers, a classicist, and inspector of schools was one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research and author of the monumental, 'Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death' that exhaustively charts his and others' empirical, scientific exploration of 'paranormal' phenomena by which he sought to demonstrate that the mind does indeed exceed the brain, such mental attributes as telepathy are real; and, that we are open to the 'cosmopathic' – open to accessing supernormal knowledge. All of this in service to an evolutionary purpose, a new dispensation of being human able to guide its evolution; and, in acknowledging consciousness as an inherent quality of the universe, so Rowlandson suggested, paving the way to an ethic that reflects a profound respect for all things, woven together as we are in a shared community of consciousness.

But there is a snag! Myers assumed that by now this new paradigm, buttressed by this empirical approach to the spirit, would have banished both scientific materialism and dogmatic religion. The paradigm would have changed and, as we can see, it has not, we continue to live in Flatland.

This brought us to the final contribution a conversation with Jeffrey Kripal whose work in comparative religion and the humanities more widely has increasingly focused on the 'paranormal' and the breakthrough that can occur when anomalous experience 'flips' our lives (or, more generally perhaps in most cases, nudges them along)!

Kripal acknowledged that whilst progress is being made partly by science recognising what it is failing to explain and by the sheer volume and commonality of people's anomalous experience, there is a countervailing conservatism especially in the "academy": too weighted perhaps on the side of critical deconstruction; and too ambivalent about 'cosmopathic'

elaboration and personal transformation. In response, we need to help people 'come out' having smart conversations with smart people about what they have experienced; encourage people to fall out of belief in belief, to suspend judgment and let the phenomena speak, being aware that they can bring unsettling terror as well as light. Meanwhile whilst taking inspiration from the past, looking to the future. Do not assume the future will simply confirm the past. It is a great unknown and may surprise us. Above all do not try to make the complex simple.

-I might add - recognise that virtually all innovation comes from the periphery and captures the centre, or makes itself a new centre, skipping the 'middle' whose honourable task is to expedite what the centre considers important, but with no real capacity for invention of its own. As someone remarked at question time, perhaps we put too much emphasis on persuading the academy rather than simply circumventing it and creating one's own new centre(s).

It was a wonderfully stimulating day, skilfully guided by Mark Vernon, and at its heart perhaps was asking us to learn the most fundamental imaginative and contemplative skill we can bring to every and any experience (however mundane, imaginative or anomalous), the reflexivity that makes us aware of being aware, that the person watching the scenery from the tower is, also, able to observe themselves watching, such that we genuinely greet every experience fully alive to its considered reflection in our receiving hearts and minds in all its myriad dimensions.

Nicholas Colloff studied theology and philosophy at the universities of London and Oxford and is the co-founder of the Prison Phoenix Trust.

Network News

ATTENTION MEMBERS

PERSONAL NUMBERS AND OFFICE PROCEDURES

Please help your administration office to run smoothly and so help you efficiently:

- when your details change (address, telephone number, email address etc.) please make sure we know
- use your membership number whenever you contact us, and write it onto all correspondence, conference booking slips, subscription forms and orders for books, services etc.
- book early for conferences - it helps you get a place
- ensure cheques are made out correctly to Scientific & Medical Network; for conferences and orders: always add (legibly!) details of what it's for and membership number on back, even when accompanied by a booking form
- remember we're a network, and it often takes time for all relevant people to be contacted so when making requests give us time to respond helpfully (and always remember to tell us who you are - we sometimes get forms back with no name at all!)
- help us save money; whenever possible pay in £ sterling and remember to gift aid when you make a payment (subscription, conference fees, etc..) - it maximises funds available for more important things.

Office hours are 10.00am to 5.00pm Monday- Thursday. Please leave a message if no one is available to take your call. We will get back to you as soon as we can.

The Network Online



As you will be aware, we have been continuing our programme of weekly webinars through the autumn, with some attracting up to 150 participants. We also ran Beyond the Brain online with a registration of the over 300, and around 200 people online at any one time. These numbers were eclipsed by the Galileo Commission Summit which attracted 800 registrations and up to 450 people online. There is a charge for these webinar recordings, but the weekly webinar recordings are available free to members. We have continued with our occasional collaboration with the Institute of Noetic Sciences where Jim Tucker from the University of Virginia spoke about children who remember previous lives to an audience of over 800 people. Our next collaboration is January 22 with Steve Taylor. As you will have seen from our new year mailing, I have already planned the schedule until the end of June. The monthly book review briefings have continued and previous recordings can be found online at our YouTube channel.

Sunday Evening Meditations



Peter Fenwick writes: Our Sunday evening meditation from 6.00- 7.00 pm has been a great success. When we began just 20 people joined us, and now we are a regular group of about 70. Kirsten Dwight does the technology with Martin Redfern as back-up. Meditation has always been important to the Network, and coming together in meditation mends the social fabric in this difficult time. It has been shown that the meditation you use may not always be the best one for you, as people respond differently to different meditations. The Group started by looking at many different forms of meditation. We started with Zen and then moved on to methods using mantras, followed by Tenzil Wangyal Rinpoche's method using body stillness, mind stillness and mind expansion. We have been following the work of Jeffery Martin and his explanation of the mental state of non-duality. After that we looked at the meditation of non-dual teachers and at their descriptions of their own mental state - Rupert Spira, Roger Lindon, Tony Parsons and Wendy Roles amongst others. We are now looking at a "new kid on the block", someone I have only recently discovered myself, Craig Hamilton, who argues that if in your meditation you simulate the mental state of non-duality, it will help to generate that state in you. I hope that somewhere in this group of meditation teachers and methods you have all managed to find one that feels right for you.



Monday Dialogues with Paul Filmore

See Paul's editorial on page 2 for an understanding of the richness of these weekly events.

Anomalous Experiences – at the Friday Wine Bar



Paul Kieniewicz writes: For the past few weeks about 40 members gathered at the Friday virtual pub to share a glass of wine and speak about anomalous states of consciousness – anomalous in the sense that they are not usually experienced while we go about our daily business. Most

material shared was primary, coming from participants' own experiences rather than from books or some external authority. We explored peak experiences, highly creative states of consciousness, but also altered states where people heard voices, saw visions that at least in our culture are usually classified as pathological. Jung explored similar territory during his inward journey, documented in the recently published Black Books, of which we read excerpts.

Many participants reported impressions of the Divine Feminine, some in dreams and other altered states, leading to questions of whether changes were taking place in the human collective. New archetypes? We explored how consciousness changes at political rallies, how people experience of being swept along by a popular tide. The well-known the Global Consciousness Project explored cases of collective consciousness influencing random number generators. Our final meeting for 2020 took place at the time of the Jupiter and Saturn conjunction, a rare event that may reflect our troubled times on Earth.

Network Book Prize 2020



The 2020 Network Book Prize for the most significant book published by a Member during the year has been awarded to Colin Tudge for his book *The Great Re-Think: A 21st Century Renaissance*. You will find an article by Colin as well as my book review in this issue.

Colin read Natural Sciences at Cambridge and worked as a science journalist for many years as well as hosting his own programme on Radio 3. In 2010 he co-founded the Oxford Real Farming Conference and is now helping to set up the College for Real Farming. In this seminal book, he asks how we can create convivial societies in a flourishing biosphere based on the fundamental principles of morality and ecology rooted in perennial metaphysics. He will be giving a webinar in June.

Imaginal Inspirations Podcasts

Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution – Albert Einstein

Imaginal cells are responsible for the metamorphosis of the caterpillar into a butterfly (the Greek symbol for the soul). These cells are dormant in the caterpillar but at a critical point of development they create the new form and structure which becomes the butterfly.

In this podcast series, David Lorimer talks to transformational authors and scientists about experiences, people and books that have shaped their lives and professional development.

Live on
<https://redcircle.com/shows/imaginal-inspirations>

Dr Elisabet Sahtouris on
Imaginal Cells, Transformation and Presence

Dr Iain McGilchrist on
Spaciousness, Wordsworth and the Soul

Dr Marilyn Schlitz on
Fiction, Mortality and Edgar Mitchell

Dr Larry Dossey on
Precognitive Dreams and Spirituality in Healthcare

Dr Anne Baring on the
Divine Feminine and Catharism

Prof Jeff Kripal on
'Impossible' Experiences, Precognition and the Esalen Institute

Upcoming

Prof Richard Tarnas, California Institute of Integral Studies

Prof Marilyn Monk, Emerita Professor of Molecular Embryology, University College, London

Prof Kim Penberthy, Division of Perceptual Studies, University of Virginia

Prof Ravi Ravindra, Emeritus, Dalhousie University, author

Dr Apela Colorado, President, Worldwide Indigenous Science Network

David Lorimer, Galileo Commission, SMN (interviewed by Charlotte Lorimer)

Dr Kevin Ashbridge has been producing a corresponding series of short video clips and you can find the following online:

Anne Baring <https://youtu.be/Ij4V4Z0kfDc>

Larry Dossey <https://youtu.be/m6fr8AJy6dE>

Jeffrey Kripal <https://youtu.be/340mBFHRuek>

Iain McGilchrist <https://youtu.be/48hVRDI4G6Q>

Other Galileo Commission News

The Salvia Foundation has generously funded Phase 3 of the Galileo Commission, covering the period January 2021-December 2023.

In Phase 3, we envisage the development of two strands of work over the next three years to extend the reach of the Galileo Commission and its Report in relation to:

- a) A group working on the elaboration of a self-reflective and interdisciplinary science of consciousness that takes into account the inseparability of the knower and the known
- b) A group working towards a renaissance of the human within the humanities so that these can be recontextualised as the study of consciousness within culture, while also self-reflectively taking into account the nature of the knower as above

The common point of departure is the contention in the Galileo Commission Report summary that *consciousness can give us direct access to the deeper structures of reality*. This is also an affirmation of the capacity of the human spirit for nondual knowing which is the highest form of knowing for those who experience it. The cultural importance of recovering our deeper identity is critical at this time, also in terms of enhancing our planetary sense of unity and interconnectedness while respecting diversity. Tabitha Jayne has completed *The Layman's Report* that can be downloaded from www.galileocommission.org/report/. Members of the Galileo Commission are now up to 774 (100 advisers, 242 Professional Affiliates, 432 Friends). If you are not already a supporter, please go to www.galileocommission.org/join-us and you will receive a copy of our monthly newsletter.

MEMBERS' NEWS

■ VELTA SNIKERE WILSON 100th BIRTHDAY



Bernard Carr writes: On Christmas Day our oldest member, Velta Snikere Wilson, celebrated her 100th birthday and I know that the whole Network will join me in sending her congratulations. She came to London after the war and was one of our earliest members, joining the SMN in 1970s. In recent years Velta has been a

regular attender of the London group. She is a well-known Latvian poet, receiving the Latvian Literature Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019, and she has also contributed greatly to the Latvian Independence Movement. She was part of the Indian dancing troupe of Ram Gopal from 1956 to 1958 and – as a founding member of the British Wheel of Yoga – she was one of the first independent Yoga teachers in London in the 1960s. Indeed, she was still teaching it until a few years ago. A surprisingly large number of SMN members have become centenarians – including Sir Frederick Warner FRS, Mary Scott (the authority on Kundalini), Mary Swainson and Lawrence LeShan – so SMN membership does seem to be associated with longevity.

■ NICK NICHOLLS

Natalie Tobert, with Marcia Goffin



After a career in military operations, Nick Nicholls became aware that consciousness existed beyond the body and continued after death. It became his life's passion to release deceased soldiers lost in war, who remained attached to the physical world, seeking release,

frustrated because they didn't realise they were dead. Nick developed a way of channelling these non-physical beings, who communicated with him telepathically and merged with his body.

The day before he died, whilst in a coma, Nick remotely visited his friend Marcia Goffin, and sang to her the words to Edith Piaf's well-known song "*Je ne regrette rien*".

Nick had read parts of the Galileo Commission Report and considered some scholars still attempted to understand consciousness from a materialistic scientific perspective. However, he wanted to tell everyone that once we died, the spirit did indeed live on. He stressed the absolute importance before our final exit, of our need to burn away any collected dross, which he said would pull us back into further incarnations. He wanted us to know that we are each a living spirit inhabiting a temporary physical form.

■ CHANNEL MCGILCHRIST

– www.channelmcgilchrist.com



Channel McGilchrist is the new official web-based platform of renowned psychiatrist, author and thinker, Dr Iain McGilchrist.

This platform has been created in response to an overwhelming demand to explore Dr McGilchrist's work in greater breadth and depth

and to discover the relevance of his work to personal, societal and environmental issues.

Following the publication of his ground-breaking book, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* in 2009 which reached international recognition and acclaim, the relevance of his work in an increasingly left-hemisphere dominant world has become even more pronounced. Described by Professor Louis Sass as 'unbelievably rich... of absolutely crucial cultural and intellectual importance', his thesis has transcended the old paradigm of hemisphere difference.

If only scientists had asked a slightly different question, says McGilchrist, not about *what* the two hemispheres of the brain do, but *how* they do it, they might not have missed something of staggering importance: the difference in the quality of attention that they pay towards the world. That literally changes the world we see and live in – and alters us.

■ PROF MARTIN LOCKLEY RECEIVES KOREAN PRESIDENTIAL AWARD



Martin Lockley (Prof Emeritus, Geology) has been awarded the Korean Government's 2020 "Presidential Award" for his scientific work with the Korean National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (NRICH). He is the first paleontologist to win this award. Lockley's work on fossil footprints in Korea began in the late 1980s when he took

three University of Denver (UCD) students there as field assistants, and began a collaboration with Korean paleontologists that continues to this day. Lockley won the Award of Excellence from the Paleontological Society of Korea in 2012 and was instrumental in helping create six Korean National Monuments around fossil footprint sites, four of which have also developed onsite museums and educational institutes. Korea is the world's most prolific nation in revealing fossil footprints of all types from the Cretaceous Period (145-65 Million years ago). Twenty track types are new to science, and with the monuments and museums are the basis for applications for World Heritage status. Lockley likes to say that "fossil footprints represent glimpses of ancient landscapes that we transform into today's cultural, scientific and educational landscapes."



LOCAL GROUP NEWS

LONDON GROUP

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To read reports from other meetings, go to the **REPORTS** page of the London Group page of the Network's website. If you don't live in London but wish to be advised of London events, please drop me an email and I shall add your e-address to the circulation list.

■ SEPTEMBER

Our September presentation was given by Dr. MICHAEL BROOKS, an author, journalist and broadcaster. Michael holds a PhD in quantum physics and is a scientific consultant with the *New Scientist*, writes regularly for the *New Statesman* and appears frequently on various BBC Radio 4 programmes. He is the author of a number of books with interesting titles, which can be seen on his website www.michaelbrooks.org. This evening's presentation was entitled **Cardano, the Quantum and the Cosmos** and Michael developed many of the thoughts to be found in his book *The Quantum Astrologer's Handbook*.

Michael started by telling us about the life of Jerome Cardano (1501-1574), a true Renaissance man. Cardano was born in Milan and from an early age showed an interest in multiple disciplines. He was amongst others, a mathematician, a zoologist and a medical doctor. His reputation as a doctor travelled far and wide after he cured a friar from a long-term illness. On the basis of this success, Cardano was asked to come to these islands to examine the Archbishop of Edinburgh and was later called by the court to attend to King Edward VI. He was requested to provide an astrological map to determine whether the king would live or die, a determination he skilfully avoided for obvious reasons. He became famous for examining the lifestyle of his patients and suggesting changes. In zoology his thinking led him to examine which species would and which would not survive, a first effort towards the idea of the survival of the fittest. Some of his ideas, however, were somewhat wild, such as those about elephants which he believed had highly sophisticated intellectual capacities even though he himself never saw an elephant 'in the flesh' so to speak.

Astrology was part of everyone's training at the time, and so it was that Cardano studied it first to find the reason for his sexual impotence, but later for its own sake. He was a sceptical astrologer and studied astronomy and mathematics in order to become more convinced. This led him to delve deeply into the field of mathematics and in turn to develop probability theory which he did for practical reasons as he paid his way through college with gambling gains. His probability theory did not help him all that much in gambling, as he often lost more than he won. He also explored the principle of imaginary numbers – the square root of negative numbers, which is at the centre of quantum theory and generally fundamental to science today, including electronics. Michael pointed out that even though an astrologer, Cardano laid the mathematical foundations of quantum theory not only through imaginary numbers but also because quantum theory is intimately related to probability theory.

Michael showed an excellent animation of the superposition process in the double slit experiment and we heard about five different interpretations of what is going on including ideas about entanglement, and that of Nicolas Gisin from the University of Geneva, who wonders whether there is a reality outside space and time. Jerome Cardano also believed in such a possibility and said that most of his best ideas came from a spirit who visited him at night. Michael amusingly wondered, considering that in quantum reality time can flow forwards as well as backwards, whether he was the spirit visiting Cardano and giving him the good ideas!

Michael ended the presentation by showing us some work from Greek astronomer Eleni Petrakou who is studying the planetary conjunction in relation to solar, lunar and other activities which may have an influence on human life. Furthermore, some modern scientists, such as Einstein, Penrose and Carlo Rovelli have ideas which resonate with Cardano's thoughts. I was delighted to be introduced to Jerome Cardano, such an important figure about whom I was totally ignorant! This is the link to this presentation https://youtu.be/Jdo_rGUgQ24.

■ OCTOBER

October is normally when Prof Ravi Ravindra comes to the UK and we have in past years been fortunate to have him present to the group. But this year things are not 'normal' so Ravi spoke to us from his home in Nova Scotia, Canada.

RAVI RAVINDRA is Professor Emeritus at Dalhousie University, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he served for many years as a professor in three Departments: Comparative Religion, Philosophy, and Physics. He has been a member of the Board of Judges for the prestigious Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion and is an honorary member of the Scientific and Medical Network. Ravindra's spiritual search has led him to the teachings of J. Krishnamurti, G. Gurdjieff, Yoga, Zen, and a deep immersion in the mystical teachings of the Indian and Christian traditions. He is the author of many books on religion, science, and spiritual disciplines.

His talk this evening was entitled **Yoga and the Future of Science of Consciousness** and Ravi explained that yoga is the science par excellence for the journey of exploration of Consciousness, Truth or God. It must be understood that this ultimate reality is a mystery and whereas in science mysteries are *resolved*, in spirituality, they are *dissolved*. This process in spirituality does not involve rational thinking but immersion and for this there must be a fundamental transformation of being, on which is what all spiritual traditions insist. The practice of yoga, stopping the reckless movements of the mind and the training of attention on some fundamental questions lead to the necessary transformation. It is through direct knowledge, direct experience, that we can get nearer to the Truth or God.

Amongst the questions Ravi raised were ideas addressing the fact that we did not create ourselves.

We were created to be here. Our breathing is another part of this mystery; we cannot stop breathing intentionally, and it could be said that we are being 'breathed'. The exploration of these fundamental questions enables us to engage in the journey of transformation which leads to evolution, the aim of our human consciousness. Ravi pointed out that the natural purpose of consciousness is to evolve. The Christian narrative of God taking on human body exemplifies this journey back from the physical body towards the highest consciousness or God. Each one of us must find our own yoga, our Buddhi Yoga for our own spiritual journey.

Listening to Ravi Ravindra with his deep knowledge of science and spirituality sharing his wisdom is always a privilege for those of us at the receiving end! The link to this talk is https://youtu.be/s_kADgvJigU

■ NOVEMBER



JENNIFER "KIM" PENBERTHY, Ph.D., ABPP is the Chester F. Carlson Professor of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences at the University of Virginia School of Medicine. Kim is a board-certified clinical psychologist and conducts research, teaches, and provides clinical care at UVA in psychiatry and the Cancer Center. Her research interests include

studying the mind-body relationship and exploring human consciousness as well as extraordinary human experiences and abilities and this aspect was the core of this evening's presentation which she entitled **An Introduction to the Study of the Mind-Body Relationship with a Focus on Extraordinary Experiences and Fear of Death**. Kim gave us an overview of the Division of Perceptual Studies (DOPS for short) of the University of Virginia, its history, and current research focus. The Division was started by Prof Ian Stevenson, famous for his research into children who remember past lives. This research is still ongoing with the work of Jim Tucker who is studying children with these memories in Australia.

The principle guiding the scientific research at the Division that consciousness cannot realistically be considered as an exclusively physical phenomenon - it is non-local and operates beyond the confines of the physical body. The subjects of their research include psychic phenomena, near-death and out of body experiences, after-death communications (ADCs) etc. This latter topic is currently the subject of an international study which indicates that people who have had spontaneous communications from dead loved ones show an increased interest in spirituality and a decrease in fear of death.

In collaboration with IONS (Institute of Noetic Sciences) DOPS is currently researching by means of neuroimaging, what happens in the brain of mediums when they are receiving information. There is also research with meditators which shows an increase in intuition and work is ongoing in understanding what other types of extraordinary abilities, such as super cognition, we can develop by quieting the mind through meditation.

The research of the Division aims at finding a theoretical foundation that can help expand the field our understanding of these phenomena in order to use it in the service of the good. Reducing fear of death is high on the agenda as is disseminating the fact that we are all connected.

In response to the question whether she has had any paranormal experience which stimulated her interest in the field, Kim told us on an event in which she saw her deceased grandfather helping her mother in a moment of need. For her mother this was absolutely natural, so it became natural for her too. Kim grew up in a home in which there was an understanding that the paranormal is nothing more than the normal for which we don't have a rational explanation yet. Not everything needs to be rational to be believable. We had many examples of paranormal experiences from the audience which enriched our understanding of these events. The link to the recording is https://youtu.be/j__tkWmiRwg.

MEMBERS' ARTICLES AND ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Available through links or from dl@scimednet.org

SCIENCE

Dr Peter Mansfield

- *The Physics of Biology* (5 pp)

CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

Prof A.K Muhkopadhyay

- *The Science of Divinity* (3 pp. from *Archives in Neurology and Neuroscience*)
- *The Science of Divinity II, Triple Transcendence* (4 pp. from *Journal of Neurology and Brain Research*)
- *The Science of Divinity III, Immersive Neuroscience, Multiversal Neuroscience and Neuroeconomics* (5 pp. from *Journal of Neurology and Brain Research*)
- *Deep Neuroscience* (5 pp. from *Journal of Neurology and Brain Research*)
- *Deep Science of CosmoNeurology: The Multiverse and The Supracortical Consciousness* (20 pp., from *Journal of Neurosurgery Imaging and Techniques*)

Prof Bruce Greyson

- *Seeing Dead People Not Known to Have Died: "Peak in Darien" Experiences* (13 pp.)

Harald Atmanspacher

- *The Pauli-Jung Conjecture and Its Relatives: A Formally Augmented Outline* (23 pp., from *Open Philosophy*)

Dr Bethany Butzer

- *Bias in the Evaluation of Psychology studies: A comparison of parapsychology versus neuroscience* (10 pp., from *Explore* 16)

Contzen Pereira

- *Quantum Resonance and Consciousness* (10 pp from *JCER* 2015)

Deepak Chopra and Stuart Hameroff

- *The "Quantum Soul": A Scientific Hypothesis* (15 pp.)

Stuart Hameroff

- *How Quantum Brain Biology can Rescue Conscious Free Will* (17 pp, from *Frontiers in Integrative Neuroscience*, 2012)

MEDICINE-HEALTH

UK Medical Freedom Alliance

- *Open Letter to MHRA on Covid-19 Vaccination Agenda* (14 pp., with 50 references – www.ukmedfreedom.org)

Dr Johannes Bircher

- *Meikirch model: new definition of health as hypothesis to fundamentally improve healthcare delivery* (8 pp. from *Integrated Healthcare Journal*)

Dr Andrew Tresidder

– www.healthandself.care

- *Foundations of Health* (2 pp.)
- *Zoomed Out? Whats Zapped? Teams Fatigue* (2 pp.)
- *Shock, Loss, Stress and the NHS* (2 pp.)

Robert F. Kennedy Jr

- *Message of Hope to Humanity – (6pp., an impassioned appeal for freedom and democracy)*

Ian James Kidd

- *A pluralist challenge to "integrative medicine": Feyerabend and Popper on the cognitive value of alternative medicine* (9 pp., from *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 2013)

George Vithoukias,

Camelia Berghian-Grosan

- *The Spin of Electrons and the Proof for the Action of Homeopathic Remedies* (5 pp. from *Journal of Medicine and Life* Vol. 13, Issue 3, July-September 2020, pp. 278–282)

James Oschman

- *Good Healthkeeping Makes Sense: But Is Anyone*

Interested? (3 pp, editorial *JACM*, 2015)

Dr Peter Mansfield

- *Health: The No-Man's-Land Between Physics and Biology* (6 pp. from *JACM* 2015)

Stephan Schwartz

- *Covid-19 and the Documented Failure of the American Illness Profit System* (4 pp. from *Explore*)
- *Climate Change, Covid-19, Preparedness, and Consciousness* (4 pp. from *Explore*)
- *America, Covid-19, Climate Change and Migration* (7 pp.)
- *Climate Change, Migration and Preparedness* (10 pp.)

PHILOSOPHY/SPIRITUALITY

Prof Ravi Ravindra

- *In the Beginning is the Dance of Love* (27 pp. + 3 pp.)
- *Yoga and the Future Science of Consciousness* (5 pp. from *SMN book Wider Horizons*, 1999)

Michael Brine

- *Biographical Essay on Wellesley Tudor Pole OBE, creator of the Silent Minute* (8 pp)

Paul Hague

- *Grand Design of the Universe* (1 p diagram, www.paulhague.net)

Shanna Dobson and Robert Prentner

- *Pluralist-Monism. Derived Category Theory as the Grammar of n-Awareness* (30 pp.)

GENERAL

Dr Anne Baring

- *America: Redeemer or Destroyer of a Higher Dream* (12 pp., 2007)
- *Chartres Talk following the US Election* (10 pp.)

Dr Nafeez Ahmed

- *Deforestation and the Risk of Collapse* (23 pp.)

ONLINE ARTICLES BY ANTHONY JUDGE

- ***From Zoom Organization to Zome Configuration and Dynamics***
Integrating the doughnut, helix and pineapple models towards global strategic coherence
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/zoomzome.php>
- ***Inspiration, Conspiracy, Transpiration, Expiration***
Towards a universal model of conspiracy theories
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/conspire.php>
- ***Anticipation of Judicial Inquisition of Humans by Extraterrestrials***
Potential consequence of failure to adhere to universal principles of intelligent life
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/musings/lestwe.php>
- ***Missiles, Needles, Missions, Rifles, Projects, Bullets***
Transformation of a civilization of spikes and penis surrogates via Global Reset mandalas
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/reset.php>
- ***Axes of Bias in Inter-Cultural Dialogue***
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs/conftran/xspbias.php> ■ ***Reframing Fundamental Belief as Disinformation?***
Pandemic challenge to advertising, ideology, religion and science
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/belief.php>
- ***Reframing the Imaginable Key to the Future?***
Clues to the nature of a Global Reset
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/musings/keyfut.php>
- ***Envisaging the AI-enhanced Future of the Conferencing Process***
Meeting design through interactive incorporation of participants and content
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/aimeet.php>
- ***Living within a Self-engendered Simulation***
Re-cognizing an alternative to living within the simulation of an other
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/simulac.ph>

NEWS AND NOTICES

- **Fetzer Institute - What does Spirituality Mean to Us? A Study of American Spirituality - <https://spiritualitystudy.fetzer.org/>**
This is a significant new study commissioned by the Fetzer Institute covering the many ways people are spiritual and the relationship between spirituality and action. Fetzer's mission – to help build the spiritual foundation for a loving world – is rooted in the conviction that we are intrinsically spiritual beings. Based on decades of Fetzer experience and confirmed by the work of this study, there is both a depth and diversity of spirituality within and outside faith traditions that is not reflected in our mainstream narratives. The common thread reveals that humans are spiritual and that engaging in spirituality can engender a greater good. The data make clear that spirituality is important for most Americans and is an essential part of their lives.
- **Vandanya International - Vandana Shiva Report on Bill Gates <https://navdanyainternational.org/bill-gates-philanthro-capitalist-empire-puts-the-future-of-our-planet-at-stake/>**
Vandana Shiva, president of Navdanya International, who hosted the online launch, declared: “With his philanthro-imperialism, Gates is emerging as the Columbus of the digital age, the New Monsanto pushing failed GMOs and trying to introduce new GMOs based on gene editing. We must take back our seed and food. We must take back our life & freedom. We must take back justice & democracy”.
The report gathers evidence and throws light on philanthrocapitalism, which is boosting the corporate takeover of our seed, agriculture, food, knowledge and

global health systems, manipulating information and eroding our democracies. Over the last 30 years it has emerged as a major force, able to derail the international agenda and push our future and the future of our planet towards extinction and ecological collapse. Throughout the report, we see how the patterns of technocratic solutionism, powered by an unholy alliance between big-capital, science and technology institutions and states, are embodied by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and put into accelerated action through philanthropic development.

