

Paradigm Explorer



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The Scientific &
Medical Network

NETWORK CALENDAR 2020

As you will have seen we are now scheduling nearly one webinar a week so please keep up to date with our mailings and on www.mysticsandscientists.org – members can access recordings of previous events free of charge. Webinars beyond October 28 not listed here due to lack of space!

September 29	Prof. April Deconick on <i>The Gnostic New Age</i>
October 7	Prof Jeff Kripal on <i>The Flip, Who You Really Are and Why It Matters</i>
October 14	Dr Anne Baring on <i>Awakening to a New Story – The Evolutionary Imperative of our Time</i>
October 16	Joint event with Institute of Noetic Sciences, Prof Jim Tucker, University of Virginia - <i>Children's Memories of Previous Lives</i>
October 17, 6-8.30 pm	<i>Director's Cut of Infinite Potential</i> Film about David Bohm with panel discussion
October 17-18	Rescheduled <i>Synchronicity and the I Ching</i> , online, limited to 28 people – fully booked, but contact Andrew for the waiting list
22 October	Prof. Chris Bache – <i>LSD and the Cosmic Mind</i>
October 28	Dr Vasilieios Basios - <i>Complexity and Tipping Points</i>
November 6-8	<i>Beyond the Brain Online</i> – www.beyondthebrain.org . Speakers: Prof Kim Penberthy, Prof Ed Kelly, Prof Janice Miner Holden, Noelle St Germain- Sehr and Amanda St Germain-Sehr, Dr Oliver Robinson, Dr Tamara Russell, Prof Harald Atmanspacher, Tim Freke, Analaura Trivellato, Dr Peter Fenwick, David Lorimer

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

SEPTEMBER

Monday 21st DR. MICHAEL BROOKS *Cardano, the Quantum and the Cosmos*

OCTOBER

Monday 5th PROF. RAVI RAVINDRA *Yoga and the Future Science of Consciousness*

NOVEMBER

Monday 9th PROF. KIM PENBERTHY *An Introduction to the Study of the Mind-Body Relationship with a Focus on Extraordinary Experiences and Fear of Death*

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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

PARADIGM EXPLORER is published three times a year by the Scientific & Medical Network, generally in April, August and December.

Editor: David Lorimer
2 Chemin de la Chaussee,
11230 St Colombe sur l'Hers,
France

E-mail: dl@scimednet.org

Web Site: www.scimednet.org

(Members may apply to the SMN Office for password to access the Members Only area of the web site).

Editorial Board:
John Clarke, Paul Kieniewicz

Printed by:
Kingfisher Print & Design Ltd, Devon

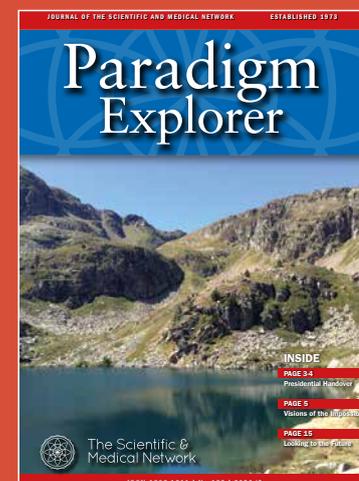
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Paradigm Explorer
Registered office:
Scientific & Medical Network,
c/o Dawe, Hawken & Dodd,
52 Fore Street, Callington,
Cornwall PL17 7AJ

Tel: 0203 468 2034.

Email: info@scimednet.org

Company limited by guarantee,
registered No. 4544694 England
Registered charity No. 1101171 UK



Cover: A day out in the Pyrenees
David Lorimer



Cyber Dialoguing on Big Questions

Paul Filmore, Chair - chairman@scimednet.org

In common with many organisations at the beginning of lockdown, the SMN faced a dilemma. It became obvious that public events, such as 'Mystics & Scientists', one of our two major annual conferences, should be cancelled in line with a general awareness of necessary response to safety issues around Covid-19. As well as the effect on members of this cancellation, it also meant a degree of threat to the financial support (and staffing) which underpins the Network, which does depend in part on income from such events.

We had to rethink our approach, both in providing alternatives for our members in these changed circumstances, while ensuring and continuing a viable mechanism of financial support for the infrastructure of our organisation, in order to allow our work to continue securely. We needed lateral thinking and the ingenuity for which Network members are often recognised, so we brainstormed, discussed, dialogued and adapted! A new approach to structure of events emerged and was immediately trialled, comprising largely online activity, intended to replace & supplement the public events, and to bypass the isolation that lockdown imposed, enabling Network members an even enhanced ability to continue networking, in a wide range of formats.

Engaging via Zoom became the chief format for these happenings. We have, in a short period of time, been able to initiate a structure of events that has transformed our organisation even further into an active vibrant community of interacting members. This has not only been possible because of the skill and insight of those behind the development, but also the enthusiasm and commitment of all the members who have thrown themselves with gusto into this new way of communicating. And this is only the beginning...

Weekly (often on Thursdays), we host a webinar with an invited major speaker; Friday brings Paul Kieniewicz's 'wine bar' discussions; On Sundays, Peter Fenwick (our emeritus President) leads a meditation session; and on Mondays we have the

'Dialogue' evenings, facilitated by myself. In addition, David Lorimer has started a monthly book review briefing; and every six weeks we present a 'Meet the Board' evening, with opportunity for members to become better informed, meet (as stated) the Board members behind the decisions, and provide a format for those who are considering membership to ask questions about the Network and its aims.

In this way, for the past ten weeks, I have been honoured to share part of my Monday evenings with Network members, via Zoom. We have been having unstructured and lightly moderated discussion sessions, sharing thoughts, experiences, concerns and wisdom, based around a single word or theme: light, time, mind-sets, creativity, peace, community, change, resilience, positivity, co-creation. We have often used the current challenge of the pandemic to focus our discussion and to initiate entry into deep or 'big' questions. What has become increasingly evident in our group Zoom meetings, is that regular attendance by a core number of Network members is developing over time into a collegiate group environment, where these big questions may be explored in an atmosphere of comradeship and trust, providing, in part, a welcome 'community' in this period of greater individual seclusion than normal.

This has led us, within the virtual walls of our Monday group meetings, to question why it is, that generally in society, it can be difficult to face these big issues, or even sometimes to acknowledge them. I remember a business colleague talking of a purported American board room scenario, entitled 'the dead moose on the table', where a graphic picture is painted of board members ignoring the moose, even standing up to see around the antlers, in order to talk to people on the other side of the table about the colour to paint the toilets, rather than discussing, in this case, an unpleasant looming financial crisis (the moose!). In today's culture, we mused, is it that we cannot see the issues that may need addressing, or have we, in some way, been trained up to feel that we are actually incapable of facing such challenges?

Our group has explored such issues around the insights gained from enforced review of daily living during lockdown, asking whether this may provide a view on potential changes to societal structure. We discussed, for example, a number of recent surveys which have indicated that many people have enjoyed a better work-life balance, and can often be more productive when working at home (which, in addition, avoids daily commuting and reduces associated pollution). These and other topics have made Monday evenings both illuminating and stimulating - but is this not the Network way? - to be a 'safe house', to enable discussion of any subject in an open-minded way, to challenge our assumptions, but be able to be rigorous in our discernment, and (from our vision statement) aspire to *co-create new paradigms to bring truth, beauty, health and well-being into harmony, and so help heal our fractured culture.*

The feedback to our new format of events has been extremely positive. Many members have expressed their pleasure in allowing some or all these events 'into their living room' as part of their weekly routine, and there has been a general expression of appreciation of the particular benefit of having access to regular companionship in this form, during this pandemic period.

Please support the SMN directly by recommending our weekly invited-speaker webinars to your friends and online community. The greater the number of people who attend, the more the SMN is supported financially, as well as, of course, and more importantly, helping to communicate the interests and values of the SMN to the wider world. Becoming a SMN member has great benefits, not least in having free access to the growing repository of past webinars and conferences, and in the providing of company and stimulation through all our free present weekly activities - so please encourage your friends and colleagues to join! And finally, please feel free to contact us with any ideas about how we can further and better serve you, our members.



Passing the Baton

Text of online handover speech, July 5, 2020

Dr Peter Fenwick

The Scientific and Medical Network was established because our Founders recognised how important such an organisation could be in redressing the dominance of materialistic science and giving a voice to those scientists who had a wider view. In its infancy, the Network was of necessity a somewhat covert organisation, conveying information about meetings etc in plain brown envelopes to a selected membership list of open-minded scientists.

The world has changed, and so has the Network, but its core premise, its membership and its purpose remain the same. Some years ago it became apparent that the Network needed to be more proactive in questioning the limits of reductionist science, and so the decision was made to produce a strongly worded and well referenced report which could be widely circulated, detailing the scientific evidence which supported non-materialistic findings. The subsequent publication of the Galileo Commission Report has for the first time put the Network's head clearly above the parapet and has attracted the attention of a number of high profile international scientists who have supported its findings.

The Network is now on the international scene as a major player in the area of consciousness, spirituality and the wider understanding of mind. So it is more important than ever that it should be headed by a respected scientist who has a foot in both camps. Professor Bernard Carr who has agreed to be our next President is just such a scientist.

Bernard completed his BA in mathematics in 1972 at Trinity College Cambridge. He studied relativity and

Cosmology under Stephen Hawking at the Institute of Astronomy in Cambridge and then at the Californian Institute of Technology. He was elected to a Fellowship at Trinity College and became an Advanced Science and Engineering Research Council Fellow at the Institute of Astronomy. In 1979 he was awarded a Lindemann Fellowship and in 1980 he took up a Senior Research Fellowship at the Institute of Astronomy in Cambridge. In 1985 he moved to Queen Mary College, University of London, where he became Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy until his recent retirement. He is well known for his work on multiple universes.

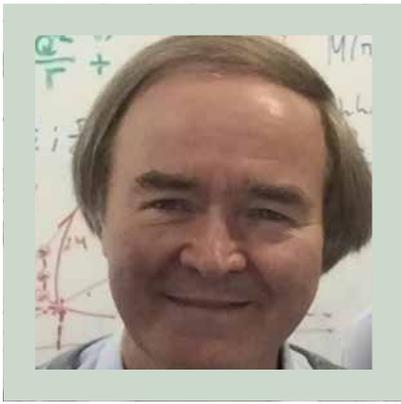
He is author of over 200 papers and his monograph, *Cosmological Gravitational Waves*, won the 1985 Adams Essay prize. He is well qualified to be our President as he has wide non-reductionist interests. He joined the Society for Psychical Research in 1972, was drafted onto their council in 1975 and became an elected member of the Council in 1977. He was the SPR Education Officer from 1985 to 2000, organising many study days and also served as SPR President from 2000 to 2004.

I was introduced to the Network by George Blaker, one of its four Founders and also the man whose generosity in giving us a grant to invest has provided us with an income to run it. I would like to thank the Trustees of the Network who have looked after our finances in an exemplary way, and have kept a sharp eye to ensure we were following the course set for it by George Blaker when he endowed it.