Free download of report and summary at:
<https://navdanyainternational.org/publications/gates-to-a-global-empire/>

- **Earthshot Prize – www.earthshotprize.org**
Prince William has launched the most prestigious global environment prize in history, as the five challenges at the heart of The Earthshot Prize are unveiled. This new global prize for the environment will incentivise change and help to repair our planet over the next ten years – a critical decade for the Earth. The launch comes after two years of work by Prince William and The Royal Foundation of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to develop a project which will support the global effort to protect and restore the environment. As well as identifying evidence-based solutions to the biggest environmental problems the planet faces, The Earthshot Prize aims to turn the current pessimism surrounding environmental issues into optimism that we can rise to the biggest challenges of our time. The five main areas for annual £1 million prizes over the next ten years are: Protect and Restore Nature; Clean our Air; Revive our Oceans; Build a Waste-Free World; and Fix our Climate.

book reviews

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SCIENCE-PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

AT ONE WITH THE EARTH

Martin Lockley

■ THE MUTUAL EVOLUTION OF EARTH AND HUMANITY

Dankmar Bosse, 2019, Lindisfarne Books, 2019, 512 pp., \$65, h/b - ISBN 978-1-58420-984-3

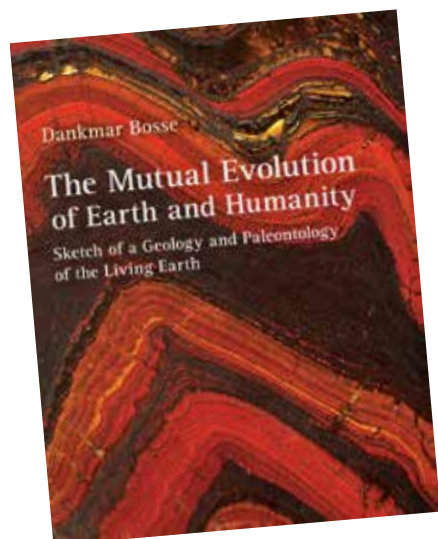
“Man is a stream whose source is hidden.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The reviewer may judge one book as compelling wisdom or another as fluff. In the case of Dankmar Bosse's extraordinary book *The Mutual Evolution of Earth and Humanity*, this reviewer, trained 'traditionally' as a geologist-paleontologist, sees Bosse's exposition as a highly unconventional view of planetary evolution. For those who are neither geologists or anthroposophists it may be helpful to outline and compare both “theories of the Earth” neutrally. The first comparative clue is in Bosse's subtitle: *Sketch of a geology and paleontology of the living Earth*. Traditionally geology and paleontology see Earth's evolution as a two-phase process, beginning with inorganic elements, minerals and rocks, followed by an as-yet-unexplained phase shift emergence of organic life. Bosse and other anthroposophists take the 'alternate' view that the Earth is an integrated, superordinate, living organism: thus, no need for an unexplained jump from rocks and minerals to life. Geologists know the interface between rocks and life is fuzzy, as in algae and microbes 'creating' limestone. This is not to mention the respectable Gaian view that planetary life is deeply integrated with supposedly 'inorganic' atmospheric, oceanic, hydrological, carbon, oxygen and other cycles. So Bosse promotes a believable holistic thesis. Instead of 'either-or' comparisons, perhaps these “world” views converge.

Bosse's compartmentalises his exposition, into conscientious scientific treatments of paleontological and geological evidence, contrasted with reviews and interpretations of various lectures by Rudolf Steiner, famous for his suprasensible spiritual vision, which Bosse says should not “be taken as generalized imaginations or plausible pictures of past conditions, but rather as detailed descriptions of the suprasensible side” which we can build up [with practice] “within us as imaginative sensitive mental pictures and test them against the physical-sensory side.” Our understanding is helped by 100 pages of appendices which explore potentially difficult “special topics” from anthroposophical time concepts and scales, to the fundamentals of anthroposophic (Goethean) scientific investigation, education and knowledge. Bosse's attempts to integrate Steiner's expositions on the co-evolution of Earth and humanity are illustrated, almost exclusively, by several dozen of Steiner's black-board drawings some originally used to illustrate talks he gave to the workers building the first Goetheanum in the 1920s. Interestingly, these audiences were neither anthroposophists and geologists. Steiner was not shy about educating all comers regarding his extraordinary insights into the nature of spiritual reality. [But were these potentially understandable to all without Steiner's scientific and spiritual gifts]? A geologist will likely find 'some' of Bosse's expositions interesting if not compelling at least where they are consistent with what a 19th century geologists called “the testimony of the rocks” – or we today simply call the geological evidence. In other areas they will likely be mystified, if not dismissive.

If the non-anthroposophist avoids getting hung up on precise definitions, and understands the physical, etheric, astral and spiritual as corresponding to interpenetrating mineral, plant [vegetative], animal [sentient] and human-spiritual process realms in both the sensory and supersensory (cognitive) world, the general arguments are straightforward. Was our world built from bottom up “as the analyzing mode of thought ... [believes]...as if assembled from parts”? [Building blocks]. Or did it “start with the superordinate



entirety” from which “it members itself and separates out aspects from itself”? This principle of top down separation, or ‘membering’ is in fact well known in geology as in the case of a mineral precipitating out of solution: evaporation first gives us limestone, then gypsum, then salt, with each new precipitate (member), changing what remains as an invisible reserve. “The further back we go...to the bacteria... the less an individual etheric body is incarnated... [as] ... today in the metabolic processes of the lowest life forms in the formation of mineral substance.” [Likewise, as magma chambers crystallise (separate) out, so the remaining melt changes]. “These substance processes ...belong to a superordinate inter-relatedness.” “Organisms have never formed themselves out of cells...[from bottom up]...the cell has first formed itself from the living” (as reproduction shows). [Organic molecules require cells to synthesize and organize them from top down]. The melt precedes the crystal. “The origin of the organism is spirit.”

If, following Steiner and Bosse, we can see the whole Earth as a superordinate organism “it becomes possible to see the organism as a totality that members itself into cells or organs.” Earth’s geological and biological evolution did not build up into ‘empty space,’ or inert physical gas envelopes. “No science will be able to explain how life developed on the early Earth if it assumes... a dead sphere in which only chemical and physical processes took place”. Rather the tangible physical manifestation (rocks, microbes, multicellular organisms) separated off as members from highly organized intangible realms – (etheric, astral and spiritual), so “the remainder could become finer and rise to a higher stage” repositories of future potential—Goethe’s “development in the higher sense.” So there is a simultaneous building up (evolution) and a breaking down (devolution): the former suprasensible, internal development, the latter an external manifestation

in the physical world. As Bosse puts it, sense-oriented science traces the tangible physical forms back to their past, anthroposophy does the same with respect to intangible soul and spirit without the “slightest contradiction.” So will mainstream geology (physical science) admit spiritual science, even if there is no contradiction with bedrock facts? [I think not, unless the mainstream is shown a demonstrable link between the sensible and suprasensible]. The sensible world reveals “ascending evolution.” It is only the evolutionary process that is “vigorously argued over” asking perennially, “How does the soul-spiritual aspect relate to the physical body?” [I would venture: look at ontogeny. As the physical body manifests from cell to embryo, infant and adult physicality, so the intangible soul-spiritual faculty becomes finer in the higher sense. The same has recapitulated in a few millennia of socio-cultural, group soul evolution: our religion, ethics, morality].

The problem with traditional geological thinking, according to Bosse, is uniformitarianism, which he politely does “not mean to belittle.” But the idea that physical ‘inorganic’ processes like erosion and sedimentation have not changed over eons is logically inconsistent if Earth evolution is an integrated organic process: change is fundamental. Actually geologists discern changes in atmospheric composition, sedimentation and other rock forming processes: they just interpret them differently. As Bosse notes, some of these have been identified as “problem” areas, and are generally most acute the further the geologist goes back in time. Uniformitarianism, taught to every geology student, is OK in the short term: waves and currents make ripples in sand, but if we go back far enough in time to where the air and water sphere were an unseparated colloidal medium, as Bosse (and Steiner) claim is consistent with geological evidence, the processes would be interpreted differently. Today, paleontologists [I’m one] suffer a slight identity crisis, not knowing if they belong in geology or biology departments! Why? Because of the artificial distinction between the inorganic (rocks) and organic (life) in Earth History, which neatly disappears with the superordinate Earth model. Truly a conceptual revolution if understood and accepted! [I would go further: traditionally modern science first discovered and codified the physical and chemical world and its laws, before getting to grips with the biological and psychological: in short the human mind in a very real sense “precipitated” or “separated” physics, chemistry, biology and psychology as concrete disciplines and “bodies of work” into the realm of conscious knowledge, from the top down. Is that not organically consistent]?

The perennial tangible-intangible riddle at the heart of our search for reality was neatly expressed by Teilhard de Chardin when he suggested that we are not human beings having spiritual experiences, but rather spiritual beings having human experiences. [Few are those like Steiner, who simultaneously know both facets of being directly]. The authors of the Nag Hammadi manuscripts expressed something similar when they said we fell in love with our experience of the sensory world and forgot our spiritual roots [a momentous shift in consciousness, which has something of the anthroposophical ‘coming into being’ flavor of the tangible-physical separating from the intangible]. However, the limitations of credibility, understandability, and testability, in the conventional sense, of Bosse’s exposition, on such momentous subjects as Earth moonseparation, is unlikely to appeal to mainstream geological community.

On understandability, anthroposophy sees the evolution much like a multi-branched plant in which each leaf is an incomplete precursor of the fully formed flower (which completes a cycle). Likewise, as the fish, dinosaurs, lower and higher mammals “separated out” or came into being, the later evolutionary stages or potentials held back and refined their “organization” in the invisible superordinate realm. In this sense, the superordinate biosphere was continuously organizing, complexifying and refining towards a progressive (teleological or purposeful) goal. [Something most lie to believe]. The human being is the latest incarnation, the latest flowering, but if Steiner and Teilhard are correct the refinements continue, and more refined beings (Omega beings) are out there in the spiritual realm. Bosse says we should not regard this ongoing “held back” superordinate organization as “generalized imaginations or plausible pictures of past conditions.”

Nevertheless, imagine we must, as he attempts to explain the rock layers from core and mantle to crust (and life forms) as physical manifestations of precipitations of mineral, plant and animal from the life-air-water envelope or wellspring. He even reminds us that these precipitations proceeded ‘top down’ from the periphery inwards, giving each Earthly tangible manifestation a new physical (mineral, plant/ etheric and animal / astral) inwardness, reflected by increased inwardness in the intangible, undifferentiated realm of potentiality. It is perhaps not surprising that such views find parallels in many spiritual traditions, inaccessible to, but not necessarily contradictory to conventional science. Lastly such considerations, raise controversial questions of human exceptionalism. But here anthroposophy

is perhaps ambivalent, as is some mainstream cosmology including consciousness studies. Is human self awareness inherently arrogant, seeing itself as the pinnacle of creation, or is it simply an incompletely self-aware 'organ' within a far greater superordinate biosphere / noosphere: the means [first step] by which the universe becomes self-aware? [Again not an 'either-or' proposition].

I would not recommend this book to most mainstream geologists. Even though they might find some parts intriguing, I suspect most would rebel. For one thing, despite beautiful illustrations, and many thought-provoking ideas, it is dense and difficult, in places, if not misleading. [I resorted to much consultation with anthroposophical friends, whose reactions were also ambivalent]. What I present here is what I understand with some confidence, and find plausible. Limitations of space save me from criticisms of nuances and notions I may not grasp. Bosse knows his geology, but I leave it to the judgement of the individual to evaluate how Bosse integrates the more arcane of Steiner's Earth-evolution pronouncements with the geological evidence. May you be 'grounded' and at one with the Earth.

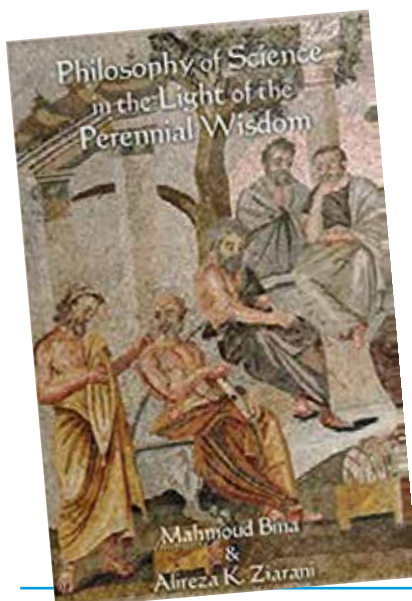
DISCERNING MODERN SCIENCE FROM SACRED SCIENCE

Samuel Bendeck Sotillos

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE IN THE LIGHT OF THE PERENNIAL WISDOM

Mahmoud Bina and Alireza K. Ziarani

Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2020, 136 pp., \$15.95, ISBN - 978-1-936597-69-7



Modern science has become the sole arbiter or criterion of truth. It claims that it alone can know the truth and the nature of reality. This situation came to pass through a long historical trajectory of events such as the Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, and European Enlightenment. It is scientism purporting to be science that is the problem, for when science claims a monopoly on the truth, it trespasses beyond its own domain of knowledge.

This book delivers a powerful intellectual critique of the foundations of modern science, rigorously exposing its ontological and epistemological limits according to sacred science, metaphysics, and the spiritual principles that exist at the very heart of every sapiential tradition.

What can be known through the five senses pertains to the corporeal realm and cannot transcend it. Modern science by and large only recognises this way of knowing without realizing that "Empiricism ... refutes itself." (p. 4) Empiricism is unaware that it is limited to the relative order and knows nothing of the Absolute and that it is the unmanifest order that can fully know the manifest. No discussion can be had until it is recognised that "modern science condemns itself to fundamental errors. It is incapable of providing a sufficient view of the world, and yet lays claim to total reality." (p. 104) Its underpinnings are truncated due to being cut off from metaphysics, and thus "It is flawed ... in its very foundation, or rather in its lack of it." (p. 103)

Empirical means of knowing are only one way of knowing, just as reason is another way of knowing. With this said, "Reasoning alone cannot arrive at truth, because man would not be able to recognise the truth arrived at as truth if he did not possess the essence of this truth *a priori*." (p. 14) The authors explain that "Man can know things because their principal realities are imprinted in his very spirit," (p. 89) and point out that "The phenomena of this world are symbols of their divine archetypes, and can thus serve to lead us back to their source." (p. 65)

Each human faculty is connected to an interrelated level or degree of reality. Within both the human being and the cosmos there are in fact multiple degrees of being or reality. The authors write, "the traditional outlook always accounts for multiple states of being." (p. 36) Human faculties pertain to the horizontal and vertical dimensions as noted here: "There are not only degrees in reality, there are also modes; the former are in 'vertical' order while the latter are 'horizontal' and situated in the appropriate manner at each degree." (p. 47) The tripartite constitution of the human being and that of the cosmos, of

which the human being is a small mirror, consists of Spirit/Intellect, soul, and body or the spiritual, psychic and corporeal states.

The Platonic doctrine of *anamnesis* or "recollection" is conceivably the clearest epistemology of the premodern West, which corresponds to the epistemologies of all the religions. *Anamnesis* is the faculty of the Intellect that is synonymous with Spirit, sometimes known as intellection or intellectual intuition. The authors explain that "*Anamnesis* bases the possibility of knowing an object on man's having its knowledge potentially." (p. 31) They add the following about this doctrine:

For the Platonic recollection of the fundamental truths to become actualized in a man, a purification of the heart is necessary—in order that earthly shadows may awaken in him their principal realities. The aim of all the religions is to help man remember what he knew—to remove the rust that covers his heart, symbolically speaking—so as to enable him to reestablish his contact with the truths contained in his inner being. (p. 33)

Hence from a metaphysical point of view "Science ... is nothing but recollection." (p. 95) It is through this intellectual recollection that the human being can apprehend what is integrally human and the cosmos at large. Beyond the Cartesian bifurcation lies transpersonal knowing: "Total knowledge is situated beyond the bipolarity subject-object, because there is only one, individual Reality." (p. 116)

Modern science lacks an integral understanding of causes and its higher order in metaphysics. The ancients always applied the principle that "the greater could never come from the lesser." (p. 68) In the ancient world, "Traditional man knew that there is no end to the knowledge of phenomena." (p. 70) Knowledge and science for the ancients were inseparably connected to sacred science, metaphysics, and spiritual principles; however, this is not the case for modern science:

By ignoring epistemological foundations and metaphysical principles, modern science reduces man's intelligence to the lowest of his cognitive faculties, namely, his senses and reason, and reality to its most outward and contingent aspect, namely, matter. The perennial wisdom, or the *Sophia Perennis*, on the other hand, offers a full account of man's faculties of knowledge and a comprehensive description of the structure of reality. (p. 111)

By the same token the authors provide a very important point pertaining to "modern psychology...[where] reality is extended to the realm of the psyche, but not beyond it.... It ... contradicts

itself in its very principle.” (p. 50) There is a contradiction because the ego cannot know itself and requires a transpersonal dimension to know itself. In contrast, perennial psychology as found across the diverse cultures of the world includes Spirit, soul, and body and their corresponding degrees and modes of reality.

This book under review is a precious and remarkable work, which merits wide attention. It is unique in situating modern science in the light of the universal and timeless wisdom of the world’s religions and what can be gleaned from them. It offers the integral principles to return science to its origins in metaphysics so that the human being as the microcosm can rejoin with the macrocosm, opening science to truths of higher realities as known in all times and places as sacred science.

Samuel Bendeck Sotillos is a practising psychotherapist who has worked for years in the field of mental health and social services, focusing on the intersection between spirituality and psychology. His works include Paths That Lead to the Same Summit: An Annotated Guide to World Spirituality, Dismantling Freud: Fake Therapy and the Psychoanalytic Worldview and Behaviorism: The Quandary of a Psychology without a Soul. He lives on the Central Coast of California.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

David Lorimer

■ TECHNOLOGY AS SYMPTOM AND DREAM

Robert D. Romanyshyn

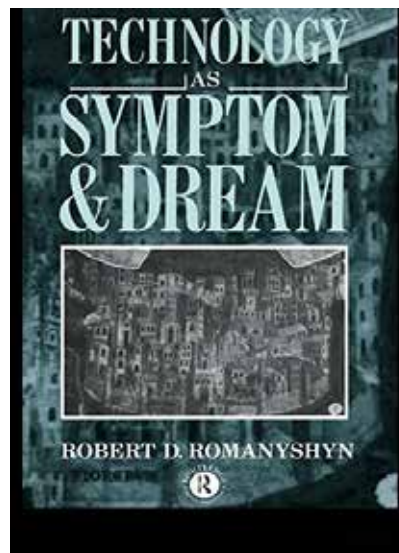
Routledge, 1989/200 254 pp., £31.99, p/b – ISBN 0-415-00787-9

■ VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN, THE MONSTER AND THE SHADOWS OF TECHNOLOGY – THE FRANKENSTEIN PROPHECIES

Robert D. Romanyshyn

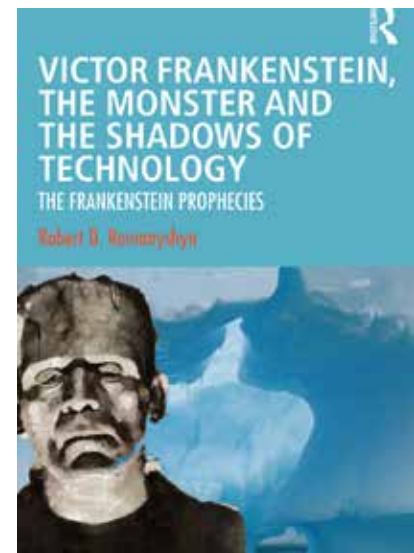
Routledge, 2019, 126 pp., £27.99, p/b – ISBN 978-0-367-13732-8

As Jeremy Naydler also argues in the book reviewed in the philosophy section below, there is a sense in which the mechanistic outlook and its implications have colonised our minds, reaching even into the unconscious as it has unfolded historically into its present form. These two books were written 30 years apart and are studies of technological perception and indeed identity. They



enable readers to become much more aware of how our mentalities and even imaginations have been shaped and literalised, especially in relation to the hegemony of the eye and the visible, and hence of a linear vision ‘as a cultural habit of mind.’ Robert shows how this originated in 1425 when Brunelleschi invented the technique of linear perspective and its associated vanishing point to create a sense of distance where ‘the self becomes a spectator installed behind his or her window on the world... the body, now divorced from this self, becomes a specimen...and the world, as a matter for this detached and observing eye, becomes a spectacle.’ (p. 31) It is easy to see how this comes to be associated with objectivity, impersonality, quantification and measurement, separation from the body and nature, the focused anatomical gaze and mechanistic thinking in general. The window and the camera are continuous, and are represented in ‘maps and charts, blueprints and diagrams.’ The related notions of spectator, spectacle and specimen are associated with a loss of connection and eventually with technological disembodiment.

Descartes takes this one stage further with his separation of mind and body, also corresponding to the crucial distinction between primary and secondary qualities not in fact mentioned here but leading to what Blake called single vision (see chart on p. 55) as well as separation of humanity from nature. This dualism between culture and nature, intellect and emotion, spirit and matter characterised by Susan Griffin makes women the carriers of the negative side – ‘symbols of feeling, carnality, nature, all that is in civilisation is “unconscious” and that it would deny’ (p. 173) – hence the witch hunt and devaluation of the feminine. There is an interesting section on cubism and the photographs of Hockney as a means of eliminating the sense of distance inherent in the camera,



although it does reflect a fragmentation of perspective. Instrumental values of speed and efficiency are embodied in the standardised computer, where ‘efficiency wedded to indifference is a cold abstraction of a human being.’ (p. 93) The story now moves on to the body as specimen with the development of anatomy by Vesalius in terms of technical functioning – this anatomical gaze is later associated with the objectification of pornography. One comes to understand the connection between the corpse reanimated by Frankenstein, the body of the industrial worker after the division of labour, the body as machine, and the robot (p. 134). Frankenstein’s vision is one of mastery and re-creation of nature, while at the same time denying responsibility for his actions and their monstrous consequences – this is all taken up in considerable detail in the second book. Psychological distance is correlated with emotional retreat and the impersonal detachment of the spectator at a spectacle.

The more recent volume is structured as a series of questions, and both books conclude with the possibility of reconnection and a new beginning. Frankenstein, also called the modern Prometheus, has become a metaphor for the drive towards mastery and control as well as wealth through patenting nature. It elicits feelings of disgust and horror from the lunar shadows undetected by the masculine solar mind intent on growth and progress and unchecked by ‘the sense of the sacred that is a limit to the hubris of the Promethean mind’ (p. 81). We think that we can assume these Godlike powers without the corresponding responsibility for the fallout from our exploitative policies and actions. If we do not awaken from the self-destructive tendencies in this cultural dream, then the patterns of the past will be extended into the future with no pause for reflection, healing, forgiveness, reconnection, renewal, regeneration – in

short, *metanoia*. We are dangerously out of touch with nature and natural rhythms represented by the feminine so graphically depicted in the original Frankenstein narrative where the monster is conceived apart from woman. Paradoxically, though, he still has sensitive feelings that bely his hideous appearance – he murders Frankenstein’s fiancée on their wedding day and Frankenstein himself refuses to provide him with a companion. By contrast, the alchemical union of sun and moon involves intimate sexual contact.

As Jung so poignantly develops in his psychology, we all need to become aware of the shadow and the tendency to project onto others what we deny in ourselves, and use this as a justification for violence. Understanding this should, in my view, be a core element of education, also with respect to relationships. The fifth chapter addresses the work of Ray Kurzweil and the emergence of a disembodied *homo digitalis* adrift in a wired world. He believes that natural evolution is much too slow to keep pace with our computer and genetic technology and that by the end of the century, humans will no longer be identified with bodies, and our essential quality will be intelligence in a rather narrow technical sense. Robert warns that ‘biological, instinctual, embodied intelligence, which evolved in relation to nature will be replaced by digital intelligence apart from nature.’ (p. 58) Here there is no feeling, no intuition, no love, no feminine, no soul – just the disembodied cleverness of the left hemisphere, as explained in the work of Iain McGilchrist, a bleak engineered prospect. For Kurzweil, this represents the technological triumph over the natural processes of evolution based on the instrumental values of efficiency, speed, perfection and data processing where there is no longer any distinction between human and machine or physical and virtual reality – if this is not a dystopic technocracy, then what is? Those who refuse will be left behind as marginalised ‘unenhanced humans’, who will at least have the marginal option of a real human future.

The 2020 lockdowns will have put many local restaurants and cafes out of business – these are places of community, meeting, relaxation and recharge where we can hang out for conversation rather than e-commerce and digital connection – it is now weeks since I was allowed to walk up the street for a beer on Saturday evening. Our self-destructive hubris in permitting so-called gain of function research to render viruses more lethal is just one example of irresponsible and unethical behaviour rebounding on us. Where is the compassion and wisdom in such developments? Who is the monster? We are, in terms of destroying life-support systems (so-called ecosystem

services) not only for ourselves but for the whole of life in pursuit of profit – as if we can avoid the adverse health effects ourselves.

Will we be able to heed the prophetic warning and awaken from our Promethean dream? The oneness and interconnectedness implied by quantum physics, mystical experience and ecology represent a potential path of return with a relational, multi-perspectival and plural structure. More immediately, in his recent book Robert emphasises love as a seed of hope, asking if it was because Frankenstein’s creation was forced to live without love that he became monstrous. Today’s economic and political systems have been corrupted by money and power, as is only too apparent in the manipulation of the corona narrative in suppressing the experience of clinicians in the interests of profit and social control, manifestations of a raw will to power: health cannot be mandated by the point of a needle or a gun. Out of fear and in the name of safety and security, we seem ready to sacrifice our freedoms when we should be reimagining a New World working in harmony with nature and each other. This also entails recovering our aesthetic sensibility for beauty and contact with nature instead of anaesthetising and distracting ourselves on our multiple screens. The brilliant and evocative analysis in these books serves as an essential cultural wake-up call that we ignore at our peril and that urges us to renew, reconnect and regenerate, expanding and deepening our consciousness and empathy in this creative process of emergence and renaissance.

PHILOSOPHY AND PHYSICS

David Lorimer

■ EINSTEIN ON EINSTEIN

Hanoch Gutfreund and
Jurgen Renn

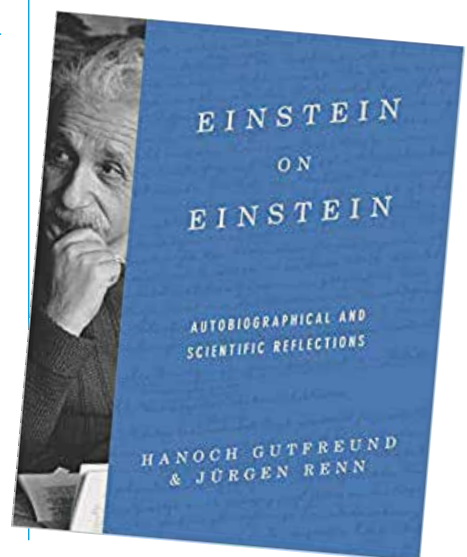
Princeton, 2020, 197 pp., £30, h/b –
ISBN 978-0-691-18360-2

Einstein was the only physicist to appear in the 35 volumes of Arthur Schilp’s Library of Living Philosophers (LLP), for which he wrote his famous intellectual autobiography, *Autobiographical Notes*, in 1946. The book begins by explaining the genesis and scope of the work, including the significance of the immediate post-war period and Einstein’s political stance with respect to nuclear weapons and his consequent advocacy of world government. The second part consists of thirteen commentaries on major themes of Einstein’s work, drawing on his own writings, correspondence and contemporary critical assessments. The third part lists the 23 thinkers

who contributed to the volume, with Einstein’s specific responses to their critical essays. Finally, there are English translations of *Autobiographical Sketch* and *Autobiographical Notes* with some concluding comments. The *Sketch* was written a few months before his death as a contribution to the centenary of ETH Zürich. Einstein was not alone in addressing philosophical themes raised by physics, and there are book length contributions from Sir James Jeans and Werner Heisenberg, while some readers may remember Ken Wilber’s compilation *Quantum Questions*.

Interestingly, the origins of Schilp’s series lay in a 1933 lecture by FCS Schiller, who noted the habit of not asking searching questions of living philosophers to open up discussion, which is precisely the aim of LLP - I have the volume devoted to Radhakrishnan. The extract at the front of the book quotes Einstein as saying that ‘the essential in the being in a man of my type lies precisely in *what* he thinks and *how* he thinks, not in what he does or suffers.’ This makes him sympathetic to Spinoza’s God, ‘who reveals himself in the harmony of all that exists, but not in a God who concerns himself with the fate and actions of human beings.’ This is Deism rather than Theism, impersonal law rather than a personal God characterised by love. Elsewhere, Einstein writes about freeing himself from the chains of the merely personal, ‘from an existence dominated by wishes, hopes and primitive feelings.’ What was more real for him was the vastness of the cosmos, its mathematical beauty and law-like regularities. He was also inclined against free will, on the grounds that we act under external compulsion and inner deterministic necessity.

The main commentaries give hugely valuable insights into the development of Einstein’s thinking and how he positioned himself with respect to his predecessors and contemporaries.



He strove for ‘a conceptual grasp of things’ while remaining fully aware of the role of epistemology in this process. Philosophically, he was influenced by David Hume and Ernst Mach, while reacting against the *a priori* approach of Kant. He developed his views in a contribution about the relationship between knowledge and sensory experience in the LLP volume devoted to Bertrand Russell. He regarded concepts as ‘the free creations of thought which cannot inductively be gained from sense experiences’, a point easily missed and which includes causality, as noted by Hume. The important factor is logical coherence of these ‘constructive-speculative’ concepts and their connection with empirical research. He also positioned himself against the Vienna Circle and logical empiricism – he was interested in the thought process itself. He argued that theory does not so much discover reality but shapes what is being determined as real, and that we order the world through our intelligence while its very comprehensibility remains a mystery at the heart of consciousness itself. I have come to regard consciousness as (an expression of) the very faculty of knowing in itself, although at different levels and depths.

The chapter on the demise of mechanics as the basis of physics is interesting in relation to the persistence of the mechanistic metaphor within science generally – action at a distance is replaced by the field concept and gravity is related to the properties of space rather than being regarded as a force. Einstein does not regard it possible for facts by themselves to yield scientific knowledge without free conceptual construction, that is thinking embedded in necessary presuppositions, without which one cannot even ask scientific questions. He was well known for his controversial views on quantum mechanics, which he refers to as statistical, offering ‘no useful point of departure for future development’ due to what he regarded as its incompleteness in relation to his own search for a unified field theory.

The list of contributors to Einstein’s LLP volume reads like a roll of honour with de Broglie, Pauli, Born, Bohr, Lemaitre, Gödel and, interestingly, Henry Margenau, whose book *The Miracle of Existence* makes fascinating reading at the interface between physics and consciousness. The reply to criticisms is extraordinarily thorough, including five pages on Margenau, and differing from many contributors on questions of epistemology – he felt that many physicists lacked epistemological awareness, which is probably still true today and which makes him a philosopher-scientist. Needless to say, the *Autobiographical Notes* printed towards the end of this volume makes absorbing reading and a further clarifies

his views on the nature of thinking and the structure of conceptual systems resting on a minimum number of axioms as undefined concepts and underived propositions. He felt that ‘dogmatic rigidity prevailed in matters of principle’ and sought freedom from this ethos, warning against attempts to retain a general theoretical foundation ‘by adapting it to the facts by means of artificial additional assumptions’ and ‘the interpretation of facts by philosophical prejudices.’ Einstein retained, contra quantum mechanics, the view that ‘physics is an attempt conceptually to grasp reality as something that is considered to be independent of its being observed’, very much a minority view these days, although further pursued by David Bohm. Readers with a background in physics will gain more from the technical discussions in this book than a non-specialist like myself, but it also provides accessible reading at the interface between philosophy and physics.

MEDICINE-HEALTH

LOOKING AND FEELING

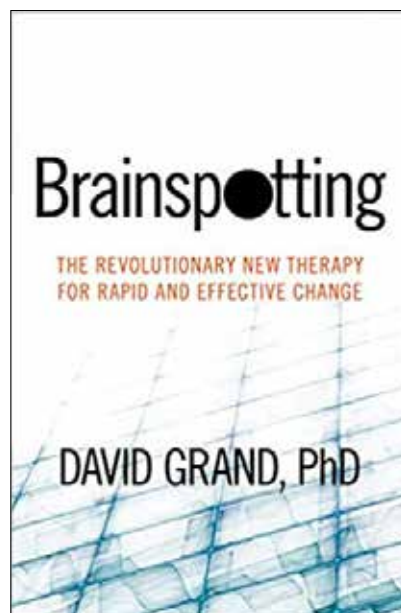
John Kapp

■ BRAINSPOTTING: THE REVOLUTIONARY NEW THERAPY FOR RAPID AND EFFECTIVE CHANGE

Dr David Grand

Sounds True, 2013, 178 pp., \$24.95,
p/b - ISBN 978-1-60407-943-2

The problem with most talking therapies is that they tend to take months or years of sessions for relief or change to occur. Brainspotting is one of the increasing number of what are known as **brain-based therapies**, which are treatments



that use **mindfulness** to go beyond the mind to gain direct access to the brain. It harnesses the brain’s natural ability for self-scanning, so we can activate, locate and process the sources of trauma and distress in the body, accelerating our ability to heal and cure any mental problems.

The motto of Brainspotting is ‘where you look affects how you feel.’ The eyes are the window to the soul. Trauma can overwhelm the brain’s processing capacity, leaving behind pieces of the trauma, frozen in an unprocessed state. Brainspotting uses our field of vision to find where we are holding these traumas. Just as the eyes naturally scan the outside environment for information, they can be used to scan the inside environment – our brains- for information.

Brainspotting uses the visual field to turn the ‘scanner’ back on itself and guide the brain to find lost internal information. By keeping the gaze focussed on a specific external spot, we maintain the brain’s focus on the specific internal spot where trauma is stored, in order to promote the deep processing that leads to the trauma’s release and resolution. There are no problems except those that we make into problems, but the mind can make a problem out of anything. We can be conditioned (brainwashed) to believe almost anything.

Brainspotting is built on a ‘dual attunement’ model, where the therapist simultaneously attunes to the client (meaning the relationship between themselves and the client, and mirrors and reveals the client’s experience with the primary caregivers in their childhood, especially their mother) and the client’s brain processes.

The left side of the brain controls the right side of our body, and the right side of the brain controls the left side of the body. Our left brain thinks, uses language and solves problems. Our right brain is intuitive, emotional and involved in body functions. When we are overwhelmed with emotion and can’t think straight, our right brain has taken over. When we are overly analytical and cut off from our emotions, we are stuck in our left brain. (Men tend to be left-brained half wits, (cold, aloof, unfeeling) and women tend to be right-brained half wits, (hysterical, weepy, can’t keep themselves together) Brainspotting helps balance the left and right sides, so that integrate and self-regulate.

Brainspotting developed from Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) in which the client is asked to focus their attention on a disturbing issue, and measure the intensity of pain or emotional distress on the 0-10 ‘Subjective Units of Disturbance Scale’ (SUDS) Thinking about painful subjects is counter-intuitive, and we normally avoid doing this, but the

therapist holds the space for the client to maintain this focus, with the object of allowing the brain to process it from implicit to explicit memory, when the SUDS level decreases. When this is reported as 0, the issue is no longer distressing, and we may then 'squeeze the lemon', by provoking the client to think again about the issue, to check the activation, and see whether it is really healed, until the client reports that they are cured.

The most impressive statistic about Brainspotting is an evaluation dated 2016 of the 20 trauma therapies given to those affected by the Sandy Hook school shootings in Connecticut USA in 2012. Brainspotting was voted the most effective intervention, and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) was almost the least effective. www.brainspotting.org. I believe that Brainspotting would help those traumatised by disasters (like the Grenfell tower fire in June 2017, who received little or no psychological support). I believe that it deserves to be clinically trialled, so that it could be recommended by NICE for use in the NHS, and I am willing to help organise a trial.

I first heard about Brainspotting when I attended a taster session in June 2018. I was intrigued sufficiently to do part 1 of the training (3 days in Nov 2018) and went on to complete part 2 in Feb and part 3 in April 2019, totalling 9 days over 6 months. As client during that time, I experienced 14 brainspotting sessions of up to 1 hour each, which were all different, and all successful in clearing up 14 different issues. I have used the technique on 10 clients to date, and all reported satisfactory outcomes, I offer it every week on Sundays from 10-1pm at Essence, 86, Church Rd Hove BN3 2EB (opposite Hove town hall) as drop in classes with facilitator training for donations. Every Sunday afternoon, 2-5, I offer family constellation group therapy on the same basis. I also run the Campaign for Social Prescribing of Talking Therapies (CASPOTT) see www.caspott.org.uk and www.sectco.org.uk, and papers on section 9 of www.reginaldkapp.org. I can be contacted on johnkapp@btinternet.com, and 01273 417997.

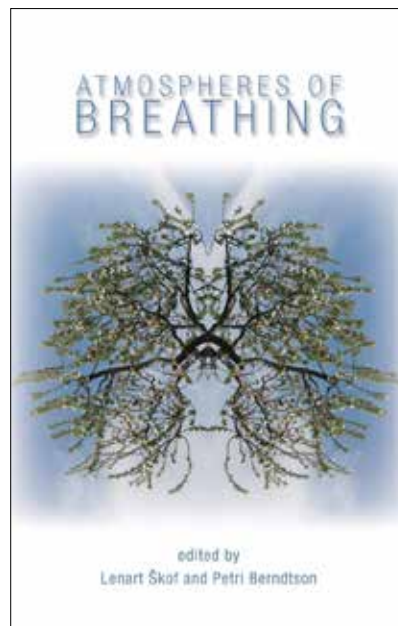
NATURE HAS NO COMPARTMENTS

Gunnel Minett

■ ATMOSPHERES OF BREATHING

Edited by Lenart Škof and Petri Berndtson

State University of New York Press,
2018, 297 pp., £24.48 p/b - ISBN
978-143846974-4



Atmospheres of Breathing is one of the first books on the philosophy of breathing, or 'Respiratory Philosophy', as it is called here. Drawing mainly on older cultures, and eastern philosophies it gives an overview of the importance breathing has had for human beings in all parts of the world.

Divided into four sections the book presents; Philosophical Atmospheres of Breathing, mainly focusing on more recent philosophers such as Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and Sartre and presents their thoughts on breathing, Philosophical Traditions of Breathing, focusing on Buddhism, Yoga, Qi and Ki and other ancient philosophies, Voices and Media of Breathing including 'Thoughts that Breathe' and 'Theatre of Breath' and 'Breathful and Breathless World' that discusses the politics of breathing as well as breathing to enhance physical and mental wellbeing.

With its wide-reaching overview of a number of different aspects of breathing it offers an eye-opener into the importance breathing has had throughout history for most cultures around the globe. In particular, in older cultures where modern medicine did not come in to the picture, there was a distinct focus on breathing both for inner peace and for general physical health. For instance, yoga includes a number of very different breathing exercises aimed at both calming and energising as well as mind altering.

Given the focus on the philosophy of breathing it may not be the right forum, but personally I missed a discussion of the role breathing has in for instance meditation or breathing techniques aimed at achieving inner peace of mind. Many of the chapters seem to be based on the idea that breathing alone makes the difference. That breathing always is a mind-altering tool, that is to say that the

focus is clearly on the phenomenology of breathing.

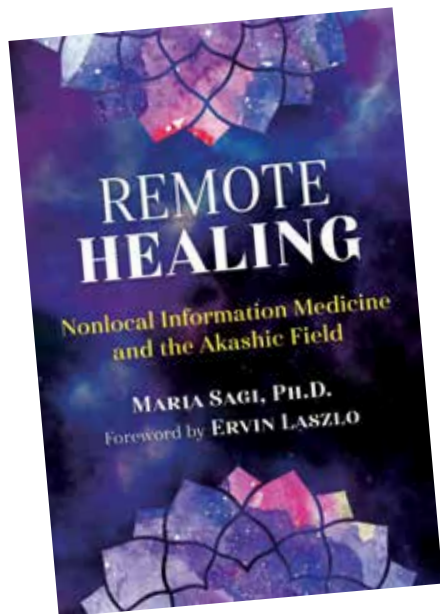
But breathing is also physiological. We all breathe, every moment of every day of our lives. But not everyone achieves some kind of inner peace as a result of it. So it would have been interesting if at least one of the chapters had had a discussion around if it is the breathing itself or the actual setting of the breathing exercise that brings about altered mind states or inner peace.

During the 1960's many westerners discovered eastern breathing techniques, often after taking mind-altering drugs like LSD. But not everyone taking recreational drugs had positive experiences. For many it was the absolute opposite. At best they had a positive experience that disappeared as soon as the drug stopped having an influence. But for all too many it was a sort episode of madness, often leading to lasting mental problem. This led to one of the forefront figures, Tim Leary, to talk of Set and Setting as key to using mind-altering drugs as a way of safeguarding the most positive outcome. By that he meant that you had to prepare yourself, both mentally and physically before you took the drug. That included being in a positive outer environment and to understand the mind-altering changes that may occur. This is similar to for instance yoga where there is an emphasis on preparing both body and mind before starting the breathing practices.

This aspect of preparation in connection with breathing or breathwork is hardly mentioned in the book. Perhaps the underlying assumption is that this is known to the reader, but in my view it makes a difference to understanding the phenomenology of breathing that is described.

Having worked with teaching breathing techniques myself for many years, my experience has been that preparation is an essential part of all breathing exercises if you want to know where the breathing will take you. I would argue that the breathing itself is a tool that can be used for mind-altering purposes, enhancing physical health, creativity among other all the effects changes in the breathing pattern can give. But although a tool is helpful or even essential if you want to build something, it alone will not be enough. A tool on its own won't build anything. It also takes know-how and practice to achieve the desired result.

As I said, in a book on the philosophy or phenomenology of breathing, the physiology of breathing may not have a place. But, as we all know, nature has no compartments. So including all aspects of breathing would probably have given a more comprehensive presentation, in particular in a book that is one of the first of its kind.



NONLOCAL INFORMATION MEDICINE

David Lorimer

■ REMOTE HEALING

Maria Sagi

Healing Arts Press, 2020,
223 pp., \$18.99, p/b – ISBN
978-1-62055-951-2

This pioneering and ground-breaking book is ahead of its time in introducing the theory and practice of nonlocal healing within an extended scientific framework in relation to Ervin Laszlo's Akashic field (see *Information Medicine*, reviewed in Issue 131 and *Healing with Information* in 130). Ervin writes both a foreword and the epilogue, explaining how he himself has benefited from Maria's nonlocal healing. While mainstream medicine relies on local biochemical interventions, this model uses a nonlocal information field for both diagnosis and treatment. In this sense, the healer is entangled with his or her patients. The role of information is central within a holistic context, while illness it can be understood as flawed informational patterns that can be re-established by matching individual patterns with the norm for correct functioning by means of the tuning of the healer in an altered state of consciousness with the Akashic field. This involves an intrinsic relationship between the generic species pattern and the individual morphic pattern. After transmission of the necessary information, the entire condition of the patient is affected.

The first part recounts how the author discovered nonlocal space and time transcending healing and various important collaborations along the way, which led her to

develop her own method of healing and diagnostic therapy based on the work of Erich Körbler and psionic medicine, using Körbler's special dowsing rod at certain points of the body and mapping the results onto a vector depending on the angle and direction of rotation (p. 67). As explained in my earlier review of *Healing with Information*, Körbler also used specific symbols as carriers of information for therapeutic purposes. Sagi clearly elaborates all this background, including the structural basis of diagnosis and therapy as well as specific principles of her own diagnostic procedures.

The second part explains how to apply the Sagi Method, which is principally useful for practitioners, describing as it does the series of specific interventions for a variety of conditions, with apparently impressive results. I don't think that the detail can be learned from a book, but would require more extensive in-person training and study. Maria adds homoeopathy and informed water to her range of treatments, seeing these as other forms of information medicine – her discussion of spiritual elements in Hahnemann's homoeopathy puts this in context, as does her account of the contributions of Fritz Albert Popp using the analogy of tuning fork where the sick organism is tuned to a given frequency that needs to be re-tuned to a healthy vibration. She uses a similar dowsing protocol to establish the correct homoeopathic potency and dosage. There is another chapter on nonlocal diagnosis and healing through chakras, with an interesting chart mapping them onto spinal nerves.

The third part discusses the role of intuition and nonlocal information transmission through telepathy and remote viewing as well as the significance of synchronised brain hemispheres. The appendix by Peter Köhne gives an overview of radionics as an example of nonlocal healing. Imagine a future medical school where students are also trained to develop their capacity for intuitive diagnosis and nonlocal healing alongside biomolecular approaches, and where such avenues are not only explored but extensively researched as well as being understood as a natural expression of quantum entanglement. In such a context, this book and the others mentioned would form a part of the reading list. However, this will demand a major shift in medical thinking and a liberation from the power and influence of the pharmaceutical industry with its primary focus of treating the symptoms of disease rather than strengthening the immune system and promoting health.

PHILOSOPHY- SPIRITUALITY

RETURN TO THE CENTRE

David Lorimer

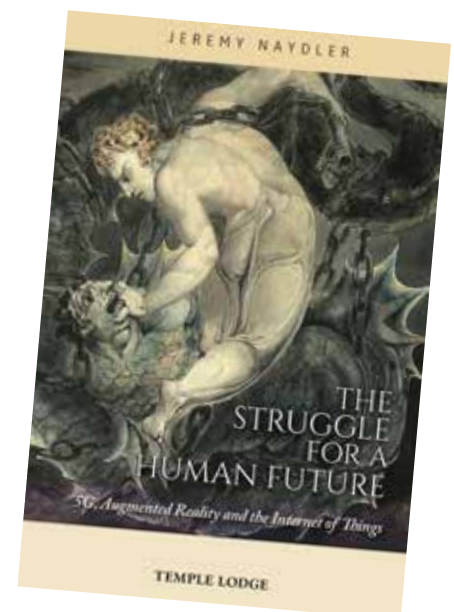
■ THE STRUGGLE FOR A HUMAN FUTURE

Jeremy Naydler

Temple Lodge, 2020, 139
pp., £14.99, p/b – ISBN
978-1-912230-43-3

This short book extends the argument of Jeremy's magisterial 2018 study *In the Shadow of the Machine* reviewed and No. 127 (p. 37), and an adaptation of the introduction is printed in this issue. The subtitle of this earlier book is 'the prehistory of the computer and the evolution of consciousness' tracing the gradual mechanisation of the mind and the dominance of the mechanistic metaphor, especially now in relation to computers, which I referred to in my review as a reimagining of the human being in the image of the machine. This process is now so advanced that we scarcely realise it and have confused quantitative computation with thinking itself and machine learning for actual understanding. As I write, 5G satellites are being launched in huge numbers at a time when the media is entirely taken up with Covid-19, and any potential connection in this respect is smartly removed from the Internet as we become further enmeshed in this global so-called electronic ecosystem.

For anyone who wants to think through the deeper implications of these developments in relation to our spiritual life and identity, this book is essential reading. As I wrote in a recent editorial, the very conception of the human is at stake with alternative visions being



offered in terms of ‘enhancement’ and transhumanism on the one hand and transformation and transcendence on the other. For Jeremy, the first assumes that the human being is essentially a biological machine and that the goal of humanity is to become ‘more and more clever’ with enhanced computational power totally unrelated to wisdom and ethical values. The view is entirely instrumental and underpinned by ‘the technological attitude that seeks to gain greater power, mastery and control of the world.’ (p. 26) We are in danger of forgetting and indeed severing ourselves ‘from the very essence of what it means to be human’ and thus from our capacities of understanding, empathy and love for each other. The much-touted Great Reset scheduled to be launched this month by Klaus Schwab at the World Economic Forum is a technocratic vision of the future merging the human with the machine by means of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, where 5G and the Internet of things are essential infrastructure components. We also need to remember that technological developments are taking place ‘within a highly materialistic philosophical matrix’ with its background in mechanistic philosophy whereby technologies are ‘not philosophically neutral’ but are themselves ‘an embodiment of reductionist thinking.’ (p. 64) All of this is called into question by our Galileo Commission project.

In itself, as Jeremy points out, technology is soulless, impersonal and inhuman, divorced from presence and being, orienting us towards itself and the outside, claiming our attention and taking up our inner space while invasively monetising our activity by means of clever algorithms. Jung’s life at his retreat in Bollingen is the antithesis of this orientation where ‘natural life is the nourishing soil of the soul’ and we are in intimate and uninterrupted relationship with the rhythms of nature. Loss of connection to our true spiritual centre has resulted in dispersion, distraction and fragmentation of consciousness, with resulting mental health implications. The trend is towards abandoning the real for the virtual as we spend more and more time online at the expense of being outside – Jeremy illustrates this with a device that analyses the composition of a corn cob and diverts the attention away from the real to the image. Use of the phone is gradually being overtaken by the smart watch, smart glasses, VR headsets and eventually with neuro-technological implants linked to the Cloud and uploading our brain processes in real time. This capacity for surveillance capitalism can all too readily become the surveillance state in the name of security and safety.

The result of all this is that ‘our relationship to nature is thrust into the

background by the increasing dominance of the virtual, while our relationship to our own inner world is subverted by the constant intrusion of extraneous virtual content that draws us away from the experience of our own soul space’ (p. 54). The overall agenda is ‘a replacement of nature with a fully technologised planet’ (p. 76). The chapter on 5G discusses the emerging electromagnetic mesh driven by economic and political priorities – money and power – that wilfully ignore the vast existing literature on the harmful effects of radiofrequency radiation. The satellites being launched into the ionosphere potentially represent a serious interference with our natural interface with the Schumann resonance. The relevant agencies in Europe and the US have been captured by industry interests, as is also the case with health and pharmaceuticals. As the work of Arthur Firstenberg and others has already demonstrated, there is an electromagnetic assault on life, with documented impact on insects, plants, trees and birds, not to mention electrosensitive humans. This is nothing less than a slow form of ecocide.

In this respect, Jeremy argues that protest is not enough – we also need a spiritually informed understanding and an ability to respond at this level. The second chapter recounts the story of the quest for the pearl, a gnostic tale of forgetting and remembering, separation from the divine and identification with matter. In scientific thinking, this has also represented ‘the drive to explain everything without recourse to God’ and to abolish the soul in favour of the machine. Jeremy puts this in a cosmic context of Blake’s Urizen and Steiner’s Ahriman as the ascendancy of the inhuman. He returns to this in his important final chapter about bringing light to the world as our deepest human vocation. For him, ‘we also need to find ways of strengthening ourselves inwardly, so that we can hold our ground and meet with full humanity the very powerful forces that threaten to undermine essential human values.’ (p. 89) He reminds us that the omnipresence of spiritual light in the pre-radio-frequency world meant that we were immersed within the divine, whereas we are now immersed in electromagnetic radiation.

Jeremy proposes that we should recover the relationship between light and thought, for which he sees an interesting parallel between electricity and artificial intelligence. Although this insight originates in Steiner, Walter Russell said something very similar when he stated on the basis of his own experience that ‘all knowledge exists in the Mind universe of Light – which is God’ and that all knowledge can be obtained from this universal source by becoming One with that Source. Both Steiner and Russell propose that matter is in essence

light and that there are corresponding radial and gravitational processes moving out from and back towards the centre. Steiner adds that electricity is a force inimical to life that can only animate machines, while light ‘is the medium through which the formative forces of life pour into the world.’ (p. 99) In relation to cosmic consciousness and light, as Russell also realised, ‘we are functioning within a greater mind’ which we are capable of tuning into and expressing, and this light and life is also love – hence we can bring ‘life-giving light to the world’ in a spirit of intrinsic selflessness. This is surely an urgent and important message for our time.

A THEMATIC MYSTICAL JOURNEY

Kevin Tingay

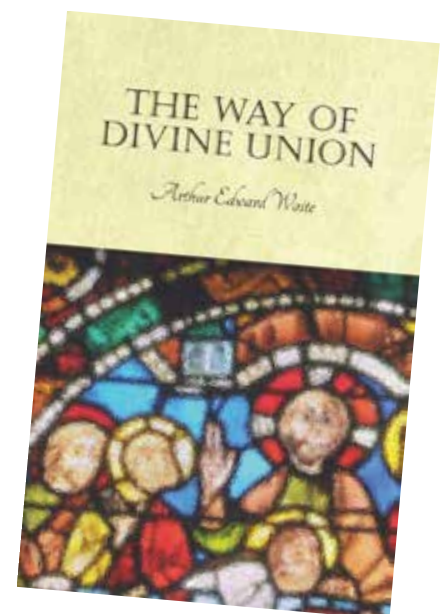
■ THE WAY OF DIVINE UNION

Arthur Edward Waite

New edition with an Introduction and Supplementary Notes by R.A. Gilbert.

Imagier Publishing, 2020 (Rider 1915), 362 pp., £40, h/b - ISBN: 978-1-910216-21-7 £40.00

Your reviewer first came across the writing of A.E. Waite (1857-1942) over five decades ago in a suburban public library. The book caught my eye as it was bound in a somewhat garish pattern. In those days older books in libraries were often rebound in house and returned to the shelves after the original had become weak or worn. Alas, in current times they tend to be discarded to make room for fresh and more fashionable items. The new binding was inappropriate to the contents! I found the text intriguing but largely incomprehensible at the time, but later, as I gained both an



education and a love of book collecting I acquired for myself many of Waite's works which ranged over many aspects of esotericism and spirituality. He also produced several volumes of poetry. A comprehensive outline of his life and labours form the introduction to this new edition of *The Way of Divine Union*. The book is a survey of mysticism, largely drawing from the Christian tradition, but from Waite's particular viewpoint. Before touching on this one should say that this volume is not one to be recommended as an accessible introduction to the subject. It was published four years after Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, which remains in print, with revisions, to this day. Underhill's book (especially in its final edition), or, for the novice, one of her less extensive titles, remain relevant and informative for the contemporary reader. Waite and Underhill did work together for a time and refer to each other's work in their respective volumes. In her later work Underhill had distanced herself from Waite's approach.

Waite has been criticised for both his style and his scholarship, in some cases with justification. Had he been able to access higher education he might have been helped to develop his written style into more accessible forms. It tended to be over laden with archaisms, prolixity, and the subordinate clause. A past acquaintance who heard him lecture in the 1930s remembers his orotund performance in speech which reflected his written style. This may have served him well in his poetry and ritual work, but less so for a public in the latter part of his life. As an independent scholar working from library sources, mostly in London, his practical and bibliographic horizons had some limitations. His spiritual life was anchored in the texts in which he immersed himself. He had left the Roman Catholic Church of his childhood, explored Spiritualism and other groups, but was unable to find a home in any mainstream Christian denomination. In contrast Underhill, under the direction of the Catholic Baron von Hugel, was able to maintain an established place within the Church of England, and to exercise a successful ministry as a spiritual director, retreat conductor, and author, in the inter-war years. Waite, in contrast, found himself limited to a relatively small circle of acquaintances, with a larger circle of the readers of his books and his contributions to periodical literature. He eventually established his own fraternity for his spiritual work.

So what does Waite offer us in his exploration of the Christian mystical way? His survey does include the major figures of the Western church, and their thought and practice. He is weaker on those of the Orthodox traditions. He makes few mentions of non-Christian traditions, which he saw as lying outside

the scope of this book. A brief excursus touches on the encounter with Hindu schools of thought, which was emerging in the West in the period in which he was writing. He had devoted himself to the Kabbalist traditions within Judaism in books published in 1902 and 1913. These books revealed the limitations of his access to reliable texts. A final version of his work on this subject was published as *The Holy Kabbalah* in 1929, which received some approval from Gershom Scholem.

He provided, for the diligent reader, a thematic journey though many important aspects of Christian mysticism, and of significant personalities that embodied them. He introduces us to a number of figures, some of them a little obscure, who do not appear in Underhill's comprehensive survey in her *Mysticism*. Whether their inclusion add much to our knowledge of the subject is, perhaps a matter of personal taste. Waite's love for obscure byways of thought and practice, and the dwellers to be encountered therein, is to be found in many of his writings.

The latter chapters of the book do provide the reader with insights that may seem unexpected given the obscurity of the earlier chapters. He examines mysticism in the light of theories of human consciousness, in guidance on the reordination of life and mind, and on living the spiritual life in the world. His criticism of what he regarded as the dangers of extreme asceticism, which still marked much Christian spiritual guidance in this time, strike a surprisingly modern note. In his own life he managed to combine a deep spiritual outlook with and enjoyment of social pleasures, exemplified in his long standing and convivial friendship with journalist and novelist Arthur Machen.

Dr. Gilbert, in addition to his valuable introduction, has also updated many references, where modern editions or reprints now provide easier access to some obscure texts. He has added some biographical notes on some of more obscure of Waite's authorities, and translated references in Latin and French. A guide to further reading is appended. The contemporary world is one in which churches, and other religious institution, sometimes seem to exhibit ignorance of the riches of their own traditions in spirituality. The nature of spiritual experience is being explored by many outside institutional and dogmatic structures. Some may find Arthur Edward Waite's guidebook helpful. It is not a lightweight addition to the pilgrim's knapsack, but would be a valuable addition to the bookshelf of the serious student of the spiritual path.