I have been President for nearly 20 years and seen the development of the Network continue. But as I think we all know, the success of the Network has always been very largely due to our good fortune in having David Lorimer since 1986. At first, he took on the entire administrative load and has been enormously creative in his choice of speakers, venues, and topics. Helped by a succession of hard-working Chairs and Council members and prominent scientists respected in their field, the Network gradually became known. We also invited a number of Honorary Members who were happy to support us, amongst them Ilya Prigogine and Brian Josephson, both Nobel laureates.

Anonymity is no longer necessary, but the Network is still a safe haven where members can be themselves and have rational discussions on subjects regarded as irrational by materialistic science. However, there are still problems about discussing such topics with mainstream scientific organisations. On one occasion in 2006 I was discussing NDEs and Rupert Sheldrake was talking about telepathy at the British Association of Science. A member of the Press who was present at Rupert's talk immediately raised the alarm, and several national newspapers published derogatory articles about the Network, claiming it was not a proper scientific body.

I am handing the Presidency on to Bernard in the certainty that he is the right person to fulfil the role, to be its public face, to help emancipate science by creating a bridge between reductionist and non-reductionist science and to keep the Network moving in the direction set by its Founders.



Presidential Transfer

Bernard's Reply to Peter

Bernard Carr

Although the SMN was founded 47 years ago, there have been only two Presidents – George Blaker (1986-2001) and Peter himself (2001-2020) – so it is a rare honour and a daunting challenge to follow in their footsteps. I'm not sure what the initiation ceremony usually entails but since it's nearly 20 years since the last one, I suspect that Peter is one of the few people who can recall. I understand that Bart van der Lugt, the chair at the time, organised some form of coronation. In any case, we clearly cannot follow tradition, since this is the first AGM to be held by Zoom. So I have the distinction of becoming the first Zoom President.

My first task in response to Peter is to thank him. He has been a member of the SMN since 1977 and has made a huge contribution – not only as Chair and President – but also in other ways, such as introducing speakers at conferences and leading meditation sessions, too numerous to mention. I've always regarded Peter and David as an indispensable double act. They embody the SMN more than anybody else – not just because they have served it for so long but because of what they have achieved. Besides this, Peter has made a crucial scientific contribution. His studies of the brain and Near-Death Experiences have provided convincing evidence that the mainstream view of consciousness is incorrect and that the brain is a filter rather than a producer of consciousness. So it will be impossible to fill Peter's boots and I can only aspire (in the words of Isaac Newton) to stand on his (very tall) shoulders to see further. Talking of double acts, I must also pay tribute to Elizabeth, who is undoubtedly part of Peter's success and co-authored his books on NDEs. Even though Peter is resigning as President (to become President Emeritus), I'm sure both of them will continue to have a profound and beneficial influence for many years to come.

I confess to suffering from impostor syndrome when I compare myself to

my Presidential predecessors. My life has been devoted to three passions – science, psychical research and spiritual endeavours – and the SMN is the only organisation I know which embraces all three. However, I don't feel that I've had great success in any of them. Despite Peter's kind words, as a scientist, I'm certainly not in the same league as my late friend and mentor Stephen Hawking. Most of my experimental work in psychical research remains unpublished and my contribution has mainly been on the theoretical side. If my hyperspatial model of mind and spirit turns out to be correct, it may be important but I probably won't know that during my lifetime. My progress on the mystical path has been even less impressive and enlightenment must certainly wait until another lifetime!

On the other hand, this is not necessarily an expression of regret. To be really successful in any activity, one has to focus on it almost exclusively (obsessively) and I think I decided long ago that my purpose was to connect my three passions – to build bridges between them – even if this was at the expense of making only a modest contribution to each. It may be controversial to suggest this but possibly this is true of the SMN as a whole. The SMN does not aspire to be a leading scientific body, it does not sponsor parapsychology experiments, and it is not an influential proponent of any particular spiritual path. But that is not its purpose. Rather it is to provide a bridge – in these perilous times a bridge over troubled waters – with a broader perspective on the nature of science and spirituality.

Like Peter, I've also served as Chair of the SMN. When I stood down in 2015, the SMN was undergoing a crisis, mainly as a result of its financial difficulties and this caused me some sleepless nights. Indeed, my final editorial – “Crises and opportunities” – caused some controversy, being regarded as excessively gloomy

by some people. However, we *were* in a crisis and this *did* turn out to represent an opportunity. Thanks to the inspiring chairmanship of Paul Filmore and his Board, many difficult but necessary developments – such as the change in administrative structure and move of office – have come to pass.

I mention this, not to dwell on the past, but because we're in another crisis now, albeit one not specific to the SMN. The coronavirus pandemic has dramatically changed the way in which we operate. However, like the previous crisis, this also represents an opportunity. For example, the frequency of our meetings and attendance at them has increased dramatically and they now include participants from all over the world. Of course, we miss the physical communion of our traditional meetings and doubtless that will return but I suspect that the SMN will be forever changed and for the better. The Presidency is an honorary position with no formal duties but I will do my best to cooperate with Paul and the Board in realising these changes.

I've informed Paul that I don't want to serve as President for more than five years, so in that respect I don't intend to emulate Peter. However, I hope to still have the role when we reach our 50th anniversary in 2023 and that will surely be cause for a wonderful celebration. In the immediate future I have been invited to attend and speak at the graduation ceremony for the students on Professor Lancaster's *Consciousness, Spirituality and Transpersonal Psychology* course next week. The SMN was involved in setting up this course and David Lorimer also contributes to the teaching, so I've always regarded it as a crucial realisation of our educational role. In the even more immediate future I must chair the Members' Forum and since this means that I must master Zoom technology, this may be the most challenging task of all!



Visions of the Impossible

How ‘fantastic’ stories unlock the nature of consciousness

Jeffrey J. Kripal

This article, first published in The Chronicle of Higher Education, was the genesis of Jeff’s latest book, The Flip – ‘a visionary new worldview of the cosmos, human consciousness and their intimate connection’ about which he will be speaking in a webinar on October 7.

"I met Jeff at the Interlaken Science of Consciousness conference last year. He suggests that the humanities should be recast as the study of consciousness within culture and that academics should seriously consider the implications of the kind of cases he cites below – see also www.galileocommission.org

The greatest taboo among serious intellectuals of the century just behind us, in fact, proved to be none of the “transgressions” itemised by postmodern thinkers: It was, rather, the heresy of challenging a materialist worldview."

Victoria Nelson, *The Secret Life of Puppets* (2002)

Two impossible tales:

Scene 1. Mark Twain was famous for mocking every orthodoxy and convention, including, it turns out, the conventions of space and time. As he relates the events in his diaries, Twain and his brother Henry were working on the riverboat *Pennsylvania* in June 1858. While they were in port in St. Louis, the writer had a dream:

In the morning, when I awoke I had been dreaming, and the dream was so vivid, so like reality, that it deceived me, and I thought it was real. In the dream I had seen Henry a corpse. He lay in a metallic burial case. He was dressed in a suit of my clothing, and on his breast lay a great bouquet of flowers, mainly white roses, with a red rose in the centre.

Twain awoke, got dressed, and prepared to go view the casket. He was walking to the house where he thought the casket lay before he realised “that there was nothing real about this—it was only a dream.”

Alas, it was not. A few weeks later, Henry was badly burned in a boiler explosion and then accidentally killed when some young doctors gave him an overdose of opium for the pain. Normally the dead were buried in a simple pine coffin, but some women had raised \$60 to put

Henry in a metal one. Twain explains what happened next:

When I came back and entered the dead-room Henry lay in that open case, and he was dressed in a suit of my clothing. He had borrowed it without my knowledge during our last sojourn in St. Louis; and I recognised instantly that my dream of several weeks before was here exactly reproduced, so far as these details went—and I think I missed one detail; but that one was immediately supplied, for just then an elderly lady entered the place with a large bouquet consisting mainly of white roses, and in the centre of it was a red rose, and she laid it on his breast.

Who would not be permanently marked, at once inspired and haunted, by such a series of events? Who of us, if this were *our* dream and *our* brother, could honestly dismiss it as a series of coincidences? Twain could not. He was obsessed with such moments in his life, of which there were many. In 1878 he described some of them in an essay and even theorised how they worked. But he could not bring himself to publish it, as he feared “the public would treat the thing as a joke whereas I was in earnest.” He offered the essay to the *North American Review* on the condition that it be published anonymously.

The magazine refused to do so. Finally, Twain published the article in *Harper's*, in two instalments: "Mental Telegraphy: A Manuscript with a History" (1891) and "Mental Telegraphy Again" (1895).

Mental telegraphy. The technological metaphor points to Twain's conviction that such events were connected to the acts of reading and writing. Indeed, he suspected that whatever processes this mental telegraphy involved had some relationship to the sources of his literary powers. The "manuscript with a history" of the first essay's title refers to a detailed plotline for a story about some Nevada silver mines that one day came blazing into his mind. Twain came to believe that he had received this idea from a friend 3,000 miles away through mental telegraphy.

Scene 2. The American forensic pathologist Janis Amatuzio's book *Beyond Knowing* is filled with extraordinary stories of impossible things that routinely happen around death. Here is one such tale.

It began one night when Amatuzio encountered a very troubled hospital chaplain, who asked her if she knew how they had found the body of a young man recently killed in a car accident. Amatuzio replied that her records showed that the Coon Rapids Police Department had recovered the body in a frozen creek bed at 4:45 a.m.

"No," the man replied. "Do you know how they *really* found him?" The chaplain then explained how he had spoken with the dead man's wife, who related a vivid dream she'd had that night of her husband standing next to her bed, apologising and explaining that he had been in a car accident, and that his car was in a ditch where it could not be seen from the road. She awoke immediately, at 4:20, and called the police to tell them that her husband had been in a car accident not far from their home, and that his car was in a ravine that could not be seen from the road. They recovered the body 20 minutes later.

Violating academic worldviews

Most scholars have no idea what to do with such poignant, powerful

stories, other than to dismiss them with lazy words like "anecdote" or "coincidence." Or perhaps we could study their textual histories and show that they are not as straightforward as they seem. That would be a relief.

As with the heads of Hercules' Lernaean Hydra, however, with every story we so decapitate, three more, or three thousand more, appear. We are swimming in a sea of such stories, if only we could recognize our situation. We do not know how many such stories there might be, much less what they might mean. We do not know because we have never really tried to find out. Why, after all, would we study something that does not exist? "Water?" the fish asks. "What's water?"

It is worse than that, though. It is not just that we are told that such things, which happen all the time, cannot happen at all. It is that there are subtle, and not so subtle, punishments in place for those who take such events seriously—that is, for those who let the Hydra stand. Note that both stories feature a kind of professional fear. Twain struggled for years with whether to own his experiences in print. Even the hospital chaplain was shaken to the core by what he encountered. Clearly these events violate something basic about our worldview and our established ways of knowing. That is why Amatuzio titled her book *Beyond Knowing*.

It is not just our fault, though. There are fundamental ambiguities inherent in the experiences themselves, ambiguities that make it difficult to put and keep these experiences on our academic tables. To start with, these things are not things. Nor are they replicable or measurable. And then there is the key role that the human imagination plays in these visions.

I have recounted two fairly straightforward, empirical cases, but the records are filled with more difficult, that is, more symbolic or outright mythical accounts whose strangeness would boggle even the most generous minds. Finally, the recounting of even the empirical cases is often changed in small ways (missing an important detail

or supplying a non-existent one), which suggests that these visions are accurate anomalous cognitions that have been "filled in" with imagined details—mixtures of trick and truth.

The early-Victorian researchers had it right: They called dreams like the two with which I began "veridical hallucinations," or hallucinations corresponding to real events.

We are not very good at such paradoxical ways of thinking today. We tend to think of the imagined as imaginary, that is, made up, fanciful. But something else is shining through, at least in these extreme cases. Somehow Twain's dreaming imagination knew that his brother would be dead in a few weeks—it even knew what kind of bouquet would sit on his brother's breathless chest. Similarly, the wife's dream-vision knew that her husband had just been killed and where his body lay. In those events, words like "imagined" and "real," "inside" and "outside," "subject" and "object," "mental" and "material" cease to have much meaning. And yet such words name the most basic structures of our knowing.

Or not knowing.

Both stories are about a kind of traumatic transcendence, a visionary warping of space and time effected by the gravity of intense human suffering. Even these most basic "categories of the understanding," as Immanuel Kant called them, surrender their reign before the needs of the human heart. Much as Kant argued, these appear to be our own cognitive filters, not some perfect reflection of what is really there, or, dare I add, of what we are really capable.

Kant's intellectual fear

There was more to Kant's fundamental insight than philosophical precision. On August 10, 1763, the philosopher marveled (in a private letter) at the clairvoyant abilities of the Swedish scientist-seer Emanuel Swedenborg, who, in 1756, related to some dinner guests, in Gothenburg, the precise details of a fire advancing in a southern suburb of Stockholm, 50 miles away. From 6 to 8 in

the evening, he reported on the fire's advance until it was finally put out, just three doors from his own house. In the next few days, Swedenborg's account was investigated and confirmed by the political authorities after the news spread and the governor got involved.

But here is the catch: Kant may have clearly accepted in private the empirical truth of such an extraordinary event, but he mocked and made fun of Swedenborg in public. There is that professional fear again.

Debunkers misunderstand such stories as the soon-to-be-dead brother, the appearance of the fatal-car-accident victim, and the advancing fire—all of which happened under extreme circumstances—when they ask, with a sneer, why all psychics do not get rich on the stock market, or why robust psychic phenomena cannot be made to appear in the controlled laboratory.

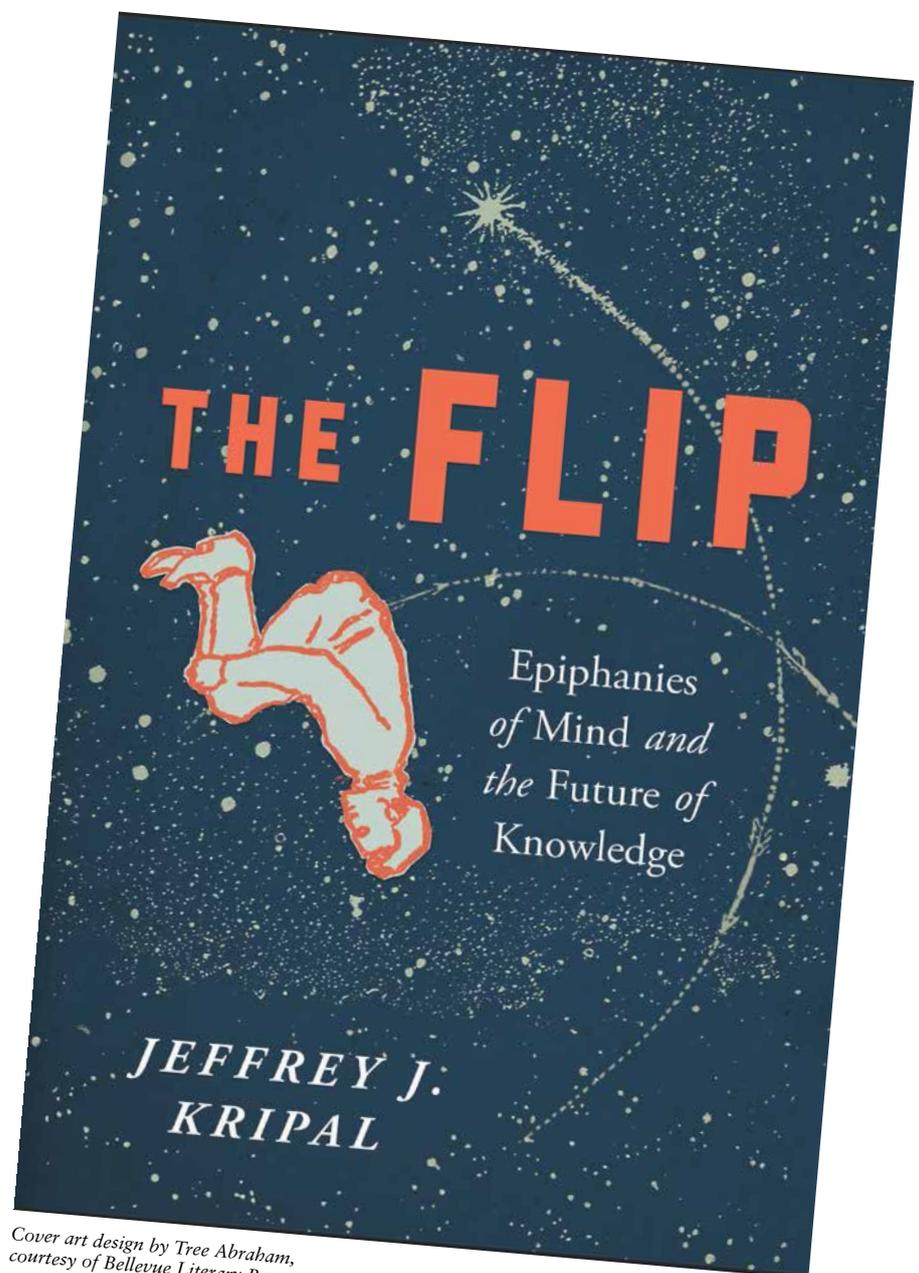
Putting aside for the moment the fact that psychics sometimes do get rich, and that statistically significant but humble forms of psychic phenomena do in fact appear in laboratories, the answer to why *robust* events like those of Twain, the widowed wife, and the Stockholm fire do not appear in the lab is simple: There is no trauma, love, or loss there. No one is in danger or dying. Your neighbourhood is not on fire. The professional debunker's insistence, then, that the phenomena play by his rules and appear for all to see in a safe and sterile laboratory is little more than a mark of his own ignorance of the nature of the phenomena in question. To play by those rules is like trying to study the stars at midday. It is like going to the North Pole to study those legendary beasts called zebras. No doubt just anecdotes.

Context matters

Methods that rely on or favour extreme conditions are employed in science all the time to discover and demonstrate knowledge. As Aldous Huxley pointed out long ago in his own defence of "mystical" experiences suggestive of spirit or

soul, we have no reason to deduce that water is composed of two gases glued together by invisible forces. We know this only by exposing water to extreme conditions, by traumatising it, and then by detecting and measuring the gases with technology that no ordinary person possesses or understands. The situation is eerily analogous with impossible scenarios like those of Twain, the wife, and the Swedish seer. They are generally available only in traumatic situations, when the human being is being "boiled" in illness, stroke, coma, danger, or near-death.

Allow me to update Huxley. Nothing in our everyday experience gives us any reason to suppose that matter is not material, that it is made up of bizarre forms of energy that violate, very much like spirit, all of our normal notions of space, time, and causality. Yet when we subject matter to certain drastic conditions, like the Large Hadron Collider, near Geneva, Switzerland, then we can see that matter is not material at all. But—and this is the key—we can get to that point only through a great deal of physical violence, a violence so extreme and so precise that it cost billions of dollars and decades of preparation to inflict and then analyse it.



Cover art design by Tree Abraham, courtesy of Bellevue Literary Press.

Because we've invested our energy, time, and money in particle physics, we are finding out all sorts of impossible things. But we will not invest those resources in the study of anomalous states of cognition and consciousness, and so we continue to work with the most banal models of mind—materialist and mechanistic ones. While it is true that some brain research has gone beyond assuming that “mind equals brain” and that the psyche works like, or is, a computer, we are still afraid of the likelihood that we are every bit as bizarre as the quantum world, and that we possess fantastic capacities that we have allowed ourselves to imagine only in science fiction, fantasy literature, and comic books.

Take my own discipline, the history of religions, which is filled with countless tales that make my two opening stories look ordinary. We are told endlessly, and quite correctly, that religious experience of every sort is “constructed” by local languages, ritual practices, and institutions. We thus insist on “contextualizing” every experience and event, which means locking them down tight to a particular physical point in space-time and so not allowing them to inform how we understand other obviously similar experiences and events at other points of space-time.

Ways of knowing

For example, individuals have been seeing dead loved ones (or loved ones about to die at a distance) for millennia, which suggests strongly that experiences like those of Twain, the widowed wife, and Swedenborg are very much a part of our world and not simply constructed by culture. Such comparisons are deeply suspect these days, mostly because they end up suggesting something at work in history that is not strictly materialist—like a mind that knows what is going to happen before it happens, or a departed soul that appears to his sleeping wife.

In the same vein, we are told, again quite correctly, that religion is about power and politics, or economics, or patriarchy, or empire and colonial oppression, or psychological

projection, or the denial of death, or—now the latest—cognitive templates, evolutionary adaptation, and computerlike synapses. And ultimately, of course, what religion is really about is nothing, since we are nothing but meaningless, statistically organised matter bouncing around in empty, dead space.

In the rules of this materialist game, the scholar of religion can never take seriously what makes an experience or expression *religious*, since that would involve some truly fantastic vision of human nature and destiny, some transhuman divinisation, some mental telegraphy, dreamlike soul, clairvoyant seer, or cosmic consciousness. All of that is taken off the table, in principle, as inappropriate to the academic project. And then we are told that there is nothing “religious” about religion, which, of course, is true, since we have just discounted all of that other stuff.

We have conscious intellectuals telling us that consciousness does not really exist as such.

Flatland models

Our present flatland models have rendered human nature something like the protagonist Scott Carey in the film *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957). With every passing decade, human nature gets tinier and tinier and less and less significant. In a few more years, maybe we'll just blip out of existence (like poor Scott at the end of the film), reduced to nothing more than cognitive modules, replicating DNA, quantum-sensitive microtubules in the synapses of the brain, or whatever. We are constantly reminded of the “death of the subject” and told repeatedly that we are basically walking corpses with computers on top—in effect, technological zombies, moist robots, meat puppets. We are in the ridiculous situation of having conscious intellectuals tell us that consciousness does not really exist as such, that there is nothing to it except cognitive grids, software loops, and warm brain matter. If this were not so patently absurd and depressing, it would be funny.

Humanists have paid a heavy price for their shrinking act. We are more or less ignored now by both the general public and our colleagues in the natural sciences, whose disciplines, of course, make no sense at all outside of universal observations, and who often work from bold cosmic visions, wildly counterintuitive models (think ghostlike multiverses and teleporting particles), and evolutionary spans of time that make our “histories” look insignificant and boring by comparison.