Kevin Tingay, a retired Anglican priest, is a long-standing member of SMN.

HUMAN KINDNESS - GENUINELY CARRYING HOPE

Larry Culliford

■ HUMANKIND: A HOPEFUL HISTORY

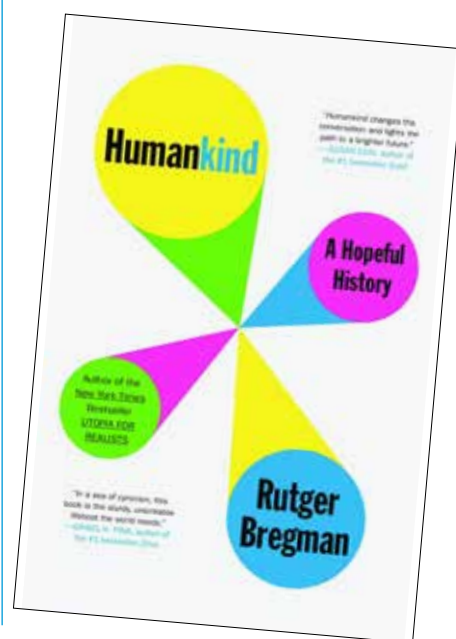
Rutger Bregman

Translated from the Dutch by Elizabeth Manton and Erica Moore

Bloomsbury, 2020, 468 pp., £20, h/b - ISBN: 9-781-4088-98932

In June 1965, six teenage schoolboys, marooned for fifteen months on a small, deserted Pacific island, did *not* degenerate *Lord of the Flies* style into brutal aggression, but made a pact never to quarrel, fended admirably for themselves, and were in peak condition when rescued. This is one of several myth-busting stories in *Humankind* to support the 'radical idea', "*That most people, deep down, are pretty decent*". (p2)

Young Dutch journalist Rutger Bregman employs a personal, somewhat conversational style, making reading easy. Not rigorously academic, the work is nevertheless thoroughly researched and well referenced, Bregman even travelling to Australia to interview key informants. Developing the central theme he writes that bombing – during the London blitz, or in Vietnam – far from demoralising people, strengthens their resolve and encourages co-operation (Prologue); that in battle, "*Most soldiers never fire their guns*" (p. 80); and, just as Columbus found the inhabitants of the Bahamas peaceful and entirely ignorant of weapons, so in 1945 were nonviolent people, totally abhorrent of bloodshed, revealed on Ifalik Island (p. 94). Further, the story of Easter Island is, on close investigation,



“Of a resourceful and resilient people... not a tale of impending doom, but a well-spring of hope” (p. 134); Zimbardo’s notorious Stanford Prison Experiment deliberately and fraudulently turned, *“A scientific experiment into a staged production”* (Ch 7); Milgram’s ‘shock machine’ subjects were brutally coerced into using high voltage settings, causing lasting psychological trauma to some (Ch 8); and finally, a woman attacked at night in 1960s New York was *not* ignored by 38 bystanders, and did *not* die alone. (Ch 9) In response, Bregman writes, *“How out of whack our view of human nature often is; how deftly journalists push those buttons to sell sensational stories; and how it is precisely in emergencies that we can count on one another”*. (p. 194)

Nevertheless, he says, *“In nearly every country, most people think most other people can’t be trusted”* (p. 12), possibly through over-exposure to ‘news’, designed less to inform than to grab attention. Bregman then pits Hobbes against Rousseau, and takes us through human evolution to show that, *“Although struggle and competition clearly factor... co-operation is much more critical”*. (p. 72) Then he describes the ‘fatal flaw’ that, as social animals, *“We feel more affinity for people like us”*, (p. 74) and so make multiple enemies and seek to cause them harm.

Explaining what went wrong, Bregman suggests, *“The advent of (the first large) settlements and private property... ushered in a new age... The 1 per cent began oppressing the 99 per cent, and smooth talkers ascended from commanders to generals and from chieftains to kings.”* (p. 102) He is strong but necessarily sketchy through limited space on the history of human social development, admitting the good points of ‘civilisation’ while cautioning that, *“Genuine progress (benefiting humanity) is a very recent phenomenon”*. (p. 110)

In Chapter 10 (‘How Empathy Blinds’), the fallacious assumption that enemies are bad people is exposed, and the truth – *“Our enemies are just like us”* – is examined favourably; even terrorists, for whom, *“Religion is an afterthought... They kill and die for each other... They (feel) part of something bigger, that their lives finally (hold) meaning”*. *“This is no excuse for their crimes”*, adds Bregman. *“It’s an explanation”* (pp. 208-9), part of which is that their leaders are war criminals, power-hungry, paranoid narcissists. (p. 221) A parallel is then drawn in Chapter 11 (‘How Power Corrupts’) with some corporation bosses exhibiting similar characteristics, Bregman saying, *“Power is like a drug... It appears to work like an anaesthetic that makes you insensate to other people”*. (p.227-8) Chapter 12 (‘What the Enlightenment Got Wrong’), tells of a principle from

the early seventeenth century; false but increasingly influential, central to the rise of capitalism, democracy and the rule of law: that people are basically selfish. The decline of religion is also said to contribute towards more cynical prevailing attitudes: *“God lost his job to the bureaucrats”*. (p. 247)

The Chapters in Parts Four (‘A New Realism’) and Five (‘The Other Cheek’) address questions like, *“What if (society’s institutions) expected the best of people instead of presuming the worst?”* (p. 250) Chapter 13 tells of the trusting and liberal management-style behind a highly successful Dutch healthcare organisation (pp. 272-3). Chapter 14 is about children, education, and the need for risky play to promote physical and mental wellbeing. Chapter 15 offers a critique of ‘democracy’, which risks suppressing people’s constructive capabilities and conscientious nature.

Bregman asserts that society need not be so negative. Chapter 16 (‘Drinking Tea with Terrorists’) tells of the remarkably humane Norwegian prison system that saves money through properly rehabilitated ex-convicts committing fewer crimes; and, in Denmark, would-be terrorists offered tea and a mentor deciding against going to Syria to fight. Chapter 17 (‘The Best Remedy for Hate, Injustice and Prejudice’), uses the example of South Africa’s avoidance of bloodshed at the ending of apartheid, describing how, when people from opposing sides are put together for long enough, they develop mutual respect. Chapter 18 (‘When the Soldiers Came Out of the Trenches’) retells the WW1 Christmas story of 1914, reinforcing the message that people are not intrinsically hostile.

Finally, in the Epilogue, Bregman offers ten rules to live by, *“Based on what I’ve learned over the past few years”*. (pp. 382 - 397) His recommendations are worth considering, but this section is not as convincing. For example, Bregman gave up meditating because, *“There’s always another email... or another video of a goat on a trampoline demanding immediate attention”*, seeming thus to be caught in the very trap he’s at such pains to warn others to avoid. By introducing an element of timelessness into one’s life, meditation does not take time; it gives you time. Importantly, too, in the context of this discussion, it enhances discernment.

Serious-minded readers might object to the anecdotal style of *Humankind*, which itself predicts a dismissive, doubting, even cynical reaction from many. It would be a mistake, though, not to embrace it as a timely gift. The pandemic, visiting the world during a threatening period of global destabilisation, offers an unparalleled

invitation and opportunity for people, as individuals and collectively, to reflect sincerely upon their values, ambitions, philosophies, plans and priorities. There could hardly, in 2020, be published a more appropriate and useful book.

Larry Culliford is a retired psychiatrist. He is the author of The Big Book of Wisdom (Hero, 2020) also numerous other books, papers, journal articles, and a regular blog on ‘Spiritual Wisdom for Secular Times’. Please refer to his website for details: www ldc52.co.uk. His new title, The Little Book of Wisdom, will appear in Spring 2021. Larry also supports the World Wide Wave of Wisdom: www.uwwow.net.

AN EVOLUTIONARY BIFURCATION

David Lorimer

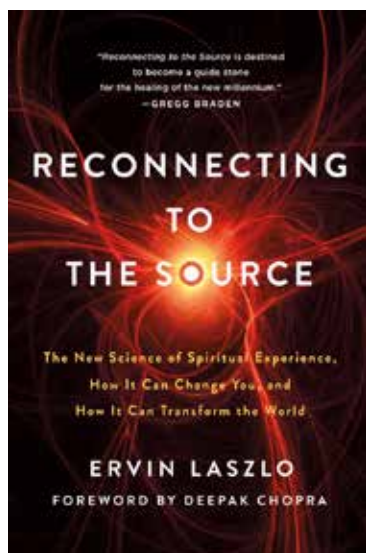
■ RECONNECTING TO THE SOURCE

Ervin Laszlo (Hon SMN)
St Martins Essentials, 2020,
244 pp., \$18.99, p/b – ISBN
978-1-250-24644-8

■ HOW WE CAN BUILD A BETTER WORLD

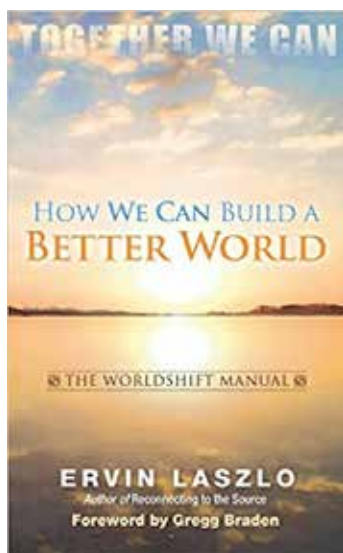
Ervin Laszlo (Hon SMN)
Waterside Books, 2020, 140
pp., \$14.95, p/b – ISBN
978-1-85763-724-5

More than 20 years ago, Ervin published a book entitled *The Inner Limits of Mankind*, and gave a talk in London at the home of the late Baroness Edmee di Pauli. We had already heard about outer limits from the Club of Rome, of which Ervin is a member, but this addressed our psychological and spiritual limits, which are now being tested by current pressures at every level. The first book is about the new science of spiritual experience and its transformative potential, building on his earlier work on physics and consciousness studies while reinstating the human dimension. Our loss of orientation and meaning can be remedied by reconnecting to the Source both within and without, which will in turn reconnect us ‘to each other, to nature and to the universe.’ This world is neither mechanical nor materialistic, but rather an in-formed hologram in which we are vibrational and coherent configurations in what David Bohm called the explicate or unfolded evolutionary order tending towards coherence and complexity. This process is characterised by a holotropic attractor (tending towards wholeness), the emergence of which is analysed in a number of fields – technology, community, health, education, economy, business and politics - with an ethos of solidarity, empathy and compassion.



We ourselves can align with this holotropism, which is supremely manifest in deep spiritual experience. The second part of the book features an extraordinary bouquet of such transformative experiences, and individual readers will be struck by different narratives. For me, the highlights were Federico Faggin, Jane Goodall, Jean Houston, James O'Dea, Pierre Pradevand, Masami Saionji and especially Barbara Marx Hubbard. Reflecting on his transformative experience of being the light, Federico writes that 'the essence of reality is a substance that knows itself in its self-reflection, and its self-knowing feels like an irrepressible and dynamic love.' This seems to me entirely on the mark, and if this were our common starting point for the creation of a new world and new systems of felt interconnectedness based on the golden rule, we could indeed co-create a beautiful future. Barbara's experience was of a Loving Universal Human Presence which we essentially all are and that the evolutionary impulse is 'towards expanding consciousness, greater freedom, and deeper access to complex order, connecting in love' as an aligning magnetic field. Further, she writes that 'at some point there is a non-linear exponential interaction of what is emerging, and the system cooperates in its own self-transcendence' leading to what she calls synergistic democracy. If this formulation is correct, then it provides essential assessment criteria for proposals like the Great Reset: does this bring an expansion of consciousness, an enhancement of freedom and the advent of a loving order? If not, it does not represent a positive human evolutionary development. Masami Saionji reminds us that we often look to outside powers to remedy problems rather than 'the power of our own profound, harmonious, sacred cosmic consciousness.'

In reflecting on these experiences and his own life as a concert pianist and systems thinker, Ervin finds that he is still



searching for wholeness and harmony in everything he encounters – significantly, his first book was called *Essential Society: An Ontological Reconstruction*. Nearly 60 years on, we still need this ontological reconstruction, along with its ethical equivalent. The deep meaning of these experiences 'inspires love and belonging among and between all things...we are, or can be, loving beings in love-oriented world.' (p. 191) More and more people are realising that we need to change, and that we can change to align more closely with our common essential identity.

The second book – a worldshift manual - is more practical in its orientation, but flows from the implications of the first, reminding us that the outcome of the global crisis is not foreclosed but is sensitive to our intentions, actions and aspirations: the danger is also an opportunity. It also includes as appendices the emerging convergent vision in physics, the life sciences and consciousness studies. From the angles of complex systems, we are at a chaos point of bifurcation, a phase transition sensitive to decisive fluctuations. We need a fundamental course correction in terms of our cultural worldviews, values and priorities that are currently set by the dominant 1% who will try to manipulate outcomes to maintain and extend their wealth and power. The relationships between technology and ethics, ends and means, innovation and tradition, secrecy and disclosure are critical issues that need to be on the table. If we want to build genuine trust, we must in turn demand truth and transparency from our leaders.

The subsequent description of unsustainable conditions in ecology and systems will be familiar to most readers, and brings us to what can be done, starting with a change of thinking and consciousness. This is emphatically not what those in power have in mind with their agenda of further dependency,

digital surveillance and control systems, and corresponding restrictions on freedom of thought, expression and travel. Ervin's answer is an aspirational 'upshift', the elements of which I think are valuable at a personal level but arguably not sufficient to initiate a systemic transformation without worldwide networked collaboration and, arguably, widespread non-violent civil disobedience. Judging from current levels of fear-induced passivity and conformity, we will need display a great deal more integrity and moral courage in order to generate sufficient pressure to create any decisive fluctuation. Individually, we can adapt our aspirations, live with diversity, question our outmoded beliefs and assumptions and faulty tenets (these are excellent lists) many of which are still widely upheld in the existing system based on self-centred and short-sighted views incompatible with an emerging planetary consciousness entailing respect for diversity and a universal sense of responsibility. I found the visionary forecast for 2030 more aspirational than realistic, even if I agree with all its tenets. It's just that I can't see how we get there from here, although the White Paper for a holistic politics sets out the necessary principles by starting from the (common) good of the whole rather than the part.

As a final observation, I'd like to comment on the contributions from a Chinese perspective by Frederick Chavalit Tsao, who, like Danah Zohar and Shantena Sabbadini, draws interesting parallels between quantum physics and the principles of Chinese philosophy with its understanding of wholeness and natural rhythms reflected in the Tao and the I Ching. He advocates a Middle Way of harmony, alignment and the more Confucian ideas of stability and structural wisdom. In his second contribution, he explains how President Xi Jinping has 'urged the promotion of a worldview covering four different levels, from the universe all the way to the individual: a cosmological view that seeks oneness between humanity and nature, a global view that urges cooperation among all nations, a social view that seeks harmony amidst diversity, and a moral view that strives for goodness.'

This would be admirable if implemented, but another strand of Chinese thought is contained in Sun Tzu's Art of War. Western adoption of their lockdown model has devastated business, weakened economies and subverted Western values; and while cancelling domestic flights, international flights continued for some weeks. However, if the above aspirations are indeed followed, China could make a very positive contribution to a more cooperative future. Much depends on how top-down 'managing for stability and harmony' is handled. As a postscript let me mention the other inspiring

essay on Taoism from the first book by Zhi-Gang Sha explaining the ten great Da qualities as a blueprint for perennial spirituality in terms of the greatest love, forgiveness, compassion, light, humility, harmony, flourishing, gratitude, enlightenment and culminating in service – a summation of spiritual wisdom. My conclusion is that the reconnecting to the Source and enacting the upshift are necessary but not sufficient for a collective transition to planetary consciousness. We will also require co-ordinated thinking and consequent action.

THE LAW OF BEING

David Lorimer

■ LOVE AND THE DIVINE FEMININE

David Cadman (SMN)

Panacea Books, 2020, 139 pp., £8.99, p/b – ISBN 979-8-655384-095

David approaches the theme of love from his Quaker background of silence and being, based on wide reading and deep reflection. In his preface, he reports a series of profound messages from Love, articulating its essential nature of uniting the true and good and enquiring into the very nature of Being in its rhythm of separation and reunion, giving and taking held in a harmonious rhythm. This makes for a lyrical introduction striking a similar note to that of Kahlil Gibran. His message is that we need to take love seriously, to bring it to the fore both privately and publicly – one which I regard as quintessentially timely, and with which we have to engage with the utmost seriousness.

The book draws extensively on the work of Anne Baring and Cynthia Bourgeault among many others. The first chapter summarises the transition

from a lunar to a solar myth, from the great mother to the dominator system of patriarchy, from wholeness and integration to conquest and opposition with its battles between light and darkness, good and evil. Knowledge of this historical process is essential to understanding our own times and predicament, and sets the agenda for our common future, as Anne also elaborated in her recent webinar. David explains how the suppression of the feminine Holy Spirit within the Church also played a significant role and this is taken up in the second chapter about Yeshua and Mary Magdalene. It is clear in the Gnostic Gospels that there is a tension between leadership of Peter eventually institutionalised in the Catholic Church and that of Mary embodying not only the essential teachings of love but an inner knowing based on initiation and direct experience. It was this immanent mystical experience of the Divine that became heretical and was marginalised in relation to the theology of the vicarious atonement of original sin and redemption, making the believer entirely dependent.

The model of a loving companionship between man and woman is an completely different exemplar, archetypally between the Logos and Sophia. It is time to reinstate Mary Magdalene fully to represent Divine Wisdom and the Divine Feminine, ‘calling Christianity back to the love story at the heart of its theology’, integrating eros with agape, and rediscovering interconnection and ‘relatingness’. At this point David interweaves his own story about the dangers we face when we cannot hear the voice of the Goddess. This brings him to formulate a Myth of Love, a new Soul Consciousness for our time that overcomes the basic pattern of a sense of separation and enables us to sense once again the sacredness of Nature as Gaia and the Great Mother on which we depend. This is ‘new way of being, *being with ourselves, being with the Earth and being with the Divine.*’ (p. 82) He elaborates: Love is God, or rather God is Love, and Love flows to us so that we can love. Love flows from Love to love, and our task is not submission but a profound surrender to Love. We need to give ourselves to Love out of love’ – this is the way of the heart, the disclosure of the divine beloved, culminating in the realisation, as Peter Deunov also insisted, that Love is the Law of Being; in this sense, the meaning of human incarnation lies in how we have lived and applied this law as part of the whole.

The next chapter poses and answers a few questions, also in relation to the contemporary challenges we face, seeking not escape and transcendence but rather transformation, ‘moving away from an old culture of separation and prejudice towards a new culture of

integration and acceptance.’ (p. 98) The last part returns to a story or parable about the king who lost his memory. He encounters a wolf who explains to him the nature of the seasons and the elements, which he must know both in his head and in his heart. He is told that he will not regain his memory by thinking and that he must *feel* the awakening of the earth and that his feet must connect him to the land. Each season with its corresponding direction has its own role to play in the cycle of life. We too need to remember our still centre and inherent wholeness, our interconnectedness with each other and with the Earth represented by this inspiring new narrative – a Myth of Love, Being in Love.

PSYCHOLOGY- CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

THE ORIGIN OF SENTIENT CONSCIOUSNESS: MATHEMATICAL OR ONTOLOGICAL?

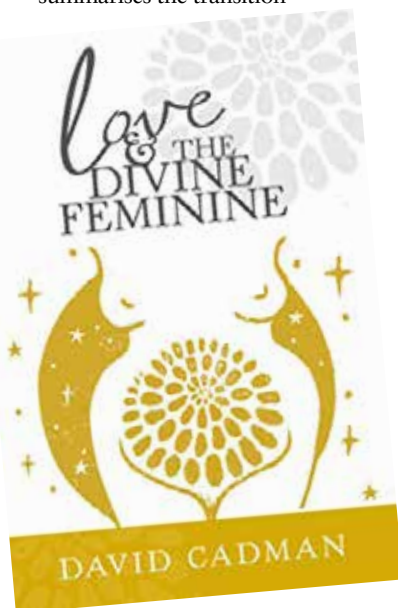
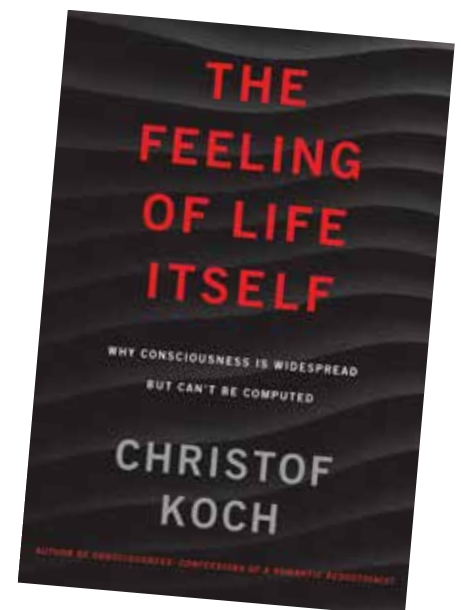
Steve Minett

■ THE FEELING OF LIFE ITSELF: WHY CONSCIOUSNESS IS WIDESPREAD BUT CAN'T BE COMPUTED

Christof Koch

MIT Press, 2019, - ISBN 978-0-262-04281-9

I published a large book on consciousness¹, with a strikingly similar title. Consequently, and perhaps inevitably, this review will consist of a ‘compare-and-contrast’ analysis of our respective positions on this subject.



We both put forward a theory as to where consciousness comes from; Koch's is called Integrated Information Theory (IIT), mine is grounded in Process Philosophy (largely from the later work of A.N. Whitehead) combined with the ontological implications of quantum mechanics. While we agree on a number of important issues, I find certain aspects of IIT unpalatable; firstly, it comes with a liberal sprinkling of mathematical 'fairy dust', which (to the frustration of a near-innumerate like me) seems to 'magic up' consciousness out of nowhere. (Similar, in this respect to Douglas Hofstadter's insistence that 'I am a Strange Loop'²). IIT also enthrones information in its title, whereas I argue that an exclusive focus on information-processing (what I call 'Infomania') has been a major stumbling block for theories of consciousness. But, perhaps above all, it's the absence of any reference to emotion, and more especially affect (neither word appears in the book's index), in relation to the nature of consciousness that profoundly distances my position from Koch's.

Starting with our areas of agreement: first, the vexed issue of a definition. Koch is admirably clear on dismissing the common confusion of consciousness with intelligence. He emphasises that experience (sentience, feeling) is the essence of consciousness. Whitehead, of course, saw experience as constituting the ultimate building blocks of reality (an idea he took from William James), thus obviating the Cartesian split between mental and physical. In a very similar way Koch claims that the mental and the physical are grounded in extrinsic and intrinsic causal powers; "Causal power of two different kinds is the only sort of stuff needed to explain everything in the universe. These powers constitute ultimate reality." (p. 166) With a small exception, Koch is also suitably sceptical about Computationalism (arguably the predominant theory of consciousness in Western scientific culture.) The exception concerns what he called 'neuromorphic electronic hardware'. He claims that this, "... could amass sufficient intrinsic cause-effect power to ..." enable a computer, "to feel like something". 'Intrinsic cause-effect power' is part of Koch's explanation of the origin of consciousness, but before delving into that, let me turn to the subject of facial recognition to challenge even this remote possibility of computer consciousness.

As a young researcher, Koch formed a working bond with the Nobel-prize-winner, Francis Crick. Following his work, together with James Watson, on the structure of DNA, Crick devoted the rest of his scientific career to consciousness studies. Together, Crick and Koch came up with the widely influential concept of the 'neural correlates of consciousness' (NCC). In this book, Koch defines these as, "the minimal neuronal mechanisms

jointly sufficient for any one specific conscious percept." (p. 48) Koch also states that NCC are 'ontologically neutral', contrary to the way in which the concept has often been interpreted in neuroscience. This means that successfully identifying NCC is entirely consistent with Whitehead's Process Philosophy.

In regard to facial recognition, Koch picks out the two fusiform face areas, one on each side of the underbelly of the cortex, as examples of NCCs. My issue with this refers back to how consciousness should be defined: for me, 'consciousness' has to include an affective evaluation of what is being experienced - without this the process under consideration is simply an exercise of intelligence. As is well-known, Artificial Intelligence systems are now being used to identify faces, but when humans do so they will have an affective reaction, good, bad or neutral - which defines such acts of recognition as conscious experiences. When computers match a face to a name, they feel nothing; machines don't have affects, which is why they will never be conscious.

We can now look more closely at Integrated Information Theory, Koch's core theory of consciousness taken from Giulio Tononi, who Koch describes as, "a polymath renaissance scholar" and "the living embodiment of the Magister Ludi of Hermann Hesse's novel *The Glass Bead Game*". Koch identifies the five axioms of IIT: "any experience exists for itself, is structured, is the specific way it is, is one, and is definite." (p. 74) Given my commitment to Process Philosophy, I have issues with most of these assumptions. As always in consciousness studies, the destination is determined by where you choose to start: let me suggest that it's a mistake to start with an adult human being's experience of consciousness - much better to begin at the beginning, both phylogenetically and ontogenetically. Few, if any, of IIT's assumptions can be said to sit comfortably with the experience of either a single-celled organism or a new-born human infant, though (along with Whitehead) I would emphatically assert that both are sentient creatures. Koch states that "consciousness needs some sort of mechanism". (p. 75) I agree with this but mechanisms such as NCCs are required to convert to the 'raw material' of experience, or feelings, at every level.

My concern with IIT is that its mechanism seems to be required in order to *generate* consciousness, rather than *converting* it out of universally pre-existing experience: Koch refers to 'the physical substrate of consciousness', which he poetically dubs 'the Whole'. This is, "the most irreducible part of any system, the one that makes the most

difference to itself. ... only this Whole has an experience. ... [other circuits] ... do not exist for themselves, as they ... have lesser intrinsic power." (p. 87) He adds that; "... any experience is identical to the irreducible, causal interaction of the interdependent physical mechanism that makes up the Whole. It is an identity relationship - every facet of any experience maps completely onto the associated maximally irreducible cause-effect structure with nothing left over on either side." (p.88) Several issues concern me about all this: firstly, its retention of a mental/physical dichotomy. As above, given the mystification of the very concept of matter by quantum mechanics, one of the great advantages of Process Philosophy is its overcoming of this division. Secondly, IIT's reliance on causation as an explanatory factor for consciousness exposes it to the accusation of substituting one mystery for another: as any examination of Western philosophy (especially the work of David Hume) will confirm, *causation* can hardly be claimed as an intellectual 'fixed point' to which an explanation of consciousness can be attached.

Finally, IIT seems to be overly restrictive when it comes to subjects (or identities) and experience: at the bottom of the hierarchy, Koch writes, "What would an extrinsic experience be? When it is the experience of somebody else, perhaps? But then it is not yours." (p. 74) The implication here seems to be that only a subject with a certain level of 'identity status' can have an experience. However, according to Process Philosophy, even entities with the vaguest and most nugatory identities, such as photons, can have a 'puff of experience'. Also, at the top of the hierarchy, Koch claims that; "Experiences do not aggregate into larger, superordinate experiences. Closely interacting lovers, dancers, athletes, soldiers, and so on do not give rise to a group mind, with experiences above and beyond those of the individuals making up the group." (p. 163)

Let me quote just two writers who flatly contradict this: firstly, Rita Carter says that: "Like ants in a colony or bees in a hive, our individual intentions become subsumed by that of the group."³ In addition, Jonathan Haidt, in his book, *The Righteous Mind*, says that human societies have often been compared to beehives, and he goes on to say that while many animals are social, living in groups, flocks, or herds, only a few species have crossed the threshold and become 'eusocial'. This means that they live in very large groups with some form of internal structure, enabling them to reap the benefits of the division of labour. Haidt argues that we are 90 percent chimp and 10 percent bee. He suggests that this switch from individualism to hive-mentality may originally have been a group-related adaptation. He gives three examples

as to what can cause people to switch into the 'hive-awe' state of mind and also speculates about the underlying mechanism: "I described three common ways in which people flip the hive switch: awe in nature, Durkheimian drugs, and raves." He describes recent findings which suggest that oxytocin and mirror neurones are the stuff of which the hive switch is made: "Oxytocin bonds people to their groups, not to all of humanity. Mirror neurones help people empathise with others, but particularly those that share their moral matrix."⁴ We can recognise here a great deal of congruence with Whitehead's ontology: this ten-percent-tendency of human groups to transform into an 'awe-hive-super-organism' can be equated with Whitehead's notion of 'compound individuals' emerging from a vast hierarchy of 'drops of experience'.