Beyond a new materialism

I am aware, of course, that there are signs of life in the humanities. I am thinking in particular of the development of “big history” in historiography and of the new materialisms, vitalisms, and panpsychisms of contemporary philosophy, as evident in Thomas Nagel's recent well-publicised doubts about the adequacy of neo-Darwinian materialism, expressed in his book *Mind and Cosmos*.

These are all positive signs, but I wonder if they are bold enough. A new materialism is, after all, still materialism, and the big histories remain allergic to any hint that human beings may be more than historical beings. In short, these new moves still keep the game-changing evidence off the table.

I also wonder if there are good reasons for ignoring the humanities. Why, after all, should anyone listen to the truth claims of a set of disciplines whose central arguments often boil down to the claim that the only truth is that there is no truth; that all efforts toward truth are nothing more than power grabs; and that all deep conversation across cultural and temporal boundaries is essentially illusory—that we are all, in effect, locked into our local language games, condemned to watching shadows in our heads, which are going nowhere and mean nothing?

I am chained to that brain floor like everyone else. I am making no certain metaphysical claims here, although I am pointing out that our present ones have erased huge swaths of the human

experience and, by so doing, have impoverished our thinking. I have not, like Plato's hero, escaped from the cave of the senses and seen the sun of mind outside. But over the past three decades, I have read and spoken with many who have described some hint or gleam of exactly such a shining intellect.

The humanities as the study of consciousness and culture

I suggest a way out of our present impasse: we should put these extreme narratives, these impossible stories, in the middle of our academic table. I would also like to make a wager, here and now, that once we put these currently rejected forms of knowledge on our academic table, things that were once impossible to imagine will soon become possible not only to imagine but also to think, theorise, and even test. I am betting, in other words, that we actually need these so-called impossible things to come up with better answers to our most pressing questions, including the biggest question of all: the nature of consciousness.

Toward this same end, I propose that we reimagine the humanities as the study of consciousness coded in culture. I am not suggesting that we can study consciousness directly, or that any ego can ever know what consciousness is in itself. I understand that we can study consciousness only as it is reflected and refracted in cultural artefacts, like texts, art objects, languages, and social institutions, or, as the cognitive scientists have it, in cognition.

But I think it matters a great deal whether we are willing to imagine that consciousness might exist in its own right and may well be more than a function of brain matter or local historical and cultural processes. Even the admission of this possibility would be enough to bring the humanities back to consciousness and humanists back to the academic table as central and valued participants. The humanities would no longer be, as my Rice University colleague Timothy Morton puts it, "candy sprinkles" on the cake of scientism. Quite the contrary: Our texts, our narratives,

and our methods of interpretation would function as guiding ideals, as pointers to where anyone interested in the nature of mind might go for answers.

After all, consciousness is the fundamental ground of all that we know or ever will know. It is the ground of all of the sciences, all of the arts, all of the social sciences, all of the humanities, indeed all human knowledge and experience. Moreover, as far as we can tell, this presence is *sui generis*. It is its own thing. We know of nothing else like it in the universe, and anything we might know later we will know only through this same consciousness. Many want to claim the exact opposite, that consciousness is not its own thing, is reducible to warm, wet tissue and brainhood. But no one has come close to showing how that might work. Probably because it doesn't.

A broad historical perspective might help here. As scholars like the American literary critic Victoria Nelson, in *The Secret Life of Puppets*, or the Dutch historian Wouter Hanegraaff, in *Esotericism and the Academy*, have demonstrated, Western intellectual history has seen immense swings back and forth between Platonism and Aristotelianism: between a philosophy rooted in mystical and visionary experience (a Platonism that helped produce, among other things, the conviction that profound mathematical and philosophical truths are "remembered" or "discovered" and not "constructed") and an empirical rationalism that bases its knowledge on sense data and linear logic. With the rise of science, rational empiricism has been dominant for the past few centuries.

The brain as filter

The solution is not simply to swing back to some kind of pure Platonism, but to effect a synthesis of the two modes of knowing. The sciences are a big help here, for two reasons. First, because they can challenge humanists to abandon their absolute constructivism, and second, because the sciences have utterly failed to explain consciousness.

We now have two models of the brain and its relationship to mind, an Aristotelian one and a Platonic one, both of which fit the neuroscientific data well enough: the reigning production model (mind equals brain), and the much older but now suppressed transmission or filter model (mind is experienced through or mediated, shaped, reduced, or translated by brain but exists in its own right "outside" the skull cavity).

Whether we can eventually address both the hard problem of consciousness and its elaborate coding in human culture hinges on whether we can integrate the Aristotelian and Platonic models, resisting an either-or solution. So far, we have not been able to resist. The rules of what gets counted in academe are defined by the dominance of the production model and the suppression of the transmission model. In short, today Plato may admire Aristotle, but Aristotle sneers at Plato.

That is probably not the end of the story, though. Consider the musings of one contemporary neuroscientist, David Eagleman, who teaches and does research at the Baylor College of Medicine. At the end of his book *Incognito*, Eagleman turns to the question of the soul and expresses reservations about promissory materialism, the commonly heard claim that, although we do not yet know how to explain mind through material processes, we eventually will. Indeed, *everything* will eventually be explained in a materialist framework, because everything is only matter.

Maybe, Eagleman concludes. Or maybe not. It is extremely unlikely that we just happen to be living at the moment when all things will soon be explained. Previous generations claimed the same, and they were all quite wrong. The likelier scenario, he observes, is that the more we learn about the brain and consciousness, the stranger, not simpler, things will get. Here is where one of his thought experiments comes in. A parable:

Imagine that you are a Kalahari Bushman and that you stumble upon a transistor radio in the sand. You might pick it up, twiddle

the knobs, and suddenly, to your surprise, hear voices streaming out of this strange little box. ... Now let's say you begin a careful, scientific study of what causes the voices. You notice that each time you pull out the green wire, the voices stop. When you put the wire back on its contact, the voices begin again. ... You come to a clear conclusion: The voices depend entirely on the integrity of the circuitry. At some point, a young person asks you how some simple loops of electrical signals can engender music and conversations, and you admit that you don't know—but you insist that your science is about to crack that problem at any moment.

Assuming that you are truly isolated, what you do not know is pretty much everything that you need to know: radio waves, electromagnetism, distant cities, radio stations, and modern civilisation—everything outside the radio box. You would not have the capacity to even imagine such things. And if you could, Eagleman says, “you have no technology to demonstrate the existence of the waves, and everyone justifiably points out that the onus is on you to convince them.” You could convince almost no one, and you

yourself would probably reject the existence of such mysterious, spirit-like waves. You would become a “radio materialist.” Eagleman points out at the end of his book: “I'm not asserting that the brain is like a radio, but I am pointing out that it could be true. There is nothing in our current science that rules this out.”

Countless clues suggest that the human brain may function as an imperfect receiver of some transhuman signal.

William James, Henri Bergson, and Aldous Huxley all argued the same long before Eagleman. Bergson even used the same radio analogy. This is where the historian of religions—this one, anyway—steps in. There are, after all, countless other clues in the history of religions that rule the radio theory in, and that suggest, though hardly prove, that the human brain may function as a super-evolved neurological radio or television and, in rare but revealing moments when the channel suddenly “switches,” as an imperfect receiver of some transhuman signal that simply does not play by the rules as we know them.

Although it relies on an imperfect technological metaphor, the beauty

of the radio or transmission model is that it is symmetrical, intellectually generous, and—above all—capable of demonstrating what we actually see in the historical data, when we really look. It is symmetrical and generous in the sense that it affirms everything we have been doing for the past century or so in the humanities and the sciences (all that Aristotelian stuff about the body and the brain), and it puts back on the table much of the evidence that we have taken off as impossible or non-existent (all that Platonic stuff about the human spirit). In this same generous, symmetrical spirit, it is not that materialism is wrong. It is that it is half-right.

Such a radio model certainly has no problem understanding how Mark Twain could have known about his brother's imminent funeral, why a wife could know about her husband's distant car wreck, or why a Swedish scientist could track a fire 50 miles away. The mind can know things distant in space and time because it is not limited to space or time. Mind is not “in” the radio or brain box. The payoff here is immense: the impossible suddenly becomes possible. Indeed, it becomes predictable.

What we have been doing for the past few centuries is studying the construction and workings of the physical radio. But the radio was built for the radio signal (and vice versa). How can we understand the one without the other? It is time to come to terms with both. It is time to invite Plato back to the table—to restore the humanities to consciousness. The rest will follow.

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Jeffrey J. Kripal holds the J. Newton Rayzor Chair in Philosophy and Religious Thought at Rice University and is the associate director of the Center for Theory and Research at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California. He has previously taught at Harvard Divinity School and Westminster College and is the author of eight books, including The Flip.



View from our holiday gite - David Lörmer



A Postscript to *LSD and the Mind of the Universe*

Christopher M. Bache, Ph.D.

I reviewed Chris's groundbreaking book last December, and here he reflects on the last few months and on some feedback he has received. Do join us for his webinar on October 22.

In the great pause imposed by the global pandemic that began shortly after *LSD and the Mind of the Universe* was released, I stepped back and looked at my work through the eyes of some of its early readers who corresponded with me. In addition to being deeply touched by their responses, I have collected some observations as a kind of postscript to the book, some after-publication thoughts I would like to share with future readers.

I want to begin by thanking the Scientific and Medical Network for the careful hearing it has given my work through the years, beginning with David Lorimer's review of *Dark Night, Early Dawn* in 2000 and continuing with his recent review of *LSD and the Mind of the Universe*. The paradigm revolution is a campaign with many fronts. For me, the question "What is it possible for human beings to actually experience?" has always held revolutionary implications, and I have deeply appreciated the Network's willingness to look at the controversial experiences that psychedelics unleash in us. Huston Smith was right that a mystical experience does not a mystic make, but a mystical experience, even a psychedelically induced mystical experience, can a reductive materialist unmake.

And yet I fear that with this new book I may be pressing the

Network's patience and good graces to their limit. I almost want to apologise for the extreme nature of the experiences I'm reporting here. I am acutely aware that I am asking readers to take seriously experiences that even progressive thinkers may find deeply problematic – transcending linear time, downloading pieces of the creative intention of the universe, dissolving into the species mind, becoming Light. I understand how outrageous these claims sound, and indeed are.

If I had published this study after only 10 or 15 sessions, the experiences would have been more modest and easier to integrate into our models of reality. Or if I had worked with lower doses of LSD or with gentler psychedelics like psilocybin, the results would have been more in keeping with the data emerging from the therapeutic protocols of today. But this is not the story of *LSD and the Mind of the Universe*. For better or worse, the story I am telling here comes from 73 fully internalised LSD sessions working at 500-600 micrograms and conducted over twenty years. Though I sincerely do not recommend such an intense regimen today, I stand by what emerged on this journey and ask my readers to stand with me, gazing into the heart and mind of our extraordinary universe.