*Steve Minett, PhD is the author of **Consciousness as Feeling**, reviewed in the last issue.*

Endnotes

- 1 Minett, Steve, 'Consciousness as Feeling: a Theory of the Nature and Function of Consciousness', 2019, The Edwin Mellen Press, New York. Click on this link for further information; <https://consciousness.wordpress.com/my-book-on-consciousness-theory>
- 2 Hofstadter, Douglas, 'I am a Strange Loop', 2007, Basic Books
- 3 Carter, Rita, 'Consciousness', 2002, Weidenfeld Nicolson, p.220
- 4 Haidt, Jonathan, 'The Righteous Mind', 2012, Penguin, p.354

FUNDAMENTAL WELL-BEING

David Lorimer

THE FINDERS

Jeffery A. Martin
Integration Press, 2019, 226 pp., \$14.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-57242-556-9

At the instigation of Peter Fenwick, Dr Jeffery Martin was a keynote speaker at our 2019 Mystics and Scientists conference on Technology, Spirituality and Well-being, where he spoke about his 15-year research programme on the nature or fundamental well-being for what he calls persistent nonsymbolic experience (PNSE). The title of this book implicitly refers to spiritual seekers as people who have not yet found what they are looking for. Over the summer, Peter invited me to take part in the introductory programme 45 days to Awakening (www.45daystoawakening.com) – which includes positive psychology exercises, one hour of daily meditation and other assignments including writing your own eulogy. One

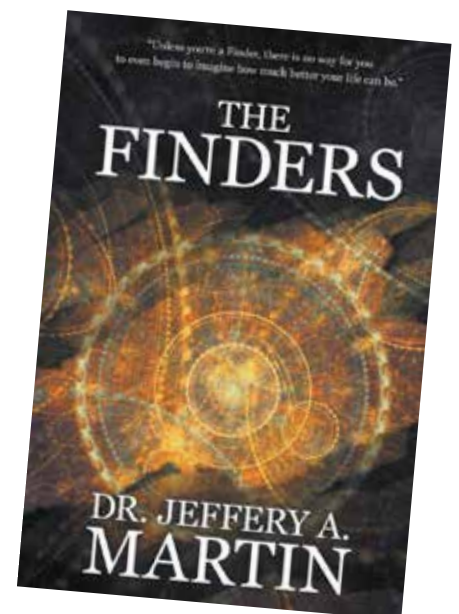
of unique features of the programme is before and after questionnaire assessments of various measures of well-being, so that the researchers can ascertain what improvements have come about. In this way, every participant becomes part of this ongoing research, which shows that 65% achieve awakening. Although I myself was in the residual 35%, I can strongly recommend taking part and felt I benefited overall, not least from the group exercises where each member had to say a sentence beginning 'awareness is...' This led me to a more subtle understanding of the relationship between transcendence and immanence where one represents *beyond* and the other *within*. We are in the world, but the world is also in us, or, as Plotinus put it, 'we are within a reality that is also within us.'

There is no doubt that this longitudinal research is ground breaking in mapping the field and the characteristics of what Jeffery calls locations; the book has accordingly been widely endorsed by many leading figures in consciousness studies. The first part considers the tension between the narrative self/ego/inner voice and fundamental well-being. Transition from the first state to the second is marked by replacement of discontent, worry and fear 'by a sense that everything is fundamentally okay, that you are safe, whole, and fine just as you are.' You will be at peace and able to thrive and enjoy life, which corresponds to what Abraham Maslow called 'the high plateau experience' after he had realised that a stage of self-transcendence lay beyond self-actualisation. Once the narrative self falls away, awareness is more centred on the present moment in a state of fundamental contentment that is no longer so concerned with control and seeking approval. The basis of the study as a whole is a series of lengthy interviews about changes in cognition, emotion, perception and memory.

As the research proceeded, a map of five main 'locations' emerged as phases or clusters along a single continuum. This section is prefaced by a very astute remark from William James: 'there are no differences but differences of degree between different degrees of difference and no difference.' Moving from Location 1 along to Location 5 and beyond involves a series of transitions starting with a sense of okayness, stillness and spaciousness where one is less susceptible to psychological triggers. Location 2 has a more impersonal feel and a corresponding non-duality in addition to an intensification of Location 1 features. Location 3 is qualitatively different in being infused with compassion, joy and love as 'facets of a single meta-emotion' and representing the mysticism of the heart in Christianity and Sufism with a sense of deep connectedness and union. Many feel that this must be the peak of well-being. For

some people, therefore, the transition to Location 4 can feel like a loss, and it is a further turn of the non-dual spiral found in Location 2. Here there is no sense of agency, and a complete immersion in the present moment with life experienced as an unfolding process. People report a sense of freedom, while the lack of emotion and the need for approval can sometimes cause challenges in family and social relationships. Anyone proceeding to Location 5 and beyond will likely have been through 4 and be undergoing a process of further reintegration, especially on the 'path of humanity' rather than the 'path of freedom.' It is at this stage is that intuitive perceptions and psi begin to occur more frequently, perhaps because of this sense of 'being the universe' without boundaries.

The third part looks in more detail at core aspects of fundamental well-being, covering the interview areas mentioned above – cognition, emotion, perception and memory – as well as the sense of self. This provides many individual nuances such as how parents in Location 4 lose their personal love for their child once they have transcended their conditioned orientation response. Crucial is this heightened present-moment awareness that can also enhance the senses. Another interesting finding is that people at Location 4 not only have fewer self-referential thoughts but have to make lists of planned events and schedules that would previously have been memorised. The 'God-sized hole' is filled with fundamental well-being, while the 'doer' progressively disappears. In a 'zoomed out' state, there is an undifferentiated spaciousness and everything is felt to be perfect exactly as it is, which is paradoxical for the 'zoomed in' personality in view of all the world's suffering. The fourth part covers the lived reality of fundamental well-being including the impact on relationships and



even sex of the transition to one of the locations. There is no necessary correlation between social action and fundamental well-being, the loss of which at this stage is likely to be due to stress; some even reject the state for personal reasons – one subject felt that he had ‘traded his humanity’, but the vast majority find the effects hugely beneficial and that life flows more smoothly with more synchronicities and a deep sense of peace. Appendices contain some more research results, which can be viewed in full www.nonsymbolic.org. Overall, this book is a must read for anyone interested in the major features of transpersonal development and the achievement of higher and broader states of consciousness.

A NEW UNDERSTANDING

Gunnel Minett

■ THE BRAIN FROM THE INSIDE OUT

György Buzsáki

Oxford University Press 2019,
464 pp., £37.28, h/b - ISBN-10:
0190905387

Throughout human history we have been trying to understand how the brain works and in particular how it forms consciousness and the psyche. There have been many speculations and theories, all with one thing in common - they have looked at the brain from the outside-in. For a period, this approach was taken to an extreme. Behaviourism tried to ignore any interpretation as to how the brain worked.

To this day, mainstream psychiatry, in particular in the United States, has a mechanistic approach, with its roots in Behaviourism. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) is a professional handbook, often used to diagnose patients and to draw boundaries among mental disorders. According to the American Psychiatric Association, the “goal in developing DSM-5 is an evidence-based manual that is useful to clinicians in helping them accurately diagnose mental disorders.” Some examples are; adjustment disorder, reactive attachment disorder, disruptive mood dysregulation disorder, intermittent explosive disorder, and somatic symptom disorder. This whole approach comes from the long tradition of an outside-in approach to understanding how the human brain works.

But, as the title of his new book *The Brain from the Inside out*, the Biggs Professor of Neuroscience at New York University School of Medicine, György Buzsáki argues that this is based on an outdated understanding of how the brain actually works. Instead, he

says, we should distinguish between what is meaningful to a scientist who is observing the brain, i.e. the ‘outside-in’ perspective, and what you can be described as meaningful to the brain itself, i.e. the ‘inside-out’ perspective. In the outside-in approach, the brain is a passive receiver and interpreter of the outside world. But once you start looking at what actually happens in the brain, things start to look very different.

Drawing from a vast area of neuroscience research, Buzsáki argues that the inside-out approach is the way forward. Neuroscientists are presenting more and more detailed knowledge as to how our sight, hearing, touch, and physical movements are mapped to activities in different areas in the brain. Scientists, in turn, relate neural activity to external stimuli. He points to the fact that there is much more happening ‘on the inside’. This can only be fully understood by taking the inside-out approach. One example is how the brain handles space and time. It is not a coincidence that we use phrases such as ‘length of time’, ‘timeline’, ‘the past is behind us’ and ‘the future is in front of us’. Time in itself is a ‘man-made’ concept that the brain has to interpret. So in order for the brain to perceive time it links space and time together.

Another example is how we use technology to externalise thought. The prefrontal cortical areas can be described as an internalised action system. Plans and thoughts are a form of internalised neuronal patterns that serve as a buffer for action, even if the action is delayed by days or even years. The same brain areas are also responsible for externalising our thoughts in the forms of; artefacts, language, art, and literature.

This has led Buzsáki to take the inside-out approach, which means that the brain is an active explorer of the world rather than a passive interpreter. Scientists should, therefore, aim to understand brain activity – its patterns and principles – without immediate reference to the outside world. “The brain,” he says, “should be treated as an independent variable because behaviour and cognition depend on brain activity, not the other way around.”

The brain is far from a ‘blank slate’ at birth. Rather, we are born with a set of ‘expectations’ that the brain actively tries to detect when we interact with the world around us. So the brain is more of an explorer than a passive processor of input from the outside world. The way we perceive the world may also be actively shaping how we engage with it. This means that it is the active exploration of environment that provides meaning to the neural information being processed. In other

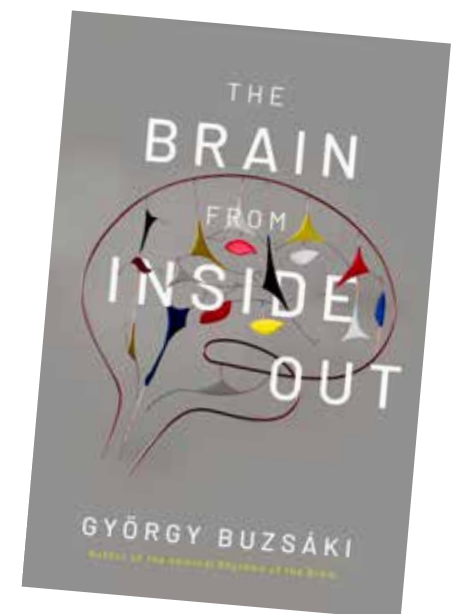
words, a far more active interaction than previously thought.

Another conclusion Buzsáki draws is that the brain can be described as two brains rather than one. This is similar to the thinking of Israeli psychologist Daniel Kahneman, who proposed ‘system one’ and ‘system two’, in his book *Thinking Fast and Slow*. Buzsáki also refers to this in his book, and even confesses that he was rather concerned suspecting that he had been influenced by Kahneman, even though he had not read the book.

The early part of the book sets out the foundation of his argument. To illustrate why it is paradigm-shifting he presents a comprehensive review of much of ‘Systems Neuroscience’. The middle section focuses on brain rhythms, the hippocampal place cell system, as well as the logic and mechanisms of gain control in neural network operation. The final section, presents new ideas on the log-normal distributions found in neuronal organisation and how this supports the theories of fast and slow dynamics in the brain.

Overall, the book is profound and full of wisdom for both science and culture in general. It challenges the established views about how the brain and the world work together, and it inspires new ideas regarding the psyche and consciousness. Despite detailed and sometimes technical explanations the book is accessible without too much previous knowledge. Scores of diagrams highlight the various experiments and concepts supporting this new theory.

We still do not know exactly how the brain works and we probably have a long way to go. But for anyone who wants to get a picture of how far science has reached, this book certainly offers that.



ECOLOGY-POLITICS

TOWARDS A PEOPLE-LED RENAISSANCE

David Lorimer

■ THE GREAT RE-THINK

Colin Tudge

Pari Publishing, 2020, 363 pp., £15, p/b – ISBN 978-8-8895604-34-3

Colin's felicitous phrase 'convivial societies in a flourishing biosphere' is the mantra conveyed by this remarkable *tour de force* of a book, the fruit of a lifetime of wide reading and deep reflection on the key challenges of our time, rooted in his case in our agricultural practices. The thesis is that we have to rethink everything from the first principles of morality and ecology, grounded in a transcendent metaphysics that was also rediscovered in the Florentine renaissance. Such a renaissance has to be a grass roots initiative for the very good reason that the dominant corporate oligarchy – a complex represented by Big Energy, Big Food, Big Agriculture, Big Tech, Big Chemical, Big Pharma and Big Finance, with its focus on increasing wealth and power - has bought up government policy and mainstream media, forming what some people refer to as a Deep State in terms of its pervasive global influence. However, as Paul Hawken noted in his 2007 book, *Blessed Unrest*, millions of NGOs are already working towards a more humane, regenerative and compassionate world, but the whole movement lacks a coordinating structure that could potentially be provided through Internet means. This theme has come up in a number of our recent webinars, notably in connection with indigenous cultures and the Humanity Rising initiative.

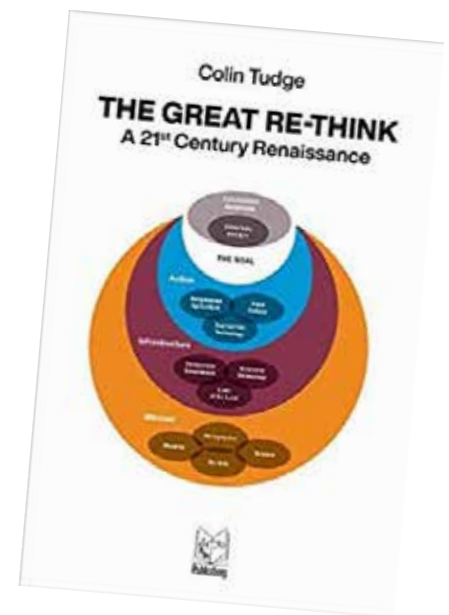
As Colin shows in the diagram accompanying his article in this issue, a grassroots Renaissance has to begin with a change of mindset and therefore values, the transformation of infrastructure towards genuine democratic government, green economic democracy and law, and action in terms of enlightened agriculture, food culture and appropriate technology, all in the service of a convivial society in a flourishing biosphere. This means redefining our aspirations and correspondingly our institutions and values, elements that determine the structure of the book: the nature of the task, the goal, action, infrastructure, mindset and prospects for the future. On the diagnosis front, Colin notes that our economies are still geared to maximising consumption and economic growth rather than well-being, and gives a good overview of the present state of the world. He then asks three fundamental questions: what is good?

What is necessary? What is possible? He states – quite rightly in my view – that 'All human action should be guided by moral/metaphysical principles on the one hand, and by the principles of ecology on the other.' (p. 40) The systems implication is that 'everything must be rethought in the light of everything else' and in context in order to arrive at a coherent holistic worldview that applies perennial principles to everyday life.

The current economic context is one of neoliberal competition originating in the 1980s, and which is now past its sell by date in terms of collateral destructive social and ecological fallout and the fallacy of such metaphors as trickle-down and rising tides lifting all boats in a world of rising inequality. Even 100 years ago, philosophers like Kropotkin were highlighting mutual aid and cooperation as an alternative view on Darwin, which the more recent work of David Loye has reinforced. We are by nature convivial creatures with built-in empathy for each other. A flourishing biosphere has to be based on the same fundamental principles of morality, ecology and the sense of the sacred, characterised by Albert Schweitzer as Reverence for Life: 'although competition is an inescapable fact of nature, cooperation is the norm.' (p. 84) Moreover, Gaia theory has amply demonstrated the reciprocity between life and the Earth in complex ecosystem feedback loops.

In terms of action related to jobs, crafts and robots, Colin charts the evolution of technology where IT 'can be seen as the ultimate extended phenotype.' Schweitzer also pointed out that there were three forms of progress relating to technology, socialisation and spirituality – he regarded the last as the most important, what Colin calls progress of heart and mind. Incredibly, he notes that 'we are organising our own redundancy as a species, relegating humanity itself to the sidelines... which is surely not sensible ambition.' (p. 109) This policy is underpinned by 'uncritical technophilia' in the service of maximising short-term profit and market share – characterised as the 'realistic' view; this word needs to be comprehensively redefined. The same redundancy is evident in industrial agromonoculture with its arguments about economies of scale, and consequent displacement of millions of subsistence farmers into urban slums. Interestingly, current developments echo those of the early 19th century when skilled tradespeople were replaced by poorly paid machine minders. Hence Colin's powerful argument that 'what matters most is the effect that our technologies have on ourselves – our ways of life, our politics, our relationships, our health, our psyche – and on fellow creatures and only on Earth.' (p. 121)

This brings him into the centrality of



agriculture with its emphasis on 'bigger and smarter technologies that maximise outputs and minimise labour' whereby machinery will eventually be controlled from the farmer's computer terminal. Such developments, as Colin rightly points out, 'are the very opposite of what is required to foster conviviality and to keep the natural world in good heart.' He then discusses the evolution of agricultural systems, explaining his own policy of 'enlightened agriculture' which he has translated into corresponding organisations and conferences on Real Farming. This is all well worth reading in detail - farms are regarded as ecosystems and agriculture as a key component of the biosphere. The key is to imitate Nature's biological efficiency of sustaining life with minimal input and minimum waste, which involves a radical redefinition of the term efficiency as understood in capitalist terms. Colin sums this up in a series of six great untruths that threaten to kill us all. Correspondingly, he explained his ideas on a new food culture, drawing on the history of the nutrition and emphasising the importance of traditional cooking and folk knowledge, including putting cooking and gardening on the school curriculum.

The section on infrastructure covers political governance, an economy fit for purpose, and law as it relates to land management. Colin engages in radical critiques of all these systems, proposing a number of axes between polarities and advancing a view based on Keir Hardie's green social democracy to replace our existing system of 'metadawinism' and rule by oligarchy – the key question becomes 'how to break the feedback loop that keeps the oligarchy and power and to expose the crude thinking lies behind it.' (p. 200) He shows through the history of economics how we have evolved a

system devoid of morality, ecological principles and compassion, a somewhat ironic development in view of Adam Smith's work on human sympathy. Since the 1980s, finance capitalism has come to dominate economic systems where wealth has trickled up, markedly so as a result of pandemic lockdowns that have devastated small businesses worldwide. Colin sets out six key components of Green economic democracy, including a role for community ownership with a minimalist and circular economy. His chapter on the law of the land builds constructively on the radical ideas of Henry George.

The last part on mindset brings us to philosophical and ethical essentials required to underpin a 21st-century Renaissance. Colin discusses three basic approaches to morality – utilitarian/ consequentialist, deontological/ focused on duty, and virtue ethics. He then proposes a universal morality based on compassion, humility and reverence for life, quoting the Dalai Lama's call for a Revolution of Compassion. The next chapter gives a good summary overview of the history of science, culminating in an important section on the need for science to be taught alongside philosophy of science, including such empathic approaches like that of Barbara McClintock. I would like to have seen some mention in this discussion of the work of RG Collingwood, whose *Essay on Metaphysics* was a riposte to the logical positivism of the 1930s, making it crystal clear that metaphysics represented by presuppositions is an essential underpinning of all intellectual activity, including science. This work has more recently been developed by Nicholas Maxwell.

Overall, the cultural missing link is the metaphysics with its core questions: what is the universe really like? What is goodness? How do we know what is true? How come? In addressing the first question, Colin discusses transcendence, oneness, the sense of mystery and intuition. Increasing numbers of people, including myself, are sympathetic to the view that 'consciousness may be a principal component of the universe itself' (p. 314). However, Colin does not take the further step of explicitly discussing the western tradition of *gnosis* or direct non-dual knowledge that is its own experiential validation through what is traditionally known as the eye of the heart or the eye of contemplation. By contrast, the eye of reason requires evidential proof since its method and perception is indirect rather than direct, as Radhakrishnan has pointed out. The concept of oneness is absolutely crucial since it logically entails interdependence and interconnectedness that have profound implications at every level, as I myself have argued in *Resonant Mind* with my proposal for

an ethic of interconnectedness. At the very least, Colin argues that the ideas of transcendence and oneness should be taken seriously along with his ethic of compassion, humility and reverence for life.

All social movements are based on key orienting principles and ideas. Most readers will agree that we are in need of a transformative upgrade based on our most profound transcendent and scientific principles. As Colin highlights in his conclusion, the ingredients are in fact already in place but kept largely out of view by the pressure of our current dominating infrastructure. As I suggested in my first paragraph, we need better coordination and communication of this New Renaissance worldview to which the Network is devoted, along with countless resonating self-organising initiatives. This brilliant analytical synthesis is a hugely significant contribution to articulating the necessary framework and should be very widely read, discussed and acted upon.

MUTUAL SECURITY AND UNIVERSAL RESPONSIBILITY

David Lorimer

■ WHAT IS AT STAKE NOW

Mikhael Gorbachev

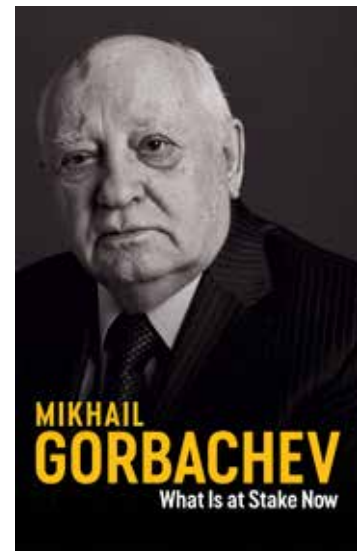
Polity, 2020, 123 pp., £12.99, h/b – ISBN 978-1-509543-21-2

■ OUR ONLY HOME

HH The Dalai Lama with Fritz Alt

Bloomsbury Sigma, 2020, 144 pp., £10.99, h/b – ISBN 978-1-4729-8302-3

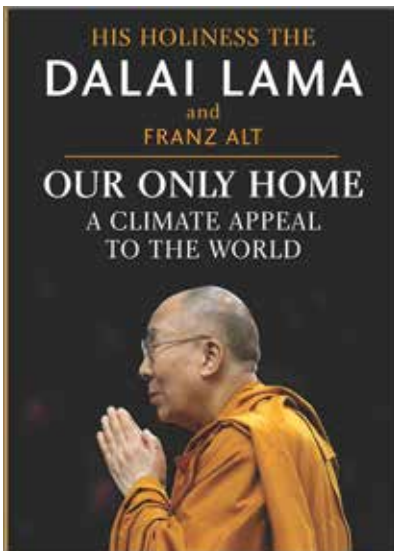
Mikhael Gorbachev and The Dalai Lama are both Nobel Peace Prize laureates and are two of the most prominent elder statesmen on the planet. We look to elders for sage advice, and to statesmen for their long political experience. Although there is a planetary group called the elders and founded by Nelson Mandela – the current president is Mary Robinson – we do not have such a world body in the traditional indigenous sense, which is akin to what Plato envisaged with his concept of philosopher kings acting from wisdom rather than personal interest. What we currently have is the United Nations and its various agencies, but these are substantially influenced by the great powers in their own interests and only supported when it suits them. As Catherine Austin Fitts points out in a recent webinar reviewed by more than 2 million people in the last two weeks, the planet is run by force and ultimately coordinated by



a relatively small group of hugely wealthy individuals and corporations who have bought up politicians, governments and federal agencies. The operating system is one of domination, control, extraction and exploitation underpinned by neoliberalism and the ideology of economic growth leading inexorably towards the collapse of our sustaining ecosystems in a sixth mass extinction.

It is in this context that these two urgent appeals have been written, fundamentally calling into question our current values and priorities. Gorbachev subtitles his book 'my appeal for peace and freedom', and addresses our major political, economic and ecological challenges. Although we live in a globalised world, 'we have not yet understood it or learned how to get along together in it', nor have we learned the art of partnership and cooperation to a sufficient degree. The first part addresses our shared security in a context of gradual remilitarisation of thought and action, with an accompanying continual increase in military spending as well as the dismantling of the arms control system that he himself did so much to build up. The US is developing new and more flexible nuclear weapons in a spirit of rivalry, when, as a species, we should be focusing on the complete elimination not only of nuclear weapons but also of chemical and biological weapons. In this planetary context, it no longer makes sense to envisage a unipolar rather than multilateral world in which one country seeks 'full spectrum dominance' where the latest and most dangerous phase is space weapons, a race that China has also joined.

The idea of a one country hegemony is an illusion, as is the political philosophy that power is the ultimate value – a great power should be



defined as great in its capacity to help others rather than to dominate them. Security is now indivisible and mutual, especially when this is extended to environmental security. John F. Kennedy (p. 17) realised this in a speech nearly 60 years ago, and the only way forward is through the building of trust, respect and subsequent negotiation to break the vicious cycle with a new form of *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (openness). Countries should act as role models rather than retaining the option for a first nuclear strike and developing new forms of weaponry through IT and cybertechnology. Let there be an ethical rather than a military rivalry to see who can achieve the most for the common good. This may seem like wishful thinking to the political elite, but it represents a fervent aspiration on the part of ordinary people in their desire for peace. Working and acting together is now an imperative. Global interdependence calls for corresponding new forms of international corporation.

The second part is devoted to a discussion of globalisation and environmental challenges. Gorbachev argues for a social market economy rather than a neoliberal free market of competition, deregulation and privatisation of profit involving the socialisation of loss, leading in the process to massive inequality. For him, the state needs to be responsible and accountable to its citizens in order to retain their trust. As many other commentators have observed, our existing economic model is unsustainable, and we are running out of time to make the necessary changes. Gorbachev points out that the Earth Charter formulated some 20 years ago contains all the necessary environmental and political principles with respect to environmental protection, individual rights,

eradicating poverty, affirming gender inequality and promoting a culture of peace. Why does this not form part of every national curriculum? As the Dalai Lama also advocates, the key principle is one of the universal responsibility, which must be applied to the development of new technologies within the framework of reverence for life and involving a redirection from military to human security.

The third and fourth parts address ideas and politics with comments on specific countries and their policies. Gorbachev is concerned about the current wave populism and the decline of democracy with a return of authoritarian regimes as a reaction to insecurity and declining standards of living. He feels that the left has not paid sufficient attention to the issues concerning ordinary people and has become too absorbed in sociocultural and identity issues – and that it needs a new intellectual and political basis. He sets out his own views in a chapter asking if politics and morals can be reconciled, stressing the need for ‘transparent governance, true accountability to the people on the part of the powerful, freedom and the sense of responsibility in the mass media.’ (p. 64) His thoughts are worth serious consideration, and he agrees with the Dalai Lama that universal values, respect for the individual, for human dignity - ‘all of this must become an integral component of world politics and international relations.’

Gorbachev clearly writes from his Russian background, which is illuminating for Westerners, for instance in the West’s triumphalism after the fall of the Soviet Union and the strategic error of the 2003 Iraq war in a climate where the US sought dominance rather than partnership, as reflected in his many conversations with the US leadership. As he points out, a multipolar world is already a reality. In Europe, he stresses the need for a dialogue between equals and consideration for Russian interests that have frequently being disregarded, for example in the expansion of NATO and the partnership with Ukraine. His remarks on China err on the side of the over-diplomatic, while he has wise advice on the Middle East and Western relationships with Islam, highlighting the real conflict between civilisation and barbarity as well as a warning against threats to cultural identity. He does not think that democracy can be imposed from the outside but requires a re-establishment of trust, also with respect to the media. He sees encouraging signs in the work of global civil society, also calling for the democratisation of international organisations rather than their control

by insiders. He warns Russia against an overemphasis on centralised executive power at the expense of their regions and states that future stability must be based on democratic principles and dialogue rather than coercion.

It seems to me that the breakdown of trust and the accompanying fomenting of violence is one of the key underlying issues to address and that this can only be achieved through agreeing ethical values supporting the common good, as the Dalai Lama also asserts in his book and interviews. He goes deeper by arguing for an education of the heart and training of the mind as well as specific environmental education. He points out that our modern education systems are oriented mainly towards material development, paying little attention to inner values. The starting point for both men is oneness and interconnectedness and hence the common good, extending to an ethic of nonviolence and establishing a new balance between economy and ecology. For him, this means becoming ‘wise-selfish’ rather than ‘foolish-selfish’, and he also observes that the Buddhist idea of rebirth provides a new perspective on the need for environmental protection. It is shocking to learn the extent of Chinese environmental destruction of Tibet, involving cutting 85% of their forests and changing the climate in the process.

Both of these books provide a profound analysis of many of our existing challenges, about the question always remains: how does a transition to a new system take place? At the moment, the immediate and well-publicised proposal is the WEF Great Reset that is basically a recipe for more centralised corporate control when we need to create the enabling conditions for thriving holistic local communities based on self-organisation and mutual support. The mechanistic mindset is devoid of love and compassion and has cut itself off from any real understanding of natural processes, natural food and natural health, which includes healing and regeneration. Perhaps Peter Spiegel’s idea of WeQ and a we-economy can potentially give us a new framework to transform our goals and institutions ‘towards a more humane economy based on greater mindfulness, empathy, nonviolence, truthfulness, transparency and responsibility.’ The principles for a new consciousness and culture have already been established, and these two prophetic books are important contributions in this respect, but we all have a shared responsibility in our own spheres of influence to initiate the necessary conversations and actions. You could do worse than read, discuss and publicise the important ideas in these two books....

A WITNESS STATEMENT

David Lorimer

■ A LIFE ON OUR PLANET

Sir David Attenborough, OM, FRS
 Witness Books (Penguin Random House), 2020, 266 pp., £20, h/b – ISBN 978-1-529-10827-9

In this book, Sir David Attenborough joins Mikhail Gorbachev and the Dalai Lama as significant planetary elders. His witness statement vision for the future is wise advice that those in charge of our governance systems would do well to heed, but are unlikely to do so as they are in thrall to a dominating oligarchy wedded to the short-term, to power and to solutions that dispense with the human in favour of technology. Some readers may also have seen the Netflix film of the same title, and if you have not yet seen it, I would urge you to do so along with consulting this book for more detail. Sir David is in a unique position in having made documentary films about the planet since the 1950s, during which period he has witnessed the visible declines documented here. The documentary begins in Pripyat in Ukraine, a place of utter desolation since the Chernobyl explosion of 1986 and a parable of what might lie in store if we complacently persist in our current trajectory. This situation came about as a result of bad planning and human error, the very factors at play in 'the spiralling decline of our planet's biodiversity.' 50 years ago we did not have the realisations that we have now and which should impel us to think and act differently.

When Attenborough was born, world population was 2.3 billion, carbon in the atmosphere 280 ppm and remaining wilderness 66%. As of 2020, human population is 7.8 billion, carbon 415 ppm and remaining wilderness 35%. He charts a number of significant developments over his lifetime and the growing realisation that ecosystems and species require protection, that the planet is also a complex ecosystem (Gaia hypothesis), that biodiversity is crucial to life, and that without a global course correction, we will literally consume our life support systems and beyond certain tipping points civilisation will collapse. All this and the wonders of the natural world are vividly depicted in Attenborough's many series about life on Earth, summed up in his final film. The 'efficiency' of our industrial approach with its large and expensive machinery and boats has become over-exploitative and unsustainable. We have come to regard the Earth as *our* planet, 'run by humankind for humankind.' This current era of 'Great Acceleration' is billed as progress, but we are now coming up against a variety of planetary boundaries and are in danger of entering a Great Decline.

Attenborough's vision is based on the correlation between the planet's stability and its biodiversity, hence his prescription that we must rewild the world and restore its biodiversity, to which he devotes the third part of the book. He supports Kate Raworth's doughnut model of economics, relating social foundations with ecological ceilings as an approach that could improve human lives while reducing our ecological impact. This involves moving away from perpetual economic growth, but even green growth, as he points out, is still growth and does not reflect the circular economy of nature. He supports a switch to green energy (though this also uses up precious raw materials), the creation of further marine protected areas and a reduction in meat consumption in order to return industrial farmland to nature and focus on regenerative farming so as to produce more food from less land. He notes that 80% of farmland worldwide is used directly or indirectly for meat and dairy production, which equates to 4 billion of 5 billion farmland hectares, and that a mainly plant-based diet is in any event healthier – he himself has not eaten meat for many years. Reforestation is also critical, but we currently have no way of estimating the value of wilderness and environmental services, hence it is more 'profitable' to cut the trees and replace them with oil palm monocultures. This 'wealth' represents the commodification of the natural world.

In a chapter on population and planning for 'peak human', Attenborough notes that the carrying capacity of the environment for a particular species 'represents the very essence of balance in nature' but, unlike other species, humans as a whole have never met our natural ceiling. However, all the signs are that we are currently approaching Earth's carrying capacity for humanity, and indeed Earth Overshoot Day in terms of regeneration of resources now occurs before the end of July. He discusses the four-stage demographic transition currently underway and the importance of empowering women, although he could also mention contraception in this respect. Towards the end of the book, Attenborough discusses how we might achieve more balanced lives in a circular economy, citing some examples of visionary city projects, although we will also require a restructuring of fiscal, legal and accounting incentives, including international laws against ecocide. All this has to involve a radically different attitude to nature, a return to a relational indigenous understanding and practice, which is not just about saving the planet, but rather saving ourselves, and moving beyond intelligence to wisdom. We as people need to demand this from our leaders, which at a minimum means voting for and electing such people then generating the necessary political momentum.

IN SERVICE TO LIFE

David Lorimer

■ REGENERATIVE LEADERSHIP

Giles Hutchins and Laura Storm
 Wordzworth, 2019, 351 pp., £29.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-78324-119-4

I don't personally need convincing of the requirement not only for regenerative leadership, but for a regenerative approach as an overall policy goal, and in such a regard, this widely endorsed and beautifully produced book is a brilliant and succinct synthesis of leading-edge scientific, philosophical and ecological ideas with practical examples of how readers can apply regenerative leadership to their own working lives. It is written with admirable clarity and articulates exactly the regenerative vision we now require to work with the principles and dynamics of nature. Both authors bring decades of experience of the sustainability agenda as it relates to business leadership (www.regenerativeleadership.co).

The first part is devoted to breakdowns and breakthroughs, analysing the deeper roots of our current crisis resulting in a 'growing imbalance [and separation] between humanity and nature, masculine and feminine, inner and outer, and left brained and right brained awareness', aspects that we now need to integrate in order to 'read the patterns, relationships, energies, insights, and intelligences innate within life' as ways of reconnecting with the logic of life (p. 24). The authors identify a growing 'complexity gap' in the business landscape, arising from viewing the organisation as a machine and from a flawed consumerist business model associated with ecological degradation – exploiting rather than serving life. This leads to all manner of stress manifesting in us as individuals, as well as in economic, political and natural systems. So the question is how we design flourishing ways of living conducive to life, which entails moving from reductive machine logic to living systems logic on a leadership journey of reconnection: regenerative business calls for regenerative leaders (defined on p. 70).

Part 2 describes the DNA of regenerative leadership based on the logic of life and incorporating Living Systems Design, Culture and Being. This is all very clearly set out with diagrams describing life and leadership dynamics, the former in terms of a dance of convergence and divergence leading to emergence, and the latter an interplay of self-awareness with systemic awareness resulting in 'regenerative leadership consciousness'. Throughout the book there are further reference points of quotations, insights from nature, business insights and opportunities to dive deeper, one of

which is Michael Harner's essential elements of core shamanism (p. 96) that spell out the relational principles of the kind of worldview that we all need to adopt. The authors explain their own version in terms of seven principles of the logic of life – life affirming, ever-changing and responsive, relational and collaborative, synergistic and diverse, cyclical and rhythmical, flows of energy and matter, and living systems field. Throughout the book, they show a remarkable grasp of such ideas and their potential applications as well as of appropriate methods of training. There are corresponding 'DNA strands' in the chapters on Living Systems Design and Living Systems Culture with many relevant practical examples.

A further key element is Living Systems Being – 'how we show up and nourish our relationship with our inner nature and encourage others to do the same.' Here again there are six DNA strands: presence, coherence, patience, silence, abundance and dance, with corresponding definitions, objectives and guidance. Practical people might initially regard this as peripheral while it is in fact central. The third part provides some useful diagnostic tools to measure the alignment of your organisation with the logic of life and a living systems approach based on a number of questions and a related points system. Then people can create personal and organisational ecosystemic maps with corresponding features and relationships, with the outer orientation on the left and the inner on the right. Finally, there are answers to frequently asked questions and further suggestions for personal practice, including journaling, quiet time, deep listening and opening up to nature; practices of silence, dialogue, story cafes and the way of council can also be applied organisationally. For the reader, such processes have to begin with the quality of our inner state as it ripples out through our lives and relationships. I was amused but not surprised to find on the final page that the logic of life is nothing more or less than Love, which creates the conditions conducive for life. As the authors note, they could not have put such a message up front, but it was good to see it plainly stated at the end. I wholeheartedly recommend this book as a highly informative and inspiring must-read for leaders in every sector.

GENERAL

HUMAN BEING

Larry Leshan

■ THE BLACK AND THE GREEN

Ada Nicolescu

Trafford Publishers, 2013, 390 pp., p/b – ISBN 978-1-46697-490-6

How would each of us feel or behave if our daily life, the world we grew up in and in which we knew all the ways and rules for surviving, turned nightmare? What would we actually do if the government not only removed all protections from us but set up methods so that anyone who wanted our home or belongings could legally and easily take them? And, in the meantime, the government itself forbade us to own a bicycle, a car, a radio, a store, office or profession, or to go to a park or a movie, ride on a bus, or be in a group of more than three people. How would we feel and behave?

This book (written fluidly by the new and exciting voice of a brilliant writer who lived through the process) is a search into human nature under extreme conditions. For most of the protagonists it was not that "they killed you" but that "they wouldn't let you live." Many others were murdered (often in a random activity where it was made even harder for the survivors to bear in that the killing was not personal, but just because it was open season on people like you and your family, and you and the killers were accidentally at the same time and place).

In this page-turner of a novel, we watch the process develop and proceed largely but not completely through the eye and life of an adolescent girl. This is not a memoir although many of the characters are drawn from real persons and it depicts true major historical events and their effects on people like us. It is written with a unique combination of objectivity and compassion that seems to be the author's trademark. (We saw the same family, the Steins, and most of the same protagonists in her earlier novel *Prelude to the Black and Green*.) Nicolescu shows her people with such compassion and respect and draws us into such empathy with them that we feel like saying with Kipling:

I have eaten your bread and salt.
I have drunk your water and wine.
The deaths you died I have watched beside,
And the lives you lived were mine.

And this is one of the things that makes this novel outstanding and not to be missed. You are a witness to the character, dignity and plain everyday courage of normal human beings, who found themselves living in a full-fledged nightmare surrounded by people who had become armed and rabid wolves, and found within themselves strength and resilience that had never been expressed or known before.

Other writers have written well of the unbelievable killing and sadism practised in the Holocaust and of the pain and suffering inflicted in the horror. I know of no other writer who shows so well, and bears such witness to, the decency, courage and steadfastness with which

it was often met. Plato wrote of those characteristics "which keep human beings on two legs instead of four." Here we see how often people express them even under terrible conditions.

Nicolescu's writing style is, I believe, unique: crisp, taut, and yet filled with warmth. It reflects her deep immersion in classic French literature and her knowledge and response to modern writing. Imagine, if you can, the same author penning Hemingway's *The Old Man and Sea* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. That might, I think, result in a style similar to Nicolescu's.

You finish the book feeling better about being a member of the human species and a little more confident about the hidden reserves of heroism you yourself will be able to draw on if and when you come to a dark time. Reading *The Black and the Green* I was reminded of the time years ago when I worked in a terminal cancer service. Nothing previous in my life and training had prepared me for the courage and strength of the patients there. In as horrible a situation as I could envision they showed great fortitude, altruism and love. Often I was asked why I continued to work in a place of such consistent pain, suffering and loss. It took me a long time to find the answer. "Because it makes me more proud to be a human being." This book leads one to have the same feelings.

Nicolescu's experience, empathy, respect and writing skills blend together so well that she, with A.E. Housman, seem to be saying to the reader:

'Tis true, the stuff I bring for sale
Is not so brisk a brew as ale:
Out of a stem that scored the hand
I wrung it in a weary land.
But take it: if the smack is sour,
The better for the embittered hour;
It should do good to heart and head
When your soul is in my soul's stead;
And I will friend you, if I may,

In the dark and cloudy day.

The late Lawrence LeShan sent this review in some time ago, and we reprint it here in his memory.





David Lorimer

Note: many of these books are now available in downloadable electronic form

Books In Brief

SCIENCE- PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

■ Reforming Science

Brian Ridley, FRS

Imprint Academic 2010, 198 pp.,
£14.95, p/b.

Brian Ridley is emeritus professor of physics in the University of Essex, and this well-written book is a breath of fresh air expounding a bracing argument excoriating the tendency in some areas of science to mutate into a form of religious authority, specifically 19th-century mechanistic materialism and what he calls mathematical theology. He is worried about the fact that 'science has developed a public image of unchallengeable authority... of sense of establishment and infallibility... guarded reputations... of the dangers of heresy.' The basic reform that he would like to see is expressed in the subtitle *Beyond Belief*, and he challenges the notion that there is no truth but scientific truth and the belief that what isn't science isn't knowledge. He advocates a new openness where 'anything goes, provided that ideas are rationally advocated with suggestions for realistic experiments' – and he points out that there are plenty of rationally advocated theories without experimental evidence, some of which have turned into dogmas, as also argued by Rupert Sheldrake.

The author sets out his own views in the introduction, lamenting a regrettable closed-mindedness exhibited by many scientists and arguing that heresies - 'ideas rationally expressed that offend received wisdom' – are a good thing. He develops a panpsychic neutral monism based on matter and force going back to the philosophy of Spinoza and, interestingly, draws sympathetically on Bergson's notion of *élan vital* where 'Life is force, a creative one that animates matter.' For him, the soul is immediately real as a 'shorthand expression for the organic holistic individuality of the

living being', although in this form there is 'no question of survival after death' - here there is nothing in the book or bibliography indicating that the author is familiar with the evidence available. The chapters that follow give an excellent summary of the history of western philosophy and science from the Greeks onwards, with a sympathetic account of Hermeticism and how this was opposed by the church along with the emerging new science. He also explains how deterministic ideas were developed and embedded in scientific thinking while reminding readers that much science was and still is geared towards the good of humanity.

The author reminds readers that God and soul fall outside the scientific remit, as Schroedinger also noted, and observes that the scientific method, while outstandingly successful with respect to matter, 'is ill-adapted to the study of mind' partly because it cannot study the unique and is hampered by a deterministic legacy that eliminates free will. The author discusses the principal 18th-century philosophers and gives a detailed and fascinating account of the work of Gustav Fechner on psychophysics, comparing his outlook with that of Schroedinger, and then going on to discuss William James, William McDougall, Sir Charles Sherrington and AN Whitehead ('the last of the Cambridge Platonists'). The book continues with an extensive discussion of mind-body interaction, again drawing on a wide range of sources, including de Broglie, Bohm, Popper and Eccles, Davidson, Putnam, Searle, JR Lucas, Nagel and Galen Strawson, bringing in Bergson's insight that 'what *really* exists is not things, but things in the making.' This theme could have been more extensively developed by bringing in process philosophy and relating this historically to Goethe. As one would expect, the discussion of 20th century physics and cosmology is comprehensive though critical, for instance of the status of the big bang and 'meta-cosmology', where prudence and caution are in order. The final chapter comes back to the

ethos of science and its 'dangerous trend towards an absolute dogmatism as regards its theories, [and its] scorn for the concepts of mind and soul and the religious impulse in man' – as manifest in the hubris of scientism. Although we cannot live without beliefs, 'they must serve, not dominate' and be held provisionally. One can only applaud that these points are being articulated by a senior scientist with a vigorous independence of mind.

■ Celestial Tapestry

Nicholas Mee

Oxford 2020, 325 pp., £16.99, h/b.

The basic theme running through this kaleidoscopic illustrated book is the idea of a deep hidden reality or concealed order that artists, mathematicians, scientists and mystics seek to unfold and represent in their own way. In a series of short sections and chapters, the author explores a huge variety of phenomena and patterns such as labyrinths, Platonic solids, cosmic architecture, knots, perspective, astronomy and representations of time, drawing richly on mainly European culture, though with excursions into China and India. The book comes across as a kind of tapestry collection, with one item leading onto the next in a successive association of ideas and threads woven together – it is quite some journey through the author's mind and reading, bringing out some intriguing connections and little-known items as well as recontextualising many great creative discoveries.

HEALTH-MEDICINE

■ Ecological Medicine

Dr Sarah Myhill and Craig Robins

Hammersmith Books 2020, 464 pp., £36.95, p/b

I have reviewed a number of Sarah Myhill's previous books, and this one with mathematician Craig Robinson is her *magnum opus*, subtitled 'the antidote to Big Pharma and fast foods.' As such, it should be in every medical practice. The book pulls no punches in looking at the degeneration of our health overseen by doctors corrupted by Big Pharma 'with kindness, gentleness and great humanity' in spite of being locked into a pharmaceutical straitjacket. Myhill has been a courageous advocate of natural approaches and learned to her cost that most doctors 'do not want to know about such safe, simple and effective medical interventions', but rather treated her as a troublemaker challenging their 'intellectually easy, drug based, simple

algorithms for health management'. Only recently, a colleague sent me a petition where she was once again being hauled up before the General Medical Council, and in this book we learn that has had to deal with 30 separate GMC investigations between 2000 and 2012, conducting her own legal defence, and being suspended in 2010 for lacking respect for the regulatory body! The GMC lawyers stated that 'the problem with the Myhill cases is that all the patients are improved and refuse to give witness statements' (!)

The book is designed to 'empower people to heal themselves through addressing the root causes of their diseases', progressing from symptoms to underlying mechanisms rather than just treating the symptoms allopathically and proceeding to sustainable treatments. Readers of her earlier books will be familiar with her emphasis on chronic inflammation and the usefulness of the paleo-ketogenic diet as well as her Groundhog Basic protocol. The book proceeds from symptoms and clinical pictures to mechanisms, then to the basics of natural health and bolt-on extras such as vitamin C, iodine and vitamin B12. It then applies these insights to the various branches of medicine and contains a detailed series of chapters with illustrative case histories. Interspersed in the text are many apposite quotations that add spice to the whole, such as Sherlock Holmes saying that 'the world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes', or Sir William Osler – 'just listen to your patient, he is telling you the diagnosis'; 'the good physician treats the disease, the great physician treats the patient who has the disease.' Towards the end, there are detailed worked examples of current case histories, which will be of extraordinary interest to practitioners. If you only buy one book from this whole field, this should be it.

■ The Encyclopedia of Ailments and Diseases

Jacques Martel

Findhorn Press 2020, 603 pp., \$34.99, p/b.

This is the latest edition of a book that has sold more than 750,000 copies and is about 'how to heal conflicted feelings, emotions and thoughts at the root of illness.' Its key contention is that every illness reflects emotional and psychological factors lodged in the subconscious, and therefore represents a message to be heeded. The keys to healing are acceptance and love. The book is offered as a complement to other approaches and a way of becoming

more aware of the processes going on in one's life as a 'tool for understanding, investigation and transformation', integrating head and heart while activating information as a starting point by reading the corresponding entries. Readers can begin with the index to see what conditions apply specifically to them and find comprehensive corresponding cross-references. The experience is similar to consulting an Oracle, so that the reader needs to discern what is speaking directly to their condition. Take, for example, allergies, which are first defined clinically, then psychologically in relation to mental interpretation and emotional overreaction. This in turn represents 'animation of irritation or frustration that is associated with the product or situation to remind me that this ailment is something I must be aware of and integrate.' There is an incredible amount of detail, and it is a useful book to have on hand, even if the contents do not always speak to us. Appendices give a directory of the meaning of individual body parts in terms of capacities, and an overview of the meaning of the main of main ailments.

■ I Wish My Doctor Had Told Me This

Kate Chaytor-Norris

Hammersmith Books 2020, 290 pp., £14.99, h/b.

The author is a nutritional therapist with qualifications in a number of other modalities, and this book is an expression of her mission to empower people to heal themselves, with a subtext and that there is more to healing than medication. Her basic premise is that 'our bodies have not yet adapted to deal with 21st Century living', given the speed of change. Complementary practitioners will be familiar with the argument that we must deal with underlying causes rather than suppress symptoms, all of which involves taking responsibility for our health and lifestyle – especially given the prevalence of chronic disease that takes decades to manifest but and is exacerbated by our stressful schedules. The chapter on this topic gives an excellent summary of the current state of research and is followed by an informative discussion of the role of the thyroid in relation to our metabolic rate. Her functional approach looks at all bodily systems and interacting balances.

A series of individual chapters then address hormones, the gut, toxicity, stress, sugar, sleep, and spirit, with illustrative case histories and a reminder of the masculine orientation of much of modern medicine. Readers are also able to access some guidance with respect to their own symptoms, with corresponding advice. The author describes the toxicity of our modern environment, including rising levels of radiofrequency radiation that can also feed into chronic conditions. Symptoms of stress are explained along with practical suggestions to defuse these, including the feeling of time pressure; here the key strategy is to create balance. There is now a growing realisation of the danger of excessive sugar and the need for proper sleep. And in managing ourselves we can avoid the pitfalls of perfectionism and victimhood, making sure that we communicate our needs openly and develop a strong sense of purpose and connection. This highly readable book contains a wealth of practical information and advice.

■ Chakra Healing Therapy

Glen Park (SMN)

Destiny Books 2020, 288 pp., \$24.99, p/b.

This comprehensive illustrated book on chakra healing therapy is based on 30 years of experience and teaching, also drawing on the Alexander technique, energy medicine, developmental psychology and spiritual traditions. The structure proceeds from the base to the crown in a corresponding series of chapters, and the book begins with an account of the author's personal healing journey. It provides a clear schematic introduction to the topic at physical, psychological, psychic and spiritual levels. The chakras are 'an individualised map of our embodied consciousness' inviting us to combine mind and body to initiate healing and growth. Each chapter describes the relevance of the four levels, also providing case studies, cultural considerations and advice for nourishing the relevant chakra. Developmentally, each chakra is dominant with respect to a certain stage, such as the movement from what Jenny Wade has called Achievement to Affiliative Consciousness and subsequently to Authentic Consciousness (p. 142), also integrating left and right hemisphere thinking (p. 191). By the time we reach the crown chakra, we have moved into Transcendent Consciousness and subsequently Unity Consciousness where we rest in our divine nature rather than seeking it. A fascinating addendum is the thought that the release of muscular tension around death triggers the

corresponding embedded memory as a life review. The end of the journey is the realisation that 'we live in a conscious intelligent universe' and that 'a conscious intelligent universe lives in us' where we are each expressions of formless Divine energy translated into mind and matter. This wise and compassionate book is a welcome companion on our path.

■ Inner Balance for an Effective Life for Health Professionals

Dr Andrew Tresidder (SMN)

Carly Press 2019, 190 pp., free download at www.healthandself.care

I have to agree heartily with the endorsements on the back of the book describing it as 'an amazing piece of work' and 'a magnificent resource' – I have never seen so much valuable self-care information between the covers of a single book and drawing on such a wide variety of resources stemming from a lifetime of reading and clinical experience. Although the book is primarily aimed at healthcare professionals, it can potentially reach a much larger audience as it deals with life issues that concern all of us, including the fundamentals of health in physical, emotional and spiritual terms. The material on relationships and transitions is extremely valuable, and readers will also find insights from Stephen Covey and Eric Berne. In fact, the book can be opened at almost any page, and the reader will find it packed with important insights and space for personal reflection.

■ The Lucifer Deception

Are Thoresen

Temple Lodge 2020, 62 pp., £9.99, p/b.

This is an intriguing book by a Norwegian vet that will undoubtedly challenge the boggle thresholds of some readers, describing as it does the memory of a past life as a physician at the Chinese court of the Emperor Yu and his energetic relationship with the spirit of the legendary Yellow Emperor, which the author identifies as Lucifer. The narrative builds on the understanding of Steiner of a battle between the forces of freedom and those of domination and explains his own theory that many diseases are caused by a spiritual translocation involving the transfer of pathological entities. Practitioners of Chinese medicine will be interested in the implications of his account of the reduction of 12 elements/energies to 5, and his recollections of his past life are certainly dramatic. He describes disturbing ways in which energy can be tapped by powerful individuals, often from women, as well as the significance of blood sacrifices in ancient cultures. All this shows that

'our present world has deep roots arising from ancient deeds of black magic', which is a serious point in relation to the way in which we use spiritual forces, whether consciously or unconsciously, and the need for these to be expressions of love and freedom.

■ The Wisdom of Teeth

Michel Montaud

Temple Lodge 2020, £14.99, p/b.

This is an unusual book, and coins the term 'dentosophy' as a gateway to health, whereby oral balance corresponds to total balance. It is informed by long practical experience and illustrated with some remarkable transformations of teeth based on the use of a latex mouthpiece that one chews on and which was invented by Prof A. Besombes. This is put forward as an alternative to the usual practices of extraction, surgery and orthodontics and it is argued that such treatment can also rebalance conditions in other parts of the body by stimulating our healing potential. The philosophical background is that of Rudolf Steiner, and the book takes the reader through links between mouth and body as well as the relationship between oral balance and a variety of ailments. Spiritually, a deeper listening is involved, moving from intellectual awareness to intuition and a gradual process of harmonisation and enhanced well-being, that also contributes to the macrocosm.

PHILOSOPHY-SPIRITUALITY

■ Tao Te Ching

Shantena Augusto Sabbadini (SMN)

Self-published 2013, 634 pp. – see www.shantena.com

Some readers will have attended the I Ching seminar in October run by Shantena and his wife Cruz and based on his magisterial Eranos edition. This book is a companion volume and is an absolute masterwork that is essential reading for anyone seriously interested in the *Tao Te Ching*. I have several translations and used these to teach the text at Winchester College in the 1980s, trying to give the boys a sense of the subtlety of the language and meaning. This work takes the process as far as it will go and gives the reader invaluable insights, also into the very nature of interpretation, language and meaning. On the basis of the latest scholarship, Shantena dates the compilation of the text to around 200 BCE although its origins go back much further. The restrictions of Aristotelian binary logic need to be

set aside since ‘each word contains a multiplicity of resonances and each sentence can be read in various ways’ – hence opposites need to be held together, a right hemisphere function.

There is a fascinating and revealing section on the author’s own background in physics, especially with respect to the quantum measurement problem and superposition of states that are never finally resolved into a single well-defined state in good Aristotelian fashion. This view corresponds to Whitehead’s panexperientialism where duality of subject and object emerges ‘from the undifferentiated non-dual background of existence’, also corresponding to explicit language and naming. Shantena explains the origins of this work in his collaboration with Rudolf Ritsema (1918-2006) at Eranos. There is ‘an intrinsic indeterminacy’ in the text, which is structurally laid out by giving alternative translations then a schematic rendering involving the Chinese character, its transliteration, a single translation and the many dictionary equivalents that generate ‘fields of meaning’. Each chapter follows the same scheme of multiple equivalent translations, commentary and exemplary comparative scholarship in relation to other traditions. This is a quite extraordinary achievement and surely the definitive English edition that deserves the utmost attention from the reader, whose understanding will be immeasurably enhanced by the process of close study and reflection.

■ Beyond the Cave

Peter Vardy

iff Books 2020, 249 pp., £16.99, p/b.

Aptly subtitled ‘a philosopher’s quest for Truth’, this is a definitive and forthright philosophical statement from a former vice-principal of Heythrop College in the University of London. It is a robust defence of Truth rooted in transcendent reality and a powerful riposte to post-modernism, relativism, fundamentalism and scientism, affirming that our deep purpose is to live a life of courage, integrity and compassion, grounded in the virtues. For many years, the author was a member of the London Society for the Study of Religions, founded by Baron von Hugel and Claude Montefiore in 1904. The founding statement refers to the importance of spiritual insight and vitality linked to peace of soul, but he left this group in 2017 when he felt it had become a talking shop and had itself succumbed to the rising tides of modernism. The book brings readers back to the perennial philosophical questions.

It is set out in two parts: the descent into the cave and rekindling the flame. The first part takes readers through the history of western philosophy and the idea of absolute Truth rooted in the Eternal. It explains the religious imperative in the context of the rise of atheism, especially in its latest form of expression. The discussion here is exceptionally clear and well-informed. The author moves on to explain the significance of a post-truth world and raises fundamental questions about artificial intelligence and the future of humanity. He sees the near collapse of the importance of Truth as ‘linked to a lack of interest and what it means to be human’, which also impacts on the structure of education. The rest of the book is devoted to a detailed consideration of such topics as the nature of argument and reality, explanation and potentiality, possibility and necessity (free will), and the relevance of the Eternal. Readers looking for a deeper understanding of how we arrived at our modern predicament and how to move beyond it will find this eloquent articulation compelling and informative - we need more thinkers like Vardy intelligently expressing their views on these essential topics. These are culturally vital matters, as the author’s engagement with Kierkegaard also indicates, and provide us with a meaningful orientation that is largely missing.

■ Scottish Philosophy – Selected Readings 1690-1960

Edited by Gordon Graham

Imprint Academic 2004, 253 pp., £14.95, p/b.