Cosmological exploration vs. Spiritual awakening

Such an extreme protocol requires a significant expansion of our expectations. I have found that some readers have had a tendency to interpret my narrative in categories they are more familiar with, such as the *therapeutic use* of psychedelics to heal the personal psyche or the *spiritual use* of psychedelics to hasten spiritual awakening. But the primary thrust of my work has been *cosmological exploration*, and this is a different undertaking that asks us to consider more radical possibilities.

Sometimes podcast interviewers have probed the early sessions of my journey which have dramatic visuals and colorful storylines, as in the chapter “Initiation into the Universe,” but pass over later sessions that are comparatively empty of content and therefore harder to grasp, as in the “Diamond Luminosity” chapter, even though these experiences were much more valuable to me personally. Sometimes people have focused on the quantity of suffering in the book as though it indicates that something has gone wrong rather than expand their perception of the sheer length of the journey that this protocol makes possible, with its many gates and its repeating spiral of death and rebirth. Ego-death still tends to dominate the discussion at the expense of recognising the other forms of death that take place at deeper levels of initiation.

I understand this tendency to keep to the more familiar. As someone who struggled for years to comprehend his own experiences, I understand the challenge of encountering the radically unknown. And yet, this is what I must ask my readers to do because this is precisely the philosophical import of the revolution that psychedelics have initiated. By amplifying our conscious awareness, they bring the far away close to hand. If we amplify our conscious awareness a little, the material that rises tends to come from the nearby territory of our personal life; but if we amplify our consciousness more powerfully, it can open doors deep into the universe.

In the early years, some scholars faulted psychedelics for being too easy a “shortcut” to mystical experience,

but in making their case, they focused on recreational tripping rather than the therapeutic use of psychedelics where the hard work of engaging the shadow is done. In a systematic psychedelic practice where the goal is not to have glancing contact with these ecstatic domains but to abide in them steadily for hours at a time with clear cognition and active absorption, there are no shortcuts. In fact, if I have a concern about this method, it is that it accelerates and intensifies the purification process that spiritual practitioners using conventional methods go through more slowly.

But this comparison does not go far enough, for, again, cosmological exploration is a different undertaking than spiritual awakening. The intense protocol that I perhaps unwisely adopted drove beyond enlightenment to take me deep into the furnace of creation, and thus the purification it exacted was greater. I understand spiritual teachers who pull back from my account saying that this much suffering is “not necessary for spiritual awakening,” and they are right. One does not have to transcend time, be dissolved into archetypal reality, or return to the birth of the universe in order to realise one’s essential nature or rest in the condition of nonduality and emptiness. These are distinct if mutually reinforcing undertakings.

Analogy with the Sun

As I cast about for an analogy to clarify the difference between spiritual awakening and cosmological exploration, I turn to our Sun. The temperature of the Sun’s centre reaches over 27 million degrees, but by the time its light reaches Earth 94 million miles away, it has cooled to the temperate range that greets us every morning. From its light springs all life on our planet. In this analogy, spiritual awakening might be likened to opening to the Sun – opening to the gift of life it brings, waking to the kinship of all life on this planet, emulating the Sun’s non-discriminating embrace, and tapping its enormous generative capacity moment by moment. One relaxes into our shared solar nature beneath the differences of species. A limited analogy, I admit, but one that underscores enlightenment’s theme of living in the here and

now, knowing the emptiness and interdependence of all forms of life, and resting in the Presence that neither comes nor goes, begins or ends.

Cosmological exploration does not ignore these truths, but it turns to explore this light more deeply. In this exploration we leave Earth behind and drive to the Sun’s centre. Surrendering our bodies and boundaries, we dissolve into its fierce heat until eventually we *become* the Sun and learn what can only be learned through this becoming. We *become* the energy that fills these planets and everything in them. We hold them in our embrace, nourishing them with our radiance. Then if we are lucky, we are taken farther. By entering the core of our local star, we may be catapulted into the *kinship of stars* and experience the light radiating simultaneously from the hundred thousand million stars of our galaxy. If we are very lucky, we may expand farther still to the *kinship of galaxies* where we experience the entire universe as a single living fabric of energy. As the sacred medicine wears off, we return to our quiet life on our home planet. The same life, the same sun, but so much has changed.

I have no argument with those who believe that it is better to spend one’s years on Earth cultivating enlightenment rather than exploring the deep structure of the cosmos. They may be right, and I have thought this many times myself. These are personal choices that reflect one’s karma and circumstance. I ask only that these undertakings be appreciated as being distinct. Cosmological exploration may support awakening, but it serves more than awakening. It serves our need to understand our universe, to participate consciously in its wonders, and to experience directly the extraordinary Love and Intelligence that gave birth to it and infuses it every second. It serves our need to understand how life works, why it is as hard as it is, what purpose our suffering serves, and what is being built here. It sacrifices life and limb to learn how the cycle of rebirth works, where reincarnation is taking us,

and where humanity is on its long evolutionary journey. And lastly, it serves our hunger to return to the Source from which we came, to remember fully what we are, to know the profound peace and stillness of homecoming.

Seen in this light, I don't think the levels of suffering I passed through on my journey are disproportionate to the larger project. The challenges inherent in cosmological exploration do not strike me as being more arduous than the hardships mountain climbers or other explorers endure. If we push ourselves to such extremes for earthly joys, is it unreasonable to do so for cosmic joys?

Internalising temporary experiences

Spiritual practice seeks to facilitate a permanent shift in our awareness, but the psychedelic path is a "path of *temporary immersion*." Our sojourns in the Great Expanse are not permanent. For some, this makes the psychedelic path an inferior path and a distraction from true awakening. It can be, I admit, but it need not be. The fact that the experiences realised in cosmological exploration are temporary does not make them irrelevant to spiritual awakening. Instead, it invites us to appreciate how even temporary experiences can exert a lasting influence on our life.

We may not be able to fully actualise our visionary experiences immediately after a session has ended, but they bend the trajectory of our lives. Even temporary immersion in the Permanent Condition can change our life. My experience has been that if one's psychedelic practice is focused on *clean contact* and *strong recall*, and if we hold our experiences properly, they begin to function as strange attractors, pulling us into an abiding intimacy with life through the increased awareness they bring.

The best option, I think, is to cultivate both forms of practice simultaneously, for the strengths of one balance the shortcomings of the other. A daily spiritual practice can ground the extreme surges of energy and insight that sweep through us in a session. Conversely, experiencing

the innate aliveness of all existence can root us more deeply on our cushion. Over the years, a favourite part of my sessions became my morning meditation the day after a session.

Can we trust these experiences?

But can we trust these experiences? They can be so extreme, reach so far beyond reality as we ordinarily know it, how can we be sure they are what they appear to be? Some readers have been so taken aback by the ontological scale of my experiences that they have sought a more palatable explanation for them. Perhaps they are simply echoes bouncing back from the canyons of my personal unconscious or the collective unconscious of our species. Perhaps they were seeded by my training as a professor of religion and thus represent only an extravagant self-fulfilling prophecy of my spiritual expectations. Two thoughtful commentators have pressed these questions in clear and heartfelt exchanges.¹

Whether deep psychedelic experiences are trustworthy is a crucial and complex question that deserves a longer answer than I can provide here. I have addressed this question in *Dark Night, Early Dawn* in a section titled "The Epistemic Warrant of Psychedelic Experience"² and in my responses to the writers mentioned³. Here there is space for only a few quick points.

Though I was well read in the world's religions, I began my psychedelic work as a deeply convinced agnostic with a strong atheistic bent, well versed in the rise of science and the eclipse of religion in the modern mind. Essentially, I had studied my way out of religion altogether. My dissertation on the logic of religious metaphor concluded that our finite language simply does not allow us to speak with precision about the infinite, that all discussion of the divine is shining flashlights at the stars. So much for self-fulfilling expectations. As my practice deepened, my sessions kept surprising me, taking me into territory beyond anything envisioned by these traditions or the scientific worldview I had internalised. There were the trans-

temporal landscapes of Deep Time, the shift from a personal to a collective model of transformation, the unexpected details of the unified body-mind of our species, and the jarring visions of humanity's future.

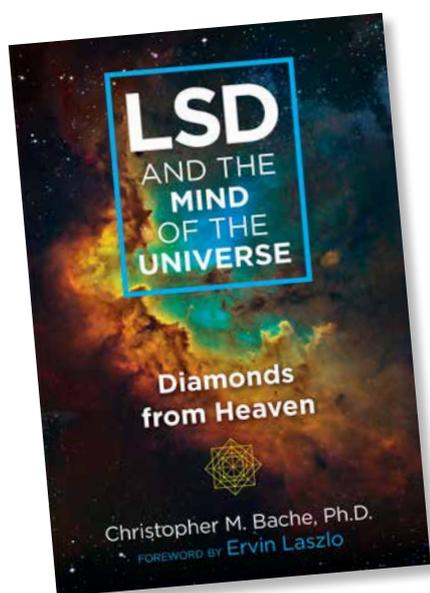
Psychedelic experience is participatory

I don't mean to suggest that my psychedelic experiences were independent of my personal and cultural conditioning. On the contrary, drawing on Jorge Ferrer's insights in *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory*, I hold that all psychedelic experience is *participatory*. This means that our being evokes in complex ways the portion of the universe we experience in these states. "The participatory approach," write Ferrer, "presents an enactive understanding of the sacred that conceives spiritual phenomena, experiences, and insights as *cocreated events*."⁴

But the corollary of the participatory view is this: the more conditioning we have let go of when this communion takes place, the more open-ended and far-reaching are the experiences that can arise. Our historical conditioning is the starting point of this conversation, not its end point. From chapter one of *LSD and the Mind of the Universe*:

As I have experienced it, consciousness is an infinite ocean of experiential possibilities. When we take these amplifying medicines, the mind we drop into this ocean acts as a seed crystal that catalyses a certain set of experiences from its infinite potential. As we are gradually healed, purified, and transformed by these encounters, the seed crystal of our mind is changed. In subsequent sessions, it catalyses still deeper experiences from this ocean. If we repeat this process many times in a sustained fashion, a sequence of initiations into successively deeper levels of consciousness takes place, and a deepening visionary communion unfolds.⁵

So while I recognise that my personal conditioning played a role in what emerged in my sessions, and certainly in how I interpreted them, the key question becomes: did I succeed in sufficiently dissolving the conditioning of my life prior to *and inside* my sessions to see beyond the filters of my personal and cultural history? If one examines the details of my journey, I believe one will find that my sessions more frequently ruptured my assumptions than reinforced them. In ways too numerous to list here, the overarching pattern is that my professional training and personal expectations were repeatedly shattered and reworked as my sessions deepened.



Beyond this, whether one finds these experiences trustworthy will rest largely on two things: whether they are replicable and the experiential quality of the experiences themselves.

By replicable I mean that the structures, categories, and insights of one's experiences will show up in other people's sessions as well. Here I would point to the broad overlap between my experiences and the psychedelic experiences Stanislov Grof has published from hundreds of subjects. I may have pushed the boundaries with the extreme protocol that I adopted, but the correspondence between my reports and their reports is clear.

But perhaps what carries the greatest epistemic weight here is the distinctive character of the experiences themselves. So many of our expectations burn up at these fiery depths as we enter the greater real. When you open repeatedly into coherent levels of visionary experience, when the lessons that emerge there are breathtakingly clear and consistent, and when the knowing carries you into transcendent ecstasy and back, I can't help but believe that there is something trustworthy here.