When I studied at St Andrews in the 1970s, a year of general philosophy was still a compulsory subject for arts degrees, as it had been for centuries; sadly, this is no longer the case. The editor of this reader is Director of the Centre for the Study of Scottish Philosophy, and is ideally placed to bring together this volume. Scottish philosophy was regarded as the jewel in the crown of the Scottish Enlightenment with its central figures of Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, Adam Smith and Thomas Reid. An earlier 19th century volume already identified 47 philosophers of note, almost all of whom were associated with the ancient universities ‘that had persisted with the basic mediaeval curriculum in which moral philosophy and logic play an important, and compulsory part.’ My own great-grandfather, Prof James Lorimer was a moral philosopher who corresponded with John Stuart Mill while Professor of International Law at Edinburgh. He wrote an important paper on the curriculum of Scottish universities in the 1850s.

Graham identifies five elements in this tradition: a methodology or science of mind, a focus on human nature, an overriding concern to answer Humean scepticism, an appeal to common sense within the University. The first figure of note is Gershom Carmichael (1672-1729) and the 13 philosophers featured include JF Ferrier and Edward Caird from the 19th century, and AE Taylor, CA Campbell and John Macmurray from the 20th. Interestingly, my Edinburgh mentor Norman Cockburn gave me copies of books on Platonism by Caird and Taylor as well as a number of works by John Macmurray and various volumes of the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion. The content will mainly be of interest to readers already familiar with philosophy, although the last extract by Macmurray still speaks to the crisis of our time, dealing as it does with the personal (only yesterday I was reading an article on this theme by Umair Haque) associating the expansion of civilisation with that of the personal, which is in danger of being overtaken by the impersonal and the purely functional. For him, the personal is the experiential, and philosophy should be grounded in human experience and existential values – a timely reminder.

■ Classical India Philosophy

Peter Adamson and Jonardon Ganeri

Oxford 2020, 397 pp., £25, h/b.

Like the other volumes in this series of the history of philosophy without any gaps, this is an astonishing intellectual *tour de force* written in an accessible and engaging style. In a previous issue, I reviewed the corresponding volume on medieval philosophy. The 49 chapters cover origins, the age of the sutra, Buddhists and Jinas, and at the end there is a short section entitled beyond ancient India. Some readers may be familiar with the two-volume work by Radhakrishnan, who in fact receives very little attention in this book, including in the chapter on the putative influence of Indian philosophy on the Greeks – his book *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* does not feature in the bibliography. Part of the discussion of this issue centres around Plotinus, and I wondered whether the similarities between his insights and Indian thought might have arisen from a common experience rather than written sources, although the discussion here is well informed and subtle. Another interesting parallel is philosophy as a way of life (see Larry Culliford’s review of Pierre Hadot in the last issue).

There are differences, however, as Indian philosophy is centrally concerned with liberation from suffering and the wheel of rebirth. Besides extensive coverage of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and Buddhism in the first part, there are also discussions of other themes such as Panini's grammar, ancient Indian political thought, women in ancient India and nonviolence. The second part covers the six main schools of Indian thought while also addressing the rise of scepticism, naturalism, Ayurvedic medicine and other more familiar philosophical topics such as language, perception, reasoning, time and causation. The third part expands on the teachings of Buddhism (e.g. Nagarjuna) and Jainism and also Dagnaga (new to me) on perception, logic and consciousness. The final part also includes a discussion of Tantra along with the Indian influence on various forms of European thought. By bridging Indian and Western traditions, this book performs a valuable service, and recent developments in consciousness studies and non-duality have stronger resonances with these streams of thought, along with a greater emphasis on experience of the deeper structures of reality.

■ The Spiritual Roots of the Tarot

Russell A. Sturgess

Inner Traditions 2020, 339 pp., \$24.99, p/b.

As this book is subtitled 'The Cathar Code hidden in the cards' and I live in this area, it was of immediate appeal. I looked up the connection between the Cathars and the Tarot, finding John Matthews' cards and another book on the subject. Since a well-known version of the cards is associated with Marseille and there are also connections with Italy, the potential relationship already has some geographical plausibility as we know that there were Cathars in Lombardy, where the cards are said to have originated. The only major study I have otherwise read is *Meditations on the 22 Major Arcana of the Tarot*, published anonymously by Valentin Tomberg and recommended by Bede Griffiths. The argument is that, like the stories told by stained-glass windows in French cathedrals, the cards represent a portable art-like illumination serving to convey secret initiatic teachings without the need for any potentially incriminating texts. Further, the Holy Grail, corresponding symbolically to the womb, 'is sacred knowledge of the path to enlightenment and inner peace' represented by the kingdom of heaven within.

The book takes the reader on a spiritual pilgrimage of evolving consciousness, where, as 'fools', we are initially absorbed by and enmeshed in the worldly attractions of wealth, power, love and fame, but the process of life represented by justice, time and chance brings us to a crossroads and entry into the dark night of the soul and various stages of growth – represented by individual cards – culminating in unlocking the gate of heaven. Interestingly, 12 of the 22 cards contain images of women, including the powerful Popess and Empress – the Cathars allowed women equal status as initiates. The medieval theology of love was present not only in the Cathars but also, in a different form, in the Troubadours. The Cathar Parfait(e)s aimed to achieve a state of purity (blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God) and undifferentiated consciousness (at-onement) while practising the nonviolence enjoined by the Sermon on the Mount and the practices of forgiveness explained in the Beatitudes. The Holy Grail in this context is a symbol of adopting a way of life centred on selfless loving-kindness – the Cathar Parfait(e)s were known as the good men and good women. And Jesus was a way-shower, a Gnostic teacher of wisdom rather than a sacrificial lamb, so the ultimate (Gnostic) aim is to achieve the light of Christ consciousness. We need to acquire 'eyes to see' and 'ears to hear', to follow the inner promptings of the spirit rather than practise strict obedience to the letter and adherence to the law. Indeed, the Cathar church was the Church of the Holy Spirit that understood the sacred marriage (*hieros gamos*) of Sophia/Mary Magdalene and Christ, the union of the soul and the spirit, also enacted in the ritual embrace.

The exposition along the way includes a huge amount of detail relating to each of the cards and the imperative at a certain stage of turning within, representing the second half of life where we need the strength and courage of the lion as inspiration and protection. Forgiveness is central, as explained in the Beatitudes and practised by the Cathar initiate's commitment to not harming anyone and loving their enemies; they would not 'forsake the sect out of fear of fire, water, and other kinds of death.' And indeed, many of them were burned at the stake on that account on their path of return to the kingdom of Light and having embodied joy, peace, love, stillness, kindness, compassion and devotion to the will of God. These are essential spiritual qualities in any era, including our own, where the loudest voices are dogmatic and divisive, insisting on their own

exclusive truth rather than listening to the unifying still small voice within – an enriching silence beyond words.

■ Swami Vivekananda's History of Universal Religion and its Potential for Global Conciliation

Sister Gayatriprana (Dr Jean MacPhail SMN)

Cook Communication 2020, 525 pp., £30.81, e-book £11.46.

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) brought Vedanta to the US and played a key role in the initial Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893. He did not live long enough to be able to put together what has been achieved by Jean in this volume over a period of more than 45 years in bringing this priceless compilation together from works by and about Swami Vivekananda. In the conclusion to her introduction, Jean notes that the Vedantic approach 'works through a dominantly right brain culture based on millennia of experience and tradition. It documents its historical adjustment to the demands of the left brain in the form of western invasion.' These reflections arose after reading Iain McGilchrist and one realises that colonisation represented an epistemological imperialism and an assumed superiority of left hemisphere thinking that cannot in fact penetrate into 'deep inner structures of reality' and even goes so far as to deny their existence – the very rationale of the Galileo Commission to reinstate the proposition that consciousness can access these deeper structures.

On arriving in the US after a British education and therefore inculcated by the dominant western mentality, Vivekananda found 'his western values of materialism, the belief in the supremacy of Western science, the supposed superiority of its systems of logic and materialistic theory of evolution increasingly difficult to assimilate with his own soul.' Jean explains all this personal and historical background and provides some useful diagrams to illustrate non-dualism/non-duality with respect to the individual and Brahman. His teacher Sri Ramakrishna imparted in a global vision of conciliation which he then took forward, including conciliation of East and West, Vedantic and Abrahamic one could have added Greek worldviews, both entailing spiritual humanism and a process of spiritualisation whereby subject and object are united in a common ground within a larger process of 'holovution'.

The scope of the book is magisterial, with nine sections and 25 chapters covering every aspect of Swami Vivekanda's life, Vedic culture and its historical roots, basic concepts of reality, the evolution of Vedantic teachings on causation and transmigration, the overall spiritual culture, the fragmentation of the Vedic message in India, reactions to invasion, the arrival of Vedanta in the West and its modern synthesis articulating a vision of oneness and solidarity so necessary for our time: All is One Spirit. The primary appeal of this book will be to scholars of Indian religion, and readers should order it for their local libraries as an invaluable resource on the topic. For the more general reader with time available, the book will repay close study and reflection. There are also extensive cross-references as well as a comprehensive glossary and index. All in all, this is a massively valuable scholarly achievement.

■ Without Reservation

Randy Kritkauskay

Bear and Co 2020, 278 pp., \$20, p/b.

Writing as an urban member of Potawatomi Nation, the author recounts his process of spiritual awakening after the death of his mother and resuming connections with his ancestors and their way of life. Appropriately, he is also a founder of the environmental organisation Ecologia. He identifies four pathways to knowing in visitations and connections, observation, reflection and storytelling. In connection with the first, he encounters a coy-wolf and realises the importance of capturing the wisdom and translating this into a story; also, that 'our desire to dominate nature is based on our lack of ability to tolerate diversity', reflected elsewhere in the imperialist desire to impose a monoculture, whether in terms of religion, science, education or agriculture. The author asks if we can re-animate and re-enchant nature, recovering our roots in the process. An interesting integration of cultures emerges from the story of Kateri Tekakwitha, the first native North American to be recognised as a saint by the Catholic Church, which also made her patron saint of the environment, reflecting a kind of dual spirituality.

An important historical theme is enforced assimilation, which also imposes a dominant way of knowing. The author questions some of the cultural background of native cultures, including the emphasis on the warrior in the cultivation of violence. He recommends instead that this energy be channelled into

becoming environmental warriors like those at Standing Rock. Many such people are simply defending their ancestral rights and territories while demonstrating their capacity to live in harmony with Mother Earth. This can potentially become a new story of re-creation, reconnection, respiritualisation and inclusion. I liked the term 'Eocene' as a possible successor to Anthropocene as recently articulated by Sir David Attenborough. For this to happen, we need a new set of values, and in this respect the author proposes respect, love, honesty, bravery, truth, wisdom and humility as a basis for healing and recovery, illustrating this with our current vulnerable situation in a chapter entitled Microbes and Black Swans. We need to recognise our collective hubris before nemesis sweeps us away. For the author, this also involves going beyond binary logic and embracing ambiguity to recognise that we are both individuals and part of larger social and ecological systems – in this connection there is an extraordinary pictograph (p. 149) sent around 1860 as a protest against the breaking of a treaty and showing thread connections between the forms of life depicted. This all gives a very interesting overall perspective on current challenges.

■ Rethinking Existentialism

Jonathan Webber

Oxford 2018, 229 pp., £19.99, h/b.

I studied existentialism at St Andrews in the 1970s, both in the context French literature and philosophy. It is unusual for British philosophers to engage with this tradition, so it is refreshing to read an original English contribution to this philosophy. The book proposes a new conception of existentialism through comparative analyses of the work of Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Franz Fanon (new to me), Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre between 1942 and 1952. I remember sitting down to read Sartre's short popular lecture, *L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme*, one of the key texts dating from the time when he and de Beauvoir defined existentialism as a common brand based on the key proposition that existence precedes essence. Since that time, the term has been used more loosely, and this book seeks to rectify the situation. The original definition was that 'existentialism is the ethical theory that we ought treat freedom at the core of human existence as intrinsically valuable and the foundation of all other values.' An affirmation of this position is surely critical at this time of creeping authoritarianism, as is the imperative of authenticity as an expression of inner integrity, as also advanced by Gide.

The author argues that, by 1952, Sartre had adapted this view and adopted that of de Beauvoir as since his original position was not entirely coherent with respect to the meaning of essence. His point was to put the emphasis on choice, but here is where Merleau-Ponty's concept of sedimentation is helpful, whereby our interaction with our environment and context 'becomes embedded in the intuitive understanding that we rely on for action.' In other words, we are necessarily situated within a cultural tradition that is bound to influence our sense of identity and therefore our choices and values in a dynamic fashion, as highlighted by Fanon with respect to race – something the others had not considered a few years earlier. The book uses a number of texts to elaborate its argument, also bringing in the influence of psychoanalysis and collective consciousness. There is an interesting tension with Aristotle's eudaemonistic approach to human flourishing which presupposes that we can act according to an intrinsic nature denied by the existentialists. For them, authenticity is the key moral imperative, though for me this entails remaining true to a deeper sense of spiritual purpose that transcends my social identity and which has to be remembered in a Platonic sense.

■ Think Least of Death – Spinoza on how to live and how to die

Steven Nadler

Princeton 2020, 234 pp., £22, h/b.

The work of Baruch Spinoza (1623-1677) is becoming more popular with the rise of panpsychism and dual aspect theories of consciousness, but this book focuses more on his ethics, and highlights his interesting connections with Stoicism characterised by his paragon of the free person, motivated by reason and mastering the passions, living from the inside on the basis of 'adequate ideas' without being determined by or reacting to outer circumstances. In this way, virtuous action leads to happiness. To be free 'is essentially to be self-determining: to think, to desire, and act on the basis of one's own nature – that is, one's *conatus*.' Interestingly, Spinoza's documented multilingual library contained Aristotle but not Plato, no copy of Lucretius, but works from the Stoics Seneca and Cicero. There are chapters on self-esteem, fortitude, honesty, benevolence and friendship, suicide, death and the right way of living. These explain the development of his ethical system and its practical implications.

The chapter on death explains how Spinoza lived through the plague in Amsterdam in 1663-4 (he himself denied immortality, feeling that it 'leads inexorably to a life governed by the passions of hope and fear'), and the one on suicide contains a moving account by Tacitus of the forced suicide of Seneca, with interesting parallels to Socrates. His last words to his friends were: 'being forbidden to show gratitude for your services, I leave you my one remaining possession, and my best: the pattern of my life.' Spinoza's message is a noble one, championing freedom of thought, autonomy and virtue guided by reason and knowledge, well worth remembering in our own time.

■ The Psychology of the Bible

Brian J. McVeigh

Imprint Academic 2020, 266 pp., £14.95, p/b.

Subtitled 'explaining divine voices and visions' with reference to the Old Testament, this book follows up on the work of Julian Jaynes on the bicameral mind. It is a *tour de force* in terms of its detailed analysis, covering what he calls neurocultural evolution and the transition from 'super-religiosity' that does not question the supernatural order to a religiosity 'that vacillates between disbelief, doubting, and wholehearted devotion', a development that occurred sometime after 1000 BCE. This corresponds psychologically to the socio-historical forces that broke apart the soul-body unity but at the same time created interiority and introspection; it also corresponds to a discussion of the role of the right hemisphere in the history of religion. The book contains a good deal of linguistic analysis, for instance key categories of biblical poetry with specific examples of the episodes and language used. There are chapters devoted to the theopolitical emergence of Israel, angels, prophets and priests in their historical context, the neurology behind hearing the voice of God, and a psychological lexicon of the Old Testament as well as an appendix of semantic clusters. The psyche is regarded as an evolving adaptive communication system that gradually closes off from theophanies as guidance, although I'm not sure this is in fact true, and no reference is made to the work of William James and Sir Alister Hardy in this respect. Overall, it is a book mainly aimed at psychologists of religion that will also be of interest to theologians.

■ The Sage of Tetherdown

Edited by Colin Stanley

Paupers' Press 2020, 187 pp., £14.95, p/b.

This is an engaging set of personal recollections of Colin Wilson by his friends and contemporaries that evoke a vivid portrait over London in the 1950s – I'm not sure about the term Sage, but I recognised accounts of his generosity to younger writers. My first book *Survival* was sent by the publishers to Colin, who was kind enough to say that it would become a classic in its field, which led to its subsequent publication in 1984. I visited Colin in Cornwall a couple of years later and remember taking him a bottle of Mercurey 1977 (he was a great wine lover) which we enjoyed over rapid-fire conversation partly about which of his books and I had read. I came away with signed biographies of Gurdjieff and Reich. He also offered £10 to any visitor who could indicate a space where a further bookshelf could be placed, a seemingly impossible task. I particularly enjoyed the contributions of Gary Lachman and Steve Taylor with Gary referring to a 'wine-fuelled evening in which Colin did his best to explain Husserl's ideas about consciousness to me.' For Steve, as for me when reading *The Outsider*, Colin's influence was formative, also in directing further reading. Wilson aficionados will enjoy these recollections over a glass of wine, perhaps toasting Colin's memory in the process.

■ Wisdom from the Spirit World

Carole J. Obley

6th Books (John Hunt) 2020, 221 pp., £11.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'Life teachings on love, forgiveness, purpose and finding peace', this inspiring book certainly delivers on its message, with many evidential readings revealing hitherto unknown information. The first part indicates that we signed up for life in terms of soul blueprints involving magnetic resonance giving rise to various challenges and opportunities. The second part of teachings explains the nature of the afterlife in terms of vibrational frequency, the eternal bond of love, the power of choice, values that transcend death and the importance of releasing the past to accelerate spiritual growth. The core values are a reminder of the centrality of gratitude, compassion, trust, connection and forgiveness, also highlighting the importance of service by merging personality and soul, thereby offering our unique contribution to world. The final chapter also gives useful practical exercises, reminding readers 'that you came to the physical realm to radiate the power and presence of Spirit.'

PSYCHOLOGY-CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

■ Sensitive Soul

Michael A. Jawer

Park Street Press 2020, 241 pp., \$16.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'the unseen role of emotion in extraordinary states', this fascinating book is an exploration of the fields through a new lens based on the observation that emotion 'exists within and between people, underpins personality, spirituality and a range of extraordinary perceptions, conditions and experiences.' We exist in a flowing, interconnected 'empathosphere', and some of us have thinner boundaries than others, which can also come about as a result of trauma, psychic and mystical experiences, as many near death experiencers have reported. Thick-boundary (skinned) people are 'rigid, calm, deliberate, well organised and persevering', while thin-boundary people are 'open, vulnerable, reactive, flexible and agitated' – in other words more sensitive. The book considers a range of phenomena at the intersection between mind, body and emotion, beginning with PTSD and moving on to mirror senses and various forms of extraordinary perception. The author argues that five types of people – 'individuals with autism, synaesthesia, savantism, child prodigies and children who remember the previous lives are linked through the biology of emotion' associated with a hidden emotional intensity and also electrical sensitivity, citing many fascinating case histories.

One should note that the very etymology of telepathy means to feel at a distance, with its bodily equivalent of telesomatic, where closely-bonded people are able to feel the bodily sensations of their loved ones at a distance (p. 153), which is what I call empathetic resonance, also manifest in psychometry. Some cases are even more extraordinary, where verbal abuse can be translated into bruises integrated from prior physical abuse (p. 51). The author argues that 'highly attuned sensing' is in fact our default setting that is subsequently overlaid by cultural factors and overall development. Those who retain this faculty are most likely to experience anomalous perceptions, which will in turn influence our sense of self. Sometimes these extraordinary capacities appear after a brain injury, providing further backup for a filter theory of mind and the existence of a Universal Mind postulated by early researchers such as Thomas Jay Hudson and leading New Thought thinkers from the late

19th century. Personally, I find this line of thought more coherent than the more fashionably genetic memory as an explanatory hypothesis. This same logic applies to other forms of prodigy and extraordinary knowing. The author also weaves in bodily factors on the basis of other scientific research.

Interestingly, he argued in a previous book that thin-boundary people 'are more likely to *report* anomalous perceptions whereas thick-boundary people are more likely to *engender* anomalies.' This put me in mind of the famous incident with Freud and Jung where the latter announced that a loud report would emanate from a bookcase just before it happened, which it then did (twice). This distinction between thin and thick also seems to correspond to the tender and tough-minded classification of William James, where the latter is correlated with 'hard' (for which read masculine) science. This difference of temperament could go some way towards explaining the debate about the status of psi. The theory also sheds light on why particular children remember previous lives when one notes that a higher proportion than normal of the lives remembered entailed violent deaths. The author connects the endurance of emotion with birthmarks and 'remembered' lives as well as heart transplants, though he does not refer to the possible attachment role of discarnate intelligence or some kind of Akashic memory field. Overall, this pioneering book makes a strong case for emotion as fundamental to sentient life – including animals and plants – and helps expand the discussion of the nature of consciousness beyond cognition and in the direction of panpsychism.

■ John E. Fetzer and the Quest for the New Age

Brian C. Wilson

Wayne State University Press 2018, \$34.99, h/b.

John E. Fetzer (1901-1991) was a pioneer in the development of radio who went on to invest successfully in many other business interests and founded the Fetzer Institute in the 1970s. This biography focuses on his spiritual quest, beginning with his family background in Seventh-day Adventism as a point of departure for a much wider search. Fundamental to his quest was a faith articulated as early as 1927 as a 'magnetic influence for the good, upon every life with which we come into contact' entailing in the process creative inspiration and service to humanity. The idea of vibration frequency is natural for a radio man with an interest in Tesla who define humanity as 'though

free to think and act, we are all held together, like the stars in the firmament, with ties inseparable. These ties we cannot see, but we can feel them.... I see a friend hurt, and it hurts me too; my friend and I are one...does this not prove that each of us is only a part of the whole?' (p. 38)

Fetzer's journey took in spiritualism in the 1930s (its nine principles are enunciated, including belief in Infinite Intelligence), ancient wisdom in the form of Freemasonry, Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, and the work of Alice Bailey as well as Theosophy, which form the core of his philosophy. He also took an interest in parapsychology from the 1950s on, and supported research projects in this domain in pursuing an understanding of the science of spirit (he also had numerous channellings from Jim Gordon, which are codified into an inspiring set of personal goals as conduits of Light, Love and Spirit – p. 166). His mature worldview (p. 123) posits an intelligent Divine Energy and the ultimate goal of human life 'to transform one's consciousness into superconsciousness or Christ consciousness by completely unblocking the flow', as a result of which we can achieve health, happiness and prosperity (echoes of New Thought here and some similarities with his fellow philanthropist Sir John Templeton). At one point, the major focus of the Institute was health, but this has now shifted to love and forgiveness as a way of catalysing global spiritual transformation.

I was privileged to visit to the Institute in 1994, by which time it had its own triangular building and worked to help 'nurture and bring humanity forward to a new level of awareness and potential.' It was striking that all staff stopped work for 20 minutes every afternoon, during which time they could meditate or cultivate their spiritual development in some other way. Fetzer's vision was of a New Age in a non-pejorative sense – a belief in potential spiritual transformation of the planet in which the transformation of science from materialist to spiritual monism plays a key role. As I write, this hope is still very much alive and focused around the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn on the winter solstice. However, I feel that this transformation requires a much greater coherence than has yet been achieved, but collaborative platforms such as Humanity Rising and the outreach of Internet petition sites are promising avenues. Although the book documents the spiritual quest of one remarkable individual, the universal outlook emerging from it will be a source of continuing inspiration.

■ The Clear Light – Spiritual Reflections and Meditations

Steve Taylor (SMN)

An Eckhart Tolle Edition, New World Library 2020, 115 pp., \$18.95, h/b.

This is a remarkable book of poems which every spiritual seeker should buy for themselves and for their friends. In his foreword, Eckhart Tolle writes that Light is the 'organising principle that guides the evolution of life throughout the universe, and infinite, eternal, and transcendent consciousness that gradually expresses itself more and more fully in the dimension of space and time.' Light is central in all spiritual traditions, and the clear light of the title is synonymous with the Buddhist luminous mind – being fully in present moment awareness, a key message of the book. Guidance in the 'dark wood' arises directly from penetrating insights on Steve's own journey, which all of us will recognise as we traverse the book – healing regrets and traumas, being gentle with ourselves, non-judgmental acceptance, expanding our minds, radiating love, navigating transience and time, developing empathy, facing fears, letting go of pain, moving beyond fear, gratitude, and a sense of belonging to the whole:

*When your mind is empty
the whole world can fill you.
When your mind is quiet
you're never alone
but always one.'*

■ Pioneers of Oneness

Gerard Aartsen

BGA Publications 2020, 266 pp., no price given, h/b – www.bgapublications.nl

This book, subtitled 'the science and spirituality of UFOs and the Space Brothers', is a sequel to *Priorities for a Planet in Transition* reviewed in PE 132, and reinforces its message of the crucial importance of applying the principles of love and oneness to our future. Our current operating systems are unsustainable and require a new worldview drawing on astronomy, systems theory, UFOlogy, post-materialist science (including the Galileo Commission Report) and the ageless wisdom. The book is highly eclectic in drawing sources to support the overall argument, with extensive references to and quotations from HP Blavatsky, DK, George Adamski, Vera Stanley Alder, Benjamin Creme and his Master, and various UFO contactees – some of these are a stretch, but the message is coherent and constructive. The chapters cover UFO research, oneness as the source of reality, the algorithms of evolution, the relationship

between consciousness and technology, and the likelihood of disclosure, along with an overt declaration from the Maitreya or world teacher so long heralded by Benjamin Creme in creating a sense of hope and expectancy – but also reinforcing the idea that some greater being will intervene on our behalf. However, we do need to be open to guidance from more advanced intelligences.

It is important to note that this oneness implies diversity within unity rather than an agenda of surveillance, manipulation and control that seems to be fast approaching. As DK wrote in a book about education dating from 1954, the two major ideas in education should be ‘the value of the individual and the fact of the one humanity’, implying a much greater degree of sharing and vastly less inequality within a metric of well-being rather than economic growth. Recognition of a core spiritual component in the human being is critical for a benign future of technology as we come to understand more about the relationship between consciousness and light: love must inform technology (p.172), and our experts ideally need to be aware of and aligned with the Source so as to promote harmony rather than devote research to destructive purposes and maintain an enemy image of the other as justification. In my last review, I mentioned the figure of Beinsa Douno referred to by Krishnamurti as the World Teacher when he renounced the title in 1929. The author disputes this reference (p. 205) as not being present in Krishnamurti’s speech, but in *Sealed by the Sun* by Emily Michael, she explains that this reference was made in a second speech (p. 241). In any event, Krishnamurti makes the point that great teachers are not a reason to abdicate our own responsibility. We need a critical mass of people to feel the need for a fundamental shift and trust in the unfolding process that will almost certainly require a combination of subtle and civil activism. In this context we need to be very discerning about the kind of ‘great reset’ that we support in order to maintain and extend our heritage of Enlightenment freedom and dignity – this book is an unusual and visionary contribution to this process.

■ **Beyond the Known: Realization**

Paul Selig

St Martin’s Essentials 2019, 276 pp., \$16.99, p/b.

This channelled text contains some powerful and transformative messages that challenge readers to be willing to align with and live from the highest self. It is set out in 28 days/sections, inviting readers to move into what the author calls the Upper Room if we are

willing to release the idea of who we are and what we have been in order to receive the new, release corresponding attachments to our identity and to affirm that ‘I know who I am in truth, I know what I am in truth, I know how I serve in truth’ – which brings freedom, including freedom from fear. New wine cannot be poured into old bottles, nor can a new world be created on the basis of old ideas. Hence, we have to move beyond the known and by saying ‘I know who I am’ we are claiming our Divine Self and are taking the first step towards realisation – also that there is nothing separate from Source. This procedure can be applied daily by apprehending that ‘the gift of the day is always the choice of the day’ and choosing from the highest level.

A new world can only be born ‘in a higher agreement’, it cannot be fixed from our current collective level of consciousness, which is why we need to move beyond the known and its inherent limitations leading to my being ‘re-known, re-created and re-sung in vibration.’ This entails remembrance of the entirety of our being in union with the Source of all things – as Plotinus said, ‘remembering is for those who have forgotten.’ These affirmations are set out in a series of powerful paragraphs, which readers can say out loud, including this: ‘I am one with love. I am allowing love. I give permission to my entire being to be known in love. And, as I say yes, I am assumed, agreed to, and re-articulated as love.’ (p. 244) All this flows from our alignment as the Divine Self, whose manifestation is urgently required on this planet, a project in which we can happily all participate by saying yes to these questions: ‘Am I willing to be re-created and re-known and in service for higher well-being, the higher well-being of all? Am I willing to forgive myself for what I may have chosen to learn on this plane? Am I willing to make a new agreement that the choices I make from now on will be made in accordance with the truth of my being, from the Upper Room?’ (p. 274) This is powerful stuff!

■ **The Hidden Door**

Peter and Elizabeth Fenwick (SMN)

White Crow 2020 (1997), 346 pp. £14.99, p/b.

Subtitled ‘understanding and controlling dreams’, this book is a welcome reissue of the original edition from 1997. It is one of the most comprehensive books on the subject, drawing on a wide range of literature and research with many intriguing case histories. It covers the physiology of sleep, the nature,

symbolism and meaning of dreams, including their dark side, hypnagogic states, creativity, telepathy and precognition in dreams, visions, lucid dreams, shared dreams and sleepwalking. All of this is considered within the wide spectrum of altered states of consciousness enabling us to understand more about the nature of the human mind and its different levels of operation.

DEATH AND DYING

■ **Where Airy Voices Lead**

Piotr Bienkowski

O Books 2020, 329 pp., £15.99, p/b.

True to its subtitle of ‘a short history of immortality’, this is a remarkable, erudite and even-handed treatment of the theme by an emeritus professor of archaeology and museology. The book is divided into four parts: bodily resurrection and the immortal soul, transmigration and transformation, longevity and legacy, and reflections on immortality. The author’s experience with indigenous peoples impressed on him ‘the limitations of a theoretical scientific perspective that dismisses such experiences as “constructs” that cannot be supported by objective evidence.’ Instead, his approach takes into account the impact of worldviews, cultural norms, goals and values on how the afterlife and immortality are regarded. The overall coverage is exceptionally wide-ranging, drawing on many classic studies with which I was familiar from my own research (though my own books and notably those of SGF Brandon do not feature in the bibliography). The chapter on journeys to heaven and hell covers many different cultures as well as the experiences of Swedenborg, comparing these to modern near-death experiences.

The next part takes us on a journey through various cultural views on reincarnation, including its heretical appearance in Christianity, then the treatment moves on to indigenous traditions where death is transformation. The focus then turns to the search for an everlasting body, culminating in cryonics, but without mentioning the transhumanistic vision of uploading the contents of consciousness into cyberspace. Immortality of name comes next as a rather different meaning in terms of legacy and fame. There is then an excellent chapter on science and philosophy versus immortality, going through the various arguments against resurrection, the soul, reincarnation and animism, along with rejoinders. The sceptic Paul Edwards uses ‘circular arguments that presuppose materialism to be self-evidently true’, a

structure of logic going back to David Hume involving accusing serious researchers like Ian Stevenson of intentional or unintentional deception. However, scientific materialism is equally subjected to scrutiny, and the discussion here would have been illuminated by William James's distinction between different types of relationship between brain and consciousness in terms of productive/emissive, transmissive and permissive – the books discussing filter theory in most detail – *Irreducible Mind* and *Beyond Physicalism* are conspicuously absent from the bibliography.

The important point made by the author, though, is that there is no conclusive proof for any particular view, including the materialist scientific view. He further argues that rationality is present in views dismissed by materialists as irrational and unintelligible, since 'they are all grounded in perfectly legitimate metaphysical philosophies about the nature of reality and how the world might work.' He rightly highlights that the key issue is that psychic and transcendent experiences 'do not fit into the materialist framework, which is only one of several possible worldviews' – there is no unbiased standpoint without presuppositions from which one can arrive at an impartial view. Hence, he writes that the question of immortality 'is not a clash of evidence, but of worldviews and their interpretation.' (p. 284) We must resist the temptation of dogmatically universalising of our assumptions, as is the case with the ideology of scientism. We necessarily have to live with uncertainty and probability and at death, as CD Broad put it, wait and see or, equally likely for him, wait and not see.

■ 7 Reasons to Believe in the Afterlife

Jean Jacques Charbonier MD

Inner Traditions 2015, 144 pp., \$14.95, p/b.

The author is an anesthesiologist and intensive care physician who is well known in France for his work on near death experiences and the afterlife. He poses the question of whether the hypothesis of survival offers a better explanation for the evidence he brings forward than the materialist view of extinction, quoting Ervin Laszlo to the effect that if you are convinced something doesn't exist, you don't see it. The NDE is now well-documented along with its ethical after-effects, and here one can read case histories to back up philosophical argument. The author takes on detractors directly by stating their arguments and refuting them. He has a collection of 124 OBEs

without any connection to death and analyses that common factors as well as changes in the subjects' belief systems. Interestingly, there are no accounts of seeing TV images during an NDE. Another chapter deals with perceptions connected to death, often with striking visions at a distance. He draws the conclusion along with other serious investigators that the 'emitter-receptor brain' model allows us to accept all these phenomena in relation to a 'source consciousness'. In addition, an appendix by Emmanuel Ransford explains his concepts of psychomatter and meta-consciousness in a simple form in relation to the evidence base of the book, introducing in the process his very interesting framework consistent with the findings of quantum physics.

■ Knowledge of Spirit Worlds and Life after Death

Dr Bob Woodward

Temple Lodge 2020, 157 pp., £12.99, p/b.

This book reports conversations between the author and eight 'spirit guides', along with his late father, who was also steeped in the work of Rudolf Steiner. There is much wisdom in these pages, consistent with other sources and based on spiritual principles. There is a good deal of informative content in response to questions about what kind of worlds these beings inhabit and what they do. As one might expect, there are close intrinsic connections between those who with whom we are very close in this life. For me, the most interesting reflections were on the nature of post-mortem identity, for instance this: 'you expand into cosmic consciousness and feel that the world is within you, instead of being in yourself and looking at the world... your perception is totally changed. You are now the world, you do not stand facing the world as you did on earth. Now the world is in you and you are the world.' (p. 42) This is very much the non-dual perspective of the mystic. As 'beings of energy and light', we can be both self-contained and more diffuse and spread out (p. 79).

Correspondingly, birth is a contraction. For comparative purposes, each chapter finishes with a reflection and commentary based on the writings of Steiner. Given what is written about identity, I could not completely square this with a more linear concept of reincarnation – one analogy might be the seeds coming from the same apple, both continuous and discontinuous. I suspect that a comprehensive understanding is not available to our normal way of thinking.

■ Life Before Life

Helen Wambach

White Crow Books 2020, 169 pp., £12.99, p/b.

This book, first published in 1979, reports 750 cases of hypnotic regression and asks the question – is there life before birth? I read the book in 1982 while writing *Survival*, along with another by Edith Fiore – *Have We Been Here Before?* I also showed my Winchester pupils an evidential documentary on the topic. Such studies are easy to dismiss but they do reveal interesting patterns in the responses to such queries as why we choose to live again on earth and specifically in this era, the extent to which we are connected across lives, when the soul enters the foetus (a question presupposing the existence of the soul) and how the soul may not immediately integrate with the body. By choosing specific time periods for the sessions, she was able to build up a more consistent comparative picture. The final chapter reports a representative range of reactions from a talk show and ends with a spiritual mentor observing that the most important lesson we can learn is that 'we are all one.'

ECOLOGY-POLITICS

■ The Path to Civility

Robert Sachs

O Books (John Hunt) 2020, 109 pp., £8.99, p/b.

On Saturday mornings I always go to the local market in Chalabre, where there are almost inevitably longish queues at the stalls and shops. This gave me the opportunity of reading through most of this book and finishing it in the hammock outside my writing hut, which overlooks the village. It brings to the fore the importance of civility in personal and social terms, rooted as it is 'in an altruistic spirit, founded on an understanding that we are *basically good* and that we best grow and succeed through cooperation. The originality of the book is that it combines the wisdom of the Buddha and George Washington. As beings of passion, it is our task to transform the three poisons of ignorance, attachment and aggression into compassion. This leads into a chapter on the six perfections of a generous spirit, kindness, patience, discipline, stillness and wisdom. Wisdom is further broken down, as is compassion, and here the author makes the useful observation that civil disobedience corresponds to a form of wrathful compassion and it is even enshrined in the First Amendment.

The principles of appropriate speech are set out, and are followed by a detailed chapter on mind training and civility, drawing on the 59 slogans composed by the 11th century Buddhist sage Atisha. These give sound practical advice and are embodied in a special meditation. The longest chapter is an analysis of George Washington's rules of civility, of which he copied down 110 from the original book *Youth's Behaviour, Or Decencie in Conversation amongst Men* published in 1668 and drawing on an earlier Jesuit text dating back to 1595. The author's commentary brings the content into a modern context and the principles can be summarised in terms of nobility, dignity, magnanimity, generosity, courtesy, consideration, modesty, respect and integrity. These are all vital moral virtues that form the basis of the important work undertaken by the Jubilee Centre in Birmingham (www.jubileecentre.ac.uk) and my own work at www.inspiringpurpose.org.uk. A civilisation is rooted in civility, and a decline in the latter spells the demise of the former – an important and timely contribution to note and implement.

■ Can we be Happier? Evidence and Ethics

Lord Richard Layard, FBA

Penguin 2020, 397 pp., £22, h/b.

When I read economics in the 1970s at St Andrews, there was no course on what became welfare economics and has now developed into a whole movement around the happiness and well-being. I read Richard Layard's 2005 book *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science* and invited him to speak about 10 years ago when the topic was the theme of the Mystics and Scientists conference. Since that time, he has helped initiate a world happiness movement, including publications such as the World Happiness Report, which I have reviewed in these pages, and the Global Happiness and Well-being Policy Report, both of which are starting to put happiness on the global agenda.

This book is effectively Richard's *magnum opus* and is as such a very important statement, as well as an articulate criticism of the excesses of individualism and consumerism at the expense of community. It is high time to move beyond the limited notions of GDP and economic growth as political drivers that are becoming increasingly unsustainable. The two main parts address the happiness revolution and who can do what, beginning with each one of us and moving onto managers, health professionals, families, communities,

economists, politicians and public servants, scientists and technologists. Richard's basic proposition is that we should each, through our choices, aim to produce the greatest happiness we can for others, and the least misery. This view is a more sophisticated expression of utilitarianism as a secular ethic. The three key elements of the happiness revolution are the science of happiness (including positive psychology), the ethics of happiness, and, crucially, mind-training – Richard has been involved in the all Parliamentary group on mindfulness, which produced an important report in 2018. He explains that the happiness principle entails three central ideas of the progress principle (are we progressing in terms of happiness reduction of misery?), the ethical principle of creating as much happiness as we can in the world around us, and the policy principle whereby policymakers 'should choose policies which create the greatest possible happiness.' In my view, an advantage of this approach is that everyone can understand and apply it in their daily lives.

Research across country rankings has shown part six critical factors accounting for 76% of the variance in average happiness: trust, generosity, social support, freedom, health and income. The good news is that there are now many ways of training our thoughts and feelings through new psychological techniques that also give rise to compassion. The second part is full of insight and advice in the various fields referred to above. In education, these include values and moral education – what kind of person do you want to be? (see my Inspiring Purpose site at www.inspiringpurpose.org.uk). A sense of community and belonging is crucial, which includes volunteering, the design of cities and the reintegration of offenders. In economics, we need a new form of cost benefit analysis, 'where benefits are measured in units of happiness.' We also need new policy priorities, especially with the robotic revolution – in this respect, Richard is critical of the idea of universal basic income, which he thinks must be earned, and is optimistic about future levels of employment on the basis of history, noting that skill levels will have to be enhanced. Politics should be 'informed by reason, fuelled by truth and targeted at the greater good', overcoming populism and the politics of division. His conclusion articulate actions for happiness framed within a moral and political philosophy that can bring a better and gentler culture. Essential reading for our time.

■ Dancing with Bees

Brigit Strawbridge Howard

Chelsea Green 2019, 282 pp., £20, h/b.

The most important message of this evocative and beautifully written book is that many of us have stopped noticing trees, plants, flowers, blossoms and insects, especially bees. This put me in mind of an experience when I used to commute into central London, and was walking past a cherry blossom between Marylebone and Baker Street. I suddenly stopped in my tracks in front of this cherry tree, realising that I had passed it without noticing the previous day. I now make a point of walking mindfully, noticing what I see, sometimes translating this into poetry (they look but they do not see). Life is far richer on that account. This reconnects us with nature and natural cycles – and this book is full of observations and experiences that can encourage readers to follow suit in terms of gardening and walking. There is an extraordinary amount to learn about the various species of bee, and the way in which plants and pollinators have co-evolved. Many readers will be aware of the precipitous decline of insects according to a recent authoritative report, and one learns about the scale and implications of large-scale industrial monoculture on bees, also reading one to wonder how a transition to a more sustainable food system can be managed. We can revisit familiar places 'with new eyes, ears and awareness' realising that 'having a relationship with the rest of the nature is about opening our hearts, our minds, and ourselves, knowing that we can, if we wish, rekindle our lost connections, because somewhere deep inside us all, there lives a little spark of "wild" just waiting to be ignited, or re-ignited.' And, if we have a garden ourselves, we can participate actively in the process.

GENERAL

■ The World Needs Dialogue

Edited by Cliff Penwell

Dialogue Publications 2019, 322 pp., £30, h/b.

My friend Peter Garrett has been working professionally with the David Bohm Dialogue process since the mid-1980s, and we arranged a weekend event together with David in Gloucestershire in 1988. Bohm's work has recently returned to prominence with the release of the new film, *Infinite Potential*, about his life and work, which had over half million views on YouTube. Part of this was about his relationship and

conversations with Krishnamurti – both men took the view that human thought itself, along with language, was the source of many of our challenges, especially those ‘wicked problems’ characterised by complexity, which require holistic and non-binary thinking. For Bohm, the problem was what he called fragmentation and the adoption of fixed dogmatic positions that undermine communication in general and negotiation in particular. In his introduction, Peter notes that organisations embody different forms of power structure with respective interacting lines and centres – and much of his work has been with organisations.

This volume of papers prepared for a 2018 conference consists of five sections: the first explains why organisations need dialogue, followed by sections describing interventions in criminal justice, healthcare, politics and economics, and finally some contributions on ‘acorn’ projects. A central theme throughout is the need for a common understanding requiring presence and openness. The critical four practices are deep listening without interrupting, respecting, suspending judgement and assumptions, and voicing. This needs to be framed within the context of checking in and checking out, with expert facilitation. There are many interesting examples given from various settings, and I was struck by the list of themes arising in prisons including loss and grief, being misunderstood, prejudice and assumptions, being labelled, isolation and loneliness, power and control. Results have been encouraging, and we badly need this dialogue approach applied to our most pressing ecological and political challenges by moving beyond nationalist positions and interests to genuine respect and collaboration. As such, this is a pioneering and inspiring volume.

■ Quantum Activation

Amit Goswami, Carl David Blake and Gary Stuart

Amazon 2020, 190 pp.,
www.quantumactivation.com

Based on the principles of quantum physics and nonlocal consciousness, this instructive book sees obstacles and challenges as an opportunity for change. Much of our patterning is ancestral, with a good deal of unresolved trauma that is activated in upbringing, as work in this field has shown. We are also subject to external obstacles such as digital distraction and social pressures from which we need to free ourselves through attention and intention. This involves learning, growth and

healing in our pursuit of well-being and our true purpose. The authors recommend what they call do-be-do-be-do manifestation as a purposive movement of consciousness that also taps into our intuition. There is much sound advice here based on a combination of scientific, psychological and practical knowledge.

■ The Inner Curriculum

Neil and Jane Hawkes

John Catt Educational 2020, 142 pp.,
£14, p/b.

This work by the pioneer of values-based education and his psychotherapist wife explains how to nourish well-being, resilience, emotional stability and self-leadership within an educational context. It is a book that everyone involved in education will want to read as it takes values and character-based education to a new level by incorporating spirituality in relation to our inner worlds of thoughts, feelings and emotions. The authors propose that ‘all children need to understand what it means to be a complete human being; that our future depends on our ability to be humane and in relationship with the natural world. (p. 22) The first part of the book gives an overview of values-based education and the inner curriculum, while the second explains how to develop this practically within schools so as to create a harmonious ethos of relationships. It also draws on neurobiology, reflective practices and the internal family system (IFS) approach by building on the positive sides of human nature and bringing our various ‘parts’ together in self-leadership. The final chapter provides a very useful guide to organisations and activities – for further information, see www.valuesbasededucation.com. I hope that these ideas will be widely adopted as they are key to co-creating a peaceful and compassionate world and not just producers and consumers contributing to unsustainable economic growth.

■ Ancient High Tech

Frank Joseph

Bear and Co 2020, 314 pp., \$20, p/b.

The mainstream archaeological narrative is allergic to this kind of investigation that rewrites the history of culture and suggests that previous civilisations have been more technologically sophisticated than we thought. This also has to do with the overall rise and fall of civilisations where their technology may all but disappear. Some of the chapter titles with the corresponding illustrations are indicative: automation, ancient

aviation, surgical wonders, optics, weapons of mass destruction, electric power and ancient engineering. Examples include a relief of a bicycle from an ancient temple, Inuit goggles to protect the eyes, and matches from the Babylonian culture. The book is extensively researched and challenges readers to assess the significance of the evidence for themselves and reflect on our continuing destructive tendencies embodied in technology that make us a danger to ourselves.

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED

■ Essays for an Ecology of Ideas

Gregory Bateson

Cybernetics and Human Knowing,
Vol 12, No. 1-2, 2005

A technical series of essays covering creativity, epistemology, emergence and transdisciplinarity, also covering a meeting between Bateson and Carl Rogers in 1975.

■ Laws of Form

George Spencer-Brown

Cybernetics and Human Knowing,
Vol 24, No. 3-4, 2017

A commemorative volume for George Spencer-Brown (1923-2016) celebrating his seminal book *Laws of Form* (1969) where the editor notes his observation that ‘we cannot escape the fact that the world is constructed in order (and thus in such a way as to be able) to see itself.’ Intriguingly, he also proposes that ‘in order to see the world clearly, we need to abandon existence to truth, truth to indication, indication to form, and form to void...’

■ The Moral Mind

Henry Haslam

Imprint Academic 2005, 106 pp.,
£8.95, p/b.

A useful and thorough discussion of the moral sense in relation to what it means to be human, bringing to bear multiple perspectives from evolution, community and transcendence on the choices we make and the reasons for them.

■ Bioethics – A Primer for Christians, fourth edition

Gilbert Meilaender

Eerdmans, 2020, 154 pp., \$19.99, p/b.

This short book considers the implications of many bioethical issues from a Christian perspective, including reproduction, abortion, genetic advance, prenatal screening, suicide and euthanasia, organ donation and embryos. It is a well informed and balanced treatment.

■ **In Search of Spiritual Intelligence**

Betty Steinhauer (BK Shivani)

Fisher King Publishing 2020, 235 pp., £11.99, p/b.

An interesting journey of 39 interviews on life and spiritual practice, mainly with inspiring people connected with the Brahma Kumaris and containing much wise counsel in an easy conversational style.

■ **The Life that Never Ends**

An Anthology of Quaker Spiritual and Psychic Experience

Quaker Fellowship for Afterlife Studies, 2019, 134 pp., £5, p/b.

This is the third such anthology containing a wide spectrum of experiences, with a number by SMN Members. When one reads such a series of case histories, they naturally fall into patterns consistent with a spiritual reality underpinning our existence and that transcends the physical world. A book full of valuable insights.

■ **The Formation of Character in Education**

James Arthur

Routledge 2020, 242 pp., £96, h/b, e-book £29.59.

■ **Flourishing as the Aim of Education**

Kristjan Kristjansson

Routledge 2020, 215 pp., £96, h/b, e-book £29.59.

These two important books have been written by my colleagues at the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, and are both rooted in Aristotelian virtue ethics. The first is a historical introduction from the Greeks onwards of character formation, with fascinating chapters covering medieval, early modern and Scottish Enlightenment foundations, then Victorian and 20th century influences, bringing the story right up to contemporary policies and themes. The second book is more specifically about the concept of flourishing, *eudaemonia* and the good life, considering its relationship to happiness and moral virtues, also with respect to exemplars. Each chapter contains reflective practical questions at the end, concluding with important pointers towards embedding the concept of flourishing more widely, especially at a policy level.

■ **Participatory Action Research – Second Edition**

Jacques M. Chevalier and Daniel J. Buckles

Routledge 2019, 417 pp., £35.99, p/b.

This comprehensive handbook about theory and methods for engaged enquiry sets the standard for the field, and is widely used in teaching action research – with people rather than about them involving ‘collective reasoning and evidence-based learning focused on social action.’ This new edition includes more emphasis on process design, and features critical commentaries on a variety of issues including stakeholder theory, systems thinking, research ethics and, Risk assessment and social innovation.

■ **Confessions of a Non-Violent Revolutionary**

Chris Savory

Clairview 2020, 185 pp., £12.99, p/b.

An engaging activist memoir from the 1980s vividly evoking the dissident campaigns of the time as Chris steps out of his privileged background into the front line of non-violent revolution. The rebel spirit is still present as he joins Extinction Rebellion wondering what his own actions achieved. However, that is not the point as each of us is responsible for doing what we can, where we can and when we can as an expression of our concern and social responsibility.

■ **Biodynamic Beekeeping**

Matthias Thun

Floris Books 2020, 194 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Matthias Thun (1948-2020) wrote this comprehensive book as the fruit of 50 years of experience in keeping bees biodynamically. It covers every aspect of the craft, starting from the biodynamic principle of cosmic rhythms and moving on to the cycles of the year, swarming, regeneration and propagation, natural honeycombs and honey, bee diseases and the conservation of bees in a genuinely sustainable fashion, which is a million miles from the prevailing factory approach – a microcosm of our overall approach to nature that requires a radical overhaul.

■ **The Maria Thun Biodynamic Calendar 2021**

Created by Maria and Matthias Thun

Floris Books 2020, 66 pp., £7.99, p/b.

Those familiar with this annual publication will know that it is the indispensable guide to biodynamic gardening. This year’s edition contains features by Matthias on Easter 2019, Planets and Trees and an account of

Maria’s first nine years of research. The calendar itself is a guide to sowing times but also contains sections on the care of bees and fungal problems.

■ **The Little Book of Education – Learning for Life**

Wendy Ellyatt (SMN)

The Flourish Project 2020, 20 pp – see www.flourishproject.net

This book flies the flag for a new kind of education grounded in flourishing that will inspire the next generation to learn about the world and change it for the better on the basis that our precarious situation is a system problem. This begins with values and a more human (and less economic) vision of education related to the seven fundamental human developmental needs of security, relationship, independence, engagement, fulfilment, contribution and growth, expressed at every level. For me, this book expresses the quintessence of education and as such cannot be too strongly recommended.

■ **The Act of Consecration of Man**

Tom Ravetz

Floris Books 2020, 129 pp., £xx, p/b.

This book follows the format of the Communion service of the Christian Community, founded by Rudolf Steiner – gospel reading, creed, offertory, transubstantiation and communion. An awareness of spiritual realms and presences pervades the ceremony, and there are suggestions for personal reflection inserted at various points, also invoking the Christ spirit within the heart. This can be used as inspiring *lectio divina* – contemplative reading, for instance on the water of life – even for those not identified with the Community.

■ **Otherworld**

Chris Allaun

O Books 2020, 209 pp., £11.99, p/b.

An engaging book about establishing relationships with the spirits of the land and ecstatic techniques for creating deeper shamanic connections.

■ **Fools’ Paradise**

Nicholas Hagger (SMN)

O Books 2020, 154 pp., £10.99, p/b.

An epic poem of social satire harking back to Sebastian Brant’s 1494 Ship of Fools where ‘the UK Ship of State [is] manned by a squabbling crew sailing for an illusory paradise and too riven by division to reach agreement.’

Autumn Path

Slanting light
Through bent branches
Speckles
Brown leaves
Rustling
Underfoot.

A purple crocus
Unfolds
Its tender beauty,
The last butterflies
Still flick lightly
In lingering warmth.

The autumn path
Leads deep underground
Into mountain stillness,
The cave of the heart,
Where new life
Patiently awaits
Its time
To rise again.

David Lorimer,
October 2020

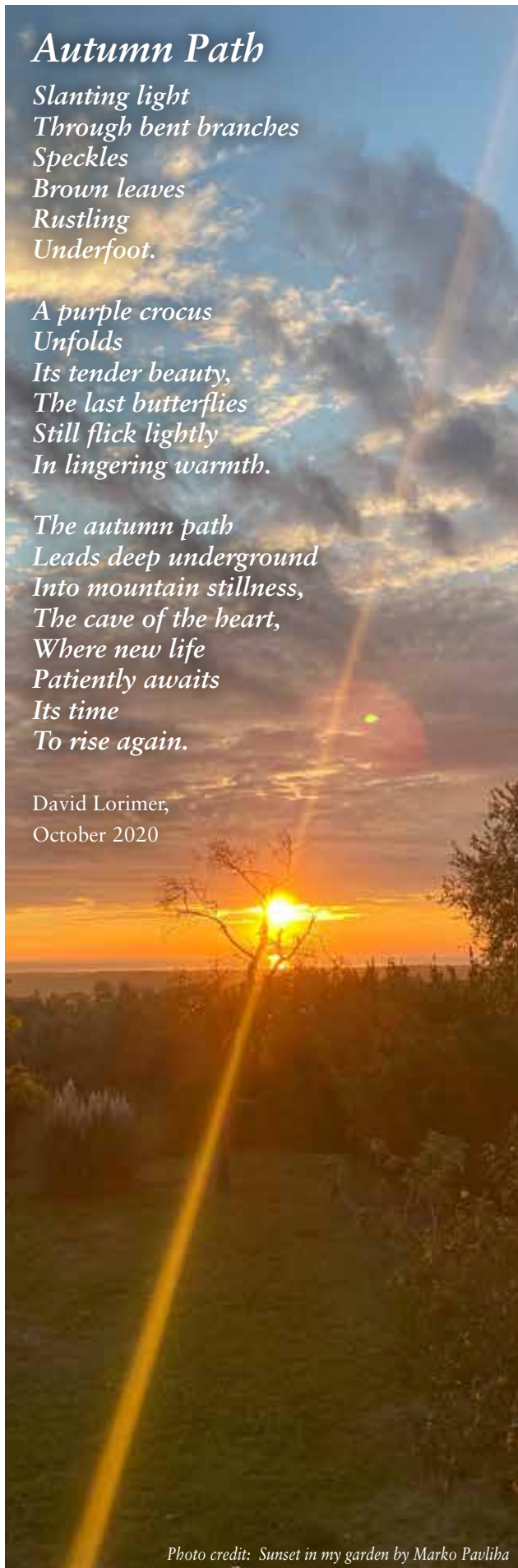


Photo credit: Sunset in my garden by Marko Pauliha

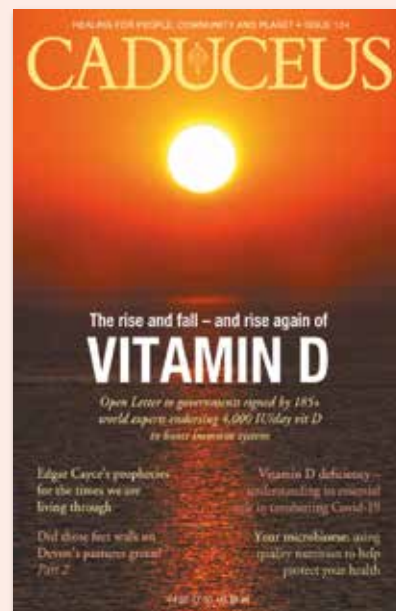
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- Practical Ways to help Someone with Cancer Diagnosis
- What will it be like Returning to Work after Lockdown? ● Turning Massage from Yang into Yin Therapy
- Train Your Brain ● Dentists Point out Bad Habits That Could Be Ruining Your Teeth ● Treating & Preventing Musculoskeletal Disorders while Self-Isolating

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The Scientific and Medical Network is a leading international forum for people engaged in creating a new worldview for the 21st century. The Network brings together scientists, doctors, psychologists, engineers, philosophers, complementary practitioners and other professionals. The Network is an educational charity which was founded in 1973.

The Network aims to:

- challenge the adequacy of scientific materialism as an exclusive basis for knowledge and values. See www.galileocommission.org
- provide a safe forum for the critical and open minded discussion of ideas that go beyond reductionist science.
- encourage a respect for Earth and Community which emphasises a spiritual and holistic approach.

In asking searching questions about the nature of life and the role of the human being, the Network is:

- Open to new observations and insights;
- Rigorous in evaluating evidence and ideas;
- Responsible in maintaining the highest scientific and ethical standards;
- Sensitive to a plurality of viewpoints

Network services

- Paradigm Explorer, published three times a year
- Monthly e-newsletter
- A website with a special area for Members
- Monthly London Group meetings
- Downloadable MP3s from our conferences
- Links with MSc course in transpersonal psychology

Network Conferences

The Network's annual programme of events includes:

- Annual Beyond the Brain conference
- Two annual residential conferences (The Annual Gathering, Mystics and Scientists)
- Annual residential conference in a Continental European country
- Day conferences, online webinars and evening lectures
- Monthly Meet the Board and Book Review Briefings online
- Weekly webinars for Members: Informal Dialogue, Meditation and Virtual Bar
- Concessionary rates for full time students

Joining the Network

Membership of the Network is open to anyone who wishes to explore some of the most difficult questions of our time with a community of like minds. Student members must be engaged in full-time study.

Subscription Rates

Membership of the Networks costs £60 (with printed review). Please contact the office for further details. £40 concession.

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