I would not trade one hour of immersion in the Diamond Luminosity for years of verifiable experiences in spacetime, so great is the transparent truth and power of

this encounter, but I know this assessment will resonate more strongly with those who have personally entered these states than with those who have not.

We are still in the early stages of mapping the extraordinary potentials these substances unlock in us. In time we will move beyond using them just to heal the wounds of life and begin using them to explore the foundations of life itself. If my conclusions seem radical today, they will seem less so in the years ahead.

Deep Gratitude

Let me close by expressing my deep gratitude to all the readers of *LSD and the Mind of the Universe* who have written me, both psychonauts and meditators. Thank you for letting me know that my sessions resonated with you and that sometimes just reading them sparked episodes of remembering and initiation. Thank you for sharing your stories with me and for comparing notes. And lastly, thank you for sharing your own intuitions of the new humanity that is emerging in history, for in this transition we all rise and fall together.

Christopher M. Bache, Ph.D. is professor emeritus in Philosophy and Religious Studies at Youngstown State University where he taught for 33 years. He is also adjunct faculty at the California Institute of Integral Studies, Emeritus Fellow at the Institute of Noetic Sciences, and on the Advisory Council of Grof Legacy Training. Chris' passion has been exploring the philosophical significance of nonordinary states of consciousness, especially psychedelic states. He has written four books: Lifecycles - a study of reincarnation in light of contemporary consciousness research; Dark Night, Early Dawn - a pioneering work in psychedelic philosophy and collective consciousness; The Living Classroom, an exploration of teaching and collective fields of consciousness; and LSD and the Mind of the Universe, the story of his 20 year journey with LSD.

Footnotes

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Beyond the Brain 2020 - see www.beyondthebrain.org



Looking to the Future: Breakdown or Breakthrough?

Serge Beddington-Behrens, PhD

*Evolution is life-oriented.
It is 'good' but not kind.
It does not care for the
feelings of individuals.'*
Barbara Marx Hubbard

Here Serge summarises some challenging insights from his new Book Gateways of the Soul and asks if even the current disruptions are sufficient to shift humanity to a more enlightened world view. He also draws on the insights of Chris Bache and you can access his webinars at www.mysticsandscientists.org

The big questions

So what lies ahead for us human beings? Are we well on the way towards extinction – finito - the end of the great experiment of humanity? Or are we going to continue stumbling along - a wounded, bleeding society - going nowhere fast? Conversely, is the crumbling away of our existing world which is certainly happening and is currently being speeded up by this virus, somehow going to lead us to 'break through' to something new - to a new, higher-order human being and a hugely improved world which works not just for the few but for the many?

Certainly, human consciousness has been rapidly evolving over the last sixty years where we've seen the birth of women's rights, animal rights and in the 60's we had the hippy movement followed by the emergence of the Human Potential movement. Today, millions of people all over the world are becoming increasingly interested in evolving their consciousness and in developing their spirituality. Most importantly, we are seeing a powerful shift away from the isolated, highly individuated ego, responsible for so much human suffering, war and patriarchy, with increasing numbers of us realising that the next step of our human evolution is towards thinking and operating much more as a human collective. Today, there are so many important questions which we all need to be asking ourselves. Perhaps one of the most significant is:

Are we as a species capable of extricating ourselves out of this very, very deep hole that we have over the years been digging, and if so, what might be the conditions necessary for this to happen?

In seeking to look at our human future, I have not consulted any futurologists or 'experts', not out of disrespect but because I think theirs is a remarkably difficult task. Too often, their calculations are made rationally – feeding data into a computer – and this can never take into consideration the emergence of unseen events, like for example, this Corona virus that has just sprung on us and is certainly magnifying or amplifying all our crises. Being brutally honest, we don't have a clue what is going to happen in a year's time. Will our financial system have totally collapsed? Things are right on the edge there. Will the power of the many authoritarian demagogues increase or diminish? Will our plague quietly peter out and we find an effective vaccine, or will it morph into a real 'black death' and wipe out many millions more of us? We just don't know.

Contradictory stories

What I have always found interesting is that we always seem to have two completely contradictory stories available to us.

On the one hand we have our negativists or doomsters who believe that we haven't a hope in

making it and that we've already gone way beyond the point of no return and that there's no coming back. Our eco-system is far too damaged; the gap between the haves and have nots has widened too far. Either global warming will burn us to a crisp, or melting icebergs producing tidal waves will sweep over all the large cities in the world. And if those don't obliterate us, a financial crisis or a nuclear holocaust will, or a truly terrible pandemic – perhaps the coronavirus will mutate into something much more deadly. And if by any small chance, a few of us manage to survive these onslaughts, artificial intelligence which will have grown smarter than us, will take us over and destroy us. In Kenneth Ring's words from *Heading Toward Omega* (1988):

'For me, the cataclysmic prophecies that are rife in current literature foreshadow a revolution of the most outstanding proportions....I sense the approach of a psychological earthquake the magnitude of which has not been experienced in the human awareness for millennia and may not have been experienced ever before.'

At the other end of the spectrum, we have our 'positivists' who tell us that there is no need to be so alarmist and our ecosystems are not as damaged as many believe and that if we make changes right now, we can pull ourselves back from the brink. The will to good is so strong

and we will create new institutions and new technologies that will work for the benefit of mankind and in future years we'll have learned to eliminate all killer diseases with the result that our children will be born without the possibility of ever contracting diseases like cancer or dementia. We'll also find ways to eliminate war and create a more caring and integrated society where new technologies of sun, wave and wind will increasingly replace those of oil or coal, and people will learn new techniques of mindfulness to lift themselves up from the tentacles of despair and soullessness that is so endemic in today's society. In Bob Marley's words:

'Every little thing's gonna be all right!'

I think it appropriate that we have both extremes dangled before us, for if we only believed there was no hope, we might just give up the ghost, and by the same token, if we were sure that we were going to 'make it', we might also hang back and not do the necessary work required for a new, improved world to come into being. I remind you that a better world won't somehow waft down from Heaven. It will be us human being who will need to work very hard to create it.

Spiritual perspectives

To get deeper into this issue, I have chosen to rely on the intuitive opinions of human beings of spiritual wisdom whom

I enormously admire. Here, for example, is something that the Bulgarian spiritual master Peter Deunov had to say about this issue 70 years ago (*Prophet for our Times*). He might have said this yesterday!

'We now find ourselves at the end of the decline of one culture and the dawn of another which is rising, developing and rapidly imposing itself. From now on a radical transformation is progressively occurring in human consciousness – in our thought, feelings and actions as well as in the organisation of human society...All earthly beings will be subjected to the great purification of the Divine Fire in order to become worthy of the new epoch. And the only thing to know now is how to put oneself in harmony with this wave of new life which is descending on earth.'

Put simply, we need to learn how best to position ourselves so we can have our impurities burned away.

Bede Griffiths, the deeply loved and respected Benedictine monk who spent much of his life living in Southern India, cultivating a deep integration of Christian and Hindu spirituality, was asked by the religious scholar Andrew Harvey what he felt about the future. Here was his reply.

I know for certain only two things about the time we are to enter. (A time which is upon us right this very moment!)



Cape Formentor, Mallorca - S.E.

The first is that we will see on every level a ruthless battle between those forces that want to keep humanity enslaved to the past – and these include religious fundamentalism, nationalism, materialism and corporate greed – and those forces that will awaken in response to a hunger for a new way of living. The second thing I know...is that God will shower help, grace and protection on all those who sincerely want to change and are brave enough to risk the great adventure of transformation

Here is what David Spangler once said in a talk at Findhorn:

‘Underneath the patterns of instability in the world, a profound spirit of love and goodwill is at work and is using the instability and the individuals that emerge from it as the farmer uses a plough, to turn the soil and prepare it for new seeds and new harvest.’

What all these statements suggest in their different ways is that while there is a lot of violence, instability, collapse and chaos around (and it has greatly increased since the time those pronouncements were made), inherent in it, or rather, *shining through it*, is a divine presence of a loving and intelligent nature - call it a God force. All three sages suggest that we do not live in a random universe but in a very intelligent one and that our destinies are being orchestrated by this higher intelligence, which is asking us to trust it and do our best to attune and align ourselves with it and that if we do so, help will be forthcoming.

From this context, we can therefore suggest that the emergence of this particular virus may not just be some accidental catastrophe that has just ‘fallen’ upon us, but may be seen as an integral part of the ‘playing out’ of an intelligent evolutionary purpose. Recently, I gave a webinar where I referred to it as ‘fierce grace’, suggesting that by turning many areas of our lives inside out and upside down, it is indirectly helping to accelerate our evolution!

Resistance to change

I used the word grace because we have to realise that we human beings have one speciality in common: a strong habit of resisting change! If there are waves of new life beckoning to us, many of us are as proficient at avoiding aligning with them as we are at shying away from looking directly at the evils of war, racism, fascism, inequality and hunger. Basically, what occurs is that we get very embedded in our old blinkered and narrow universes - in our old beliefs and values and lifestyles - as they are familiar, and this gives us a degree of comfort even if at another level, they are no longer relevant to what is required in the world. Gurdjieff (*Life is Real only When I am*) understood this pathology of ours very well.

‘Man being the lazy and rigid creature that he is, he tends not to shift unless forced to do so by a crisis bigger than the sum of his inertia’.

In other words, if we are seriously to evolve, we need to be deeply shocked; we need to be shaken to our core; we need a rocket up our backsides! Adi Da said the same thing. ‘Humanity is so clenched. It needs to be shocked or tricked if it is to unloosen and grow.’ As the evolutionist Barbara Marx Hubbard (*The Evolutionary Journey*) put it:

‘Evolution proceeds by long periods of incremental change punctuated by sudden shifts, radical changes, like water turning to ice At some point the new condition appears and the old is forever extinct. Both our problems and our potentials are driving us to innovation and transformation.... Evolutionary drivers or threats are essential to overcome inertia. Crises always precede transformation.’

My point, therefore, is that our current financial, political, economic and ecological crises may not yet be *severe* enough to awaken us to try to make changes to a system that is currently working for fewer and fewer people. Thus, it may well be an evolutionary necessity – or, as I put it, an expression of grace - that our lives become very much more seriously disrupted. In other words, perhaps we need to be put intentionally into states of great distraught-ness as a prerequisite for continuing our

human evolution, and if shocks don’t kill us - which they can - they have the capability of potentially increasing our consciousness, or waking us up! And this is very necessary, since, with our current level of overall awareness, we are not going to be able to solve any of the truly huge problems in the world. (Viz., Einstein’s remark that ‘no problem can be solved at the level that created it!’)

Ask yourselves this question: why are our politicians not dealing more effectively with many of Al Gore’s ‘inconvenient truths’ which include world starvation (many more are dying of hunger than of Covid 19), climate change, the ever-growing gap between the haves and have nots, etc? Why is more not being done in the arena of nuclear disarmament?

The reason is that it is not urgent enough. A spirit of complacency prevails. The extreme urgency that is impelling a coordinated approach to the Coronavirus does not exist for these issues, as those who are already OK feel they won’t necessarily feel more OK if more impoverished people are educated or more immigrants are given a better life or if we work through our addictions to oil. *Most of our world leaders know exactly what is wrong with the world and what to do to solve many of the problems, but nothing is done to have genuine change come about, simply because one can get away with not having to! i.e., the consciousness is not sufficiently elevated.*

So might it be, then, that this virus may play a role of bringing humanity to a place where ‘getting away with such things’ no longer becomes an option! Certainly, as I write, three months into this pandemic, it is causing many millions of us to re-examine our lives, to ask new questions of who we are and what our purpose in life is and how we best wish to live. It is also helping to flush out - bring out into the open - many of the issues that are amiss both in our personal lives and in society. We could say it is helping to connect us more fully with the dark side of life and in so doing also to align many of us with Deunov’s ‘wave of new life’ and Spangler’s ‘spirit of love and good will.’

Human-collective Dark Night of the Soul

Another way to look at what is happening in the world today is to suggest that due to this virus, we are all currently descending much more deeply into what I am calling a human-collective Dark Night of the Soul crisis which actually we've been in for the past forty years. Please at this stage indulge me if I now share some of my own personal experiences of a time in my life when I myself went into such a such a crisis, as I think it excellently proves a point I wish to make.

My personal 'descent'

I was just over thirty, and my inordinately selfish life was humming along very nicely. I was earning good money in my work. I lived in a nice house, worked out regularly in the gym and had great muscles that I could show everyone how tough and macho and entitled I was. I was living in California at the time and liked to go about in an English gentleman's purple velvet smoking jacket as I felt it made me seem rather intriguing.

All went well until I caught a rare tropical disease in the Mexican jungle that affected my lungs and my whole charade began collapsing. I ended up in hospital for three months and became so weak that I was unable to get out of bed. During that time, I also underwent a huge financial loss, my muscles faded away, and all the time I was lying there, as I was too ill to read or watch television, I found myself having to confront the enormity of my inauthenticity, my narcissism, my selfishness, my manipulativeness and my greed. I felt ashamed with seeing how involved I was with me and what little concern I felt for others unless they could be of use to me. I saw the coldness of my heart and I felt alone and desolate and sensed I'd lost everything that had meaning for me. I felt utterly abandoned by anything warm or good about life.

I didn't know then about Dark Night of the Soul crises. I had no idea that what I was going through was a spiritual initiation and purification and that most probably a higher intelligence or a 'God of love' was purposefully accelerating my evolution by stripping me apart, dissolving my grandiosity and getting me to confront

the multiple self-centred agendas of my false egoic separate self. A friend introduced me to the poet Rumi (*The Book of Love*) at that time and made me a little frame of a short poem of his that went

'Be grateful for the Friend's (i.e. God's) tyranny not his tenderness, so the arrogance in you can become a lover that weeps.'

Yes, I wept a lot during those three months. My doctor told me it had been touch or go for many weeks. I survived physically but I mainly died at another level to a self that was arrogant, self-centred and entitled, and when at last I was able to get up and leave hospital, weighing just under half my normal weight, it was a very different me that did so, and as I look back on my life, I realised that those dark months were graced months and were among the most important in my whole life and had helped me for the first time touch into what it meant to be a tiny bit more human. Basically, I had been on a spiritual journey into my Shadow self and it felt like huge chunks of me had been ripped away because I was then so fully identified with my ego that it felt as if it constituted all of me.

In having been 'shocked' out of a dimension of myself that was both immature and rather repugnant, a space began opening up in me giving permission for something a tiny bit deeper and subtler to come through, which over the intervening years, has very slowly grown stronger. I would love to say that all my old bad habits and egotisms utterly vanished, but that would be telling a lie. Rather, I saw how much inner work still needed doing. Nonetheless, my life had been pushed into a new trajectory. It no longer orbited solely around me but now also around the interests of humanity and the planet. Slowly, my inner spiritual heart began to open and many years later I wrote a book about it.

Need for Initiation

Why am I telling you this story? I am doing so because I feel *that the Initiation which I had to go through, albeit on a small level, may be similar to one that possibly humanity as a whole may have to go through, and may even now be beginning to.*

But perhaps not. Very possibly this Coronavirus is currently giving us a watered down 'sneak preview' of what may lie ahead for all of us. The question to ask ourselves is: have *enough* of us, at this stage, been shocked *enough*, or been *sufficiently* stripped apart, so that we can both see and lament the inherent evils and injustices both in our own lives and also out in the world, so that in the not-too-distant future we will be moved to make those many changes that are needed without, as it were, needing harsher doses of divine punishment!

My intuition is: I don't think so. At this stage, I don't think that enough of us have been stripped, and that those of us who have, have perhaps not been stripped sufficiently. Or as I just said, perhaps this virus is serving as a warning shot over our bows, saying 'make changes now while you still can, as later on, things may suddenly become a whole lot tougher!'

In his book *Awakening Earth*, Duane Elgin also feels that the suffering needs to be greater.

'It is the immense suffering of millions – even billions – of precious human beings coupled with the destruction of many other life forms that will burn through our complacency and isolation. Needless suffering is the psychological and psychic fire that can awaken our compassion and fuse individuals, communities and nations into a cohesive and consciously organised global civilisation.'

This also tallies with the explorations of Chris Bache in his extraordinary new book *LSD and the Mind of the Universe: Diamonds from Heaven*. There he suggests that

'Humanity's transformation will come about through terrible suffering.'

This suffering will be driven by a global system crisis triggered by a global ecological crisis. Our species will change when our collective pain becomes unbearable any longer.'

He suggests that we see the species mind as a unified psychic field and that 'this field will be driven into a far-from- equilibrium state by the extreme suffering generated by the global ecological crisis, and that in this hyper-aroused state, the species-mind will exhibit..... the capacity for rapidly accelerated change, heightened creativity and higher self-organisation.... Under the pressure of the extreme conditions of the future, the human psyche will come alive at new levels, and....the interconnections between people previously too subtle to be detected will become obvious, and all of this will take place much more quickly than anyone could have predicted. In his future vision, Bache saw

'The whole system becoming alive at new levels...It was as if the eco crisis hadallowed new and deeper levels of self-awareness to spring into being...Everywhere, new social institutions sprang into being that reflected a new reality- new ways of thinking, new values that had been discovered during the crisis...'

In *The Great Disturbance*, Paul Gilding also suggests that

'There will be a tipping point when denial ends and the reality that we face a global, civilisational-threatening risk will become accepted wisdom virtually overnight. At that point, we will respond dramatically and with extraordinary speed and focus.'

Again, I ask the question: Have we reached that tipping point? Or might we even get there more gently? As evolutionary scholar Steve Taylor puts it. 'it is our evolutionary destiny to shift to a more expansive consciousness. The question is: will it occur before our species undergoes massive upheavals and cataclysms? Charles Darwin suggested that it is not the strongest or the most intelligent of the species that survive. It is the ones most adaptable to change!' Have enough of us become sufficiently adaptable so we might carry those who haven't on our shoulders?

The God presence will be with us

Whether the 'new condition' will be accelerated by this virus, or whether a much more devastating shock further down the road lies ahead of us, I do not know. And none of us knows. *All I know is what I feel with my whole heart and soul, namely that the God Presence is not going to abandon us. On the contrary, I experience this Presence to be closer to us than ever before.* Whatever depths of insanity, species wise, we may have descended into, however far many of us may have deviated from our true path, this is not going to be the end of the wonderful experiment of man, but it is going to be the end of the dominant story that so many of us currently live by, namely, a story of rabid individuality, a story telling us that we are all separate from one another, that it is every one for themselves and that we inhabit a world of insufficiency - where there is not enough - be it of love or money or water or food. ***It is this reality that is going to perish, not humanity.***

I say this as leading on from what I said in my first paragraph, there is an ever-growing group of people the world over who are seeking to live lives of great integrity and harmony and who are evolving rapidly without needing to die violent psychological deaths in the process, and these higher-order, big-souled, very conscious men and women are coming to the fore in every nation and in every race and they are as different from your average person today as cheese is from chalk! And I trust in the power of these 'higher-order human beings' who are becoming ever more finely attuned to the sacred.

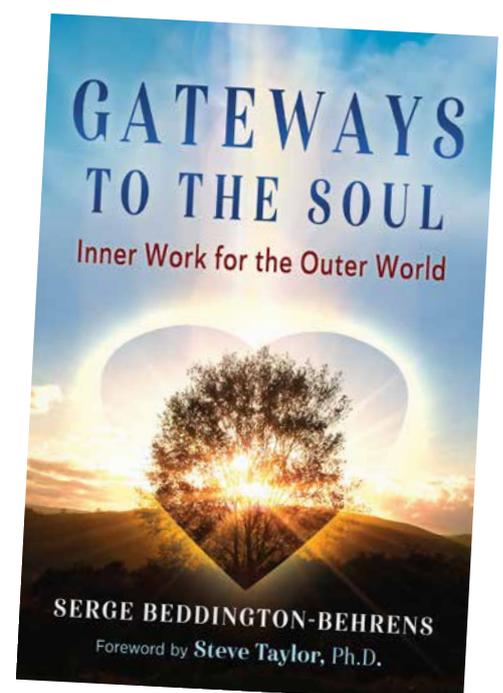
The only problem is that percentage wise, there may not yet be enough of these more spiritually-attuned people to effect the many societal changes needed. A lot of us may have a lot of catching up to do. This is why I believe that we really do need, as Bache suggested, big shocks to activate the emergence of more human beings to a similar level of evolution.

In all my meditations I get the message that humanity will, in the way Bache and others have described it, 'break on through to the other side' (to quote from a song by the Doors!) Bede Griffiths also believes this, but as he put it:

It will cost everything. Just as Jesus had to go through death into the new world of the resurrection, so millions of us will have to go through a death to the past and to all old ways of being if we are to be brought by the grace of God into the truth of a real new age.....God, I believe, wants a new world and a new humanity to be born from what is about to unfold.'

What you and I can do is to work on ourselves spiritually to strengthen ourselves so that we are strong and courageous and big hearted and are willing to go through whatever tests may lie before us. The more work we do on our dark side, the more we put energy into awakening our inner hearts and into prayer and meditation, the more prepared we will be.

Serge Beddington-Behrens MA (Oxon), PhD., KOML is a life coach, spiritual educator, author and transpersonal psychotherapist and his new book is all about how to live in changing times, and is called GATEWAYS TO THE SOUL: Inner Work for the Outer World.





Architecture is a Symphony of Form

René Stevens

Buildings have a major impact on the people who use them. Therefore, also on the results of the processes in which these people are involved as on their personal health, well-being and consciousness.

All physical matter in our universe is vibrating and emanates a field of energy that can be measured and influenced. This is true for both the human body as well as for buildings.

One of the lost secrets of ancient wisdom teachings is that geometry is vibration. Geometry is a visual representation, a structural manifestation of vibration. The German writer Johan Wolfgang von Goethe called Architecture 'frozen music', I prefer to call it 'Symphony of Form', a symbiosis between architecture and its occupants to create (more) added value.

Instruments in sync

When an orchestra performs a musical symphony, it is important that all instruments are tuned, in balance, and playing with the right intensity and duration. For a high-level performance, everything must be in sync.

For the functioning of our learn/work environment, it is equally important that all building components, like shapes, parts, materials and colours, including the relationship with nature (e.g. earth's energy radiation, geopathic stress, climate, seasons, vegetation, bodies of water) are also in sync. They all contribute to the desired harmonious balancing environment that supports people and their functioning within a building.

The perception of being satisfied with the performance of the building depends upon our interaction with the environment and the people in it, as well as our physical and mental constitution.

Affect mood

Just as music affects our mood, buildings do too. We have all experienced music that can touch you and make you feel like dancing, or getting into a romantic or meditative state, or even a melancholic state. Even though we may not yet have the tools to fully measure how architecture affects the health, well-being and consciousness of the people inside a building, we know intuitively that it makes sense.

A growing body of research demonstrates that it is not the

objective environmental conditions, but the subjective interpretation of it, that affects the well-being and performance of humans. That is why the way people experience their environment also influences their potential, effectiveness and efficiency. 'Soft' human engagement metrics, as used in the marketing and communications industry, are therefore in most cases more relevant than the necessary 'hard' absolute metrics of costs and square meters. Especially when the soft relative metrics of performance are monitored over a longer time period.

Symphony of form

As music is frequencies of sound, architecture is about visual geometrical and spatial frequencies, and much more. When we move through a building, it can shape our thoughts and feelings just as music does.

My passion is to bring the various parts together in such a way that the building components will sound like a great 'Symphony of Form'. The whole is equal to the sum of its parts plus new properties because of the interactions between the parts. As frequencies evoke reactions, architecture can bring people together, and unite them as one force. It protects, supports interaction and engagement and expresses unity and identity.

Occupants in tune

People inside a building bring their own etheric field: an integration of mind, body, heart and spirit, a determiner of overall health. When

you interact with a person, you are not only transferring information but also emotion. You are transferring things that are outside the intellect.

A human-centric environment is a better place for organisations, people and society. A place that is adaptive to changing user needs. A place that gets the best out of its users and a program that creates a bond between users and the environment. The design of the environment doesn't solely determine behaviour, but it does shape, enable or encourage or hinder it.

Effects of shape

In theatre design it is well known that shape and the materialisation of walls, floor and ceiling have a profound impact on the audibility and quality of the sound in the room.

We also know from experience that buildings can affect the quality of radio, mobile telephone and Wi-Fi signals.

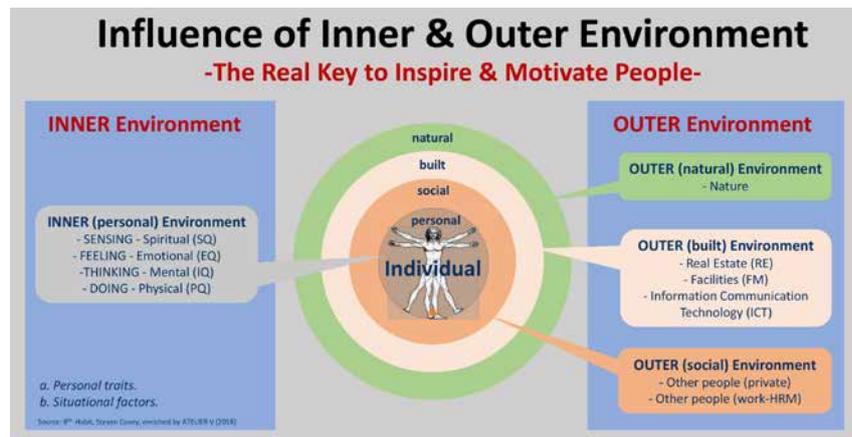
Could it be that the built environment also affects the dynamic multi-dimensional etheric field of humans, consisting of a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimension? The work of Dr Ibrahim Karim, a new multidimensional 'Physics of Quality' called BioGeometry, proves that this is the case. His worldview is that 'ENERGY AND SHAPE CREATE FUNCTION.'

The Poor scientific measuring instruments are no proof that outside a material worldview nothing else exists. To quote neurophysiologist Dr. Peter Fenwick: "If you think that the world is only material, then you are missing a huge part of human experience."

Morphogenetic field

Biochemistry scientists like Dr Rupert Sheldrake and Dr Bruce Lipton suggest the existence of a morphogenetic field that not only connects everything in the environment but has a collective memory as well. Humans are one with that field and everything in it and therefore the human consciousness can influence this field and vice versa. It is a two-way communication.

Lipton states that our body consists of 50 trillion cells of living entities. So, we are a community not a single person. Every cell is a battery with a positive and a negative charge of 1,4 Volts. This life force energy can be focused and directed by thought and intention.



But besides the internal environment it is also influenced by the external environment.

New science

According to new science, we are not a physical entity but energy waves of interacting frequencies that can affect the condition of our body. Our waves get entangled and resonate with those of the physical and digital environment and the people in it.

One could say that it creates a cocktail of environment frequencies mixed with vibrating human thoughts and emotions.

Animals and plants communicate with vibrations and are sensitive to the subtle energy in the environment. In fact, all organisms do, according to Lipton. We humans have that ability too but are not trained to use it.

Sheldrake proposes that the morphogenetic field is also responsible for telepathy-type interconnections between organisms. What if humans could be taught to develop the sensitivity for vibrations and use it to navigate in their daily life through places and in their (work) relationships?

Digital workplace

Digital technology allows us work independently of time, space and device. Documents, pictures, audio and video are stored in the 'digital cloud' and can be retrieved and changed when you have a device to receive and send. Laptops and smart phones are intermediary devices that let humans interact with data and each other.

New science suggests further that our human body is the device (biological vehicle), our consciousness the operating system and the mind is

part of the morphogenetic field. One could then argue that the data of our experiences is stored non-locally in a virtual 'consciousness cloud'.

A marriage of Architecture and Neuroscience can deepen the understanding of how the learn/work environment affects human health, well-being, consciousness and performance.

Tuning fork

According to Albert Einstein and Nikola Tesla, everything is energy and frequency; it should therefore be possible to introduce a vibration that acts like a tuning fork. That centers the cacophony of frequencies of the built environment, electromagnetic smog of modern technology and the etheric fields of humans. Balancing them all into harmony again. All these frequencies are resonating and amplifying each other and should therefore be treated in a holistic way.

Humans and other living organisms are part of the natural environment of subtle energies, they are one because they are open energy systems affecting each other. Through the improvement of spatial forms and the materialisation of them, a high potential concept for balancing and centering, as well as communication and interaction between people, can be developed.

High potential

How do people resonate with the landscape and building frequencies? If an organisational identity and culture could be expressed in a melody, how would that sound? How can we bring harmony into a learn/work environment so that a building and its occupants are able to vibrate in a highly lively coherent potential?

“Being interconnected and multidimensional brings greater responsibility, because of the influence we have over our self and the environment.

Even to a degree that we can overcome our environmental conditions.” (Theresa Bullard, Ph.D. in Physics)

Transformation

With greater understanding and a more holistic approach towards eco-system effects of an integrated physical, digital and social learn/work environment, you can literally transform an organisation, its business and people.



In the 1940's, Sir Winston Churchill made the connection between architecture and human behaviour in his famous quote: *“We shape our buildings, thereafter they shape us”*.

Unleash capabilities

The Inner Environment (Mind-Body-Heart-Spirit) of human consciousness can be changed by personal coaching and practice. Changing the Outer Environment (built, digital and social) of people is an extra leverage to unleash the capabilities of the multi-dimensional human being. It is spirituality at work.

Duet for three hands

Real Estate & Facility Management (RE&FM) and ICT in collaboration with Human Resource Management (HRM) form a *‘duet-for-three-hands’*. This gives a focus on the environment in which people must function and perform.

It creates a holistic symbiosis between the learn/work environment, the organisational objectives and the human beings inside. This synergy will unlock the latent potential for innovation, growth, health, well-being and consciousness of an organisation and its people.

The vision about the symbiosis forms the score of the symphony, whereby a conductor ensures that the various

components of the learn/work environment are coordinated in such a way that they optimally facilitate the most important resource of an organisation: the people.

Regular ‘performance reviews’ of the learn/work environment as a tool for managing knowledge are required to ensure continuous improvement and a learning organisation.

Monitoring effectiveness

The ultimate test for the effectiveness of the learn/work environment is the experience of those who use it.

Apart from the (subjective) opinion of the users, there is also a need for an objective assessment whether the intended effectiveness of the study/workplace is realized in an efficient manner on time, within budget and acceptable risks.

The scores of the required ‘Symphony of Forms’ should therefore have appropriate SMARTI performance metrics:

Specific (Who, what, which, where),
Measurable (Actual vs. desired),
Achievable (How),
Realistic (Worthwhile),
Time-bound (When),
Inspiring (Engagement).

This will make an iterative learning loop of transparent monitoring, adaptation and feedback communication possible. It focuses attention on measuring process and progress rather than results. It is more about continuous learning and communicating than control, identifying problems and allocating fault.

Take into consideration Albert Einstein's words: *“Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.”*

Adding value is more than cost reduction

To answer the question ‘Is the learn/work environment adding value?’, four sub questions must be addressed:

- 1 Can I work and study here effectively -- are we doing the right things?
- 2 Is it used efficiently -- do we do things in the right way?
- 3 Is the learn/work environment manageable and under control?

- 4 How does the learn/work environment affect me?
(attractiveness-engagement)

Sub-questions 2 and 3 focus on efficiency and manageability -- cost centre approach -- whereas sub questions 1 and 4 are more process oriented and people centred — enablers for adding value. Understanding the complex interrelationship in the ecological system of the learn/work environment supports better decision making. The effects of cost reduction have a limit, whereas the so-called soft outcomes of culture and process changes can be continuously reinforced and enhanced.

Remember the musical score is not the music itself just as a map is not the landscape. An analytical and logical left-brain approach should be balanced with an integrated intuitive right-brain approach. Analytical thinking allows us to comprehend the parts of the learn/work environment while integrated thinking enables us to understand how they work together. The whole is more than the sum of its parts.

Where attention goes, energy will flow. Instead of focusing on avoiding a cacophony of vibrations, concentrate on balance and harmony in the learn/work environment. This requires a human-centric system approach.

Bridging architecture and spirituality

Architecture as a Symphony of Form is an exploration odyssey about REAL ESTATE and the (real) STATE of HUMANS. The interface and interaction between the state of the built environment (physical, digital, social) and of the health (body, mind, heart, spirit) of people using the built environment. The environment influences how you think and feel. The human mind and body are not separate and distinct from their environment. A management team that is aware of the strategic opportunities of a harmonized environment, together with the help of interdisciplinary specialists, can create the difference in unlocking and unleashing human potential.

René P.M. Stevens MSc Arch/MBA is architect, management consultant, coach and social entrepreneur. End 2002 he established ATELIER V real estate, a trend setting firm in real estate consultancy, of which he is owner and general director.



How to Awaken Human Inhabitants on Our Planet: Fragments for discussion

Marko Pavliha

Introduction

Who am I to speak on such a delicate matter as the awakening, what or who gives me the right to be “spiritually wise”?

Given my relative freshness in international circles of scientists and other enlightened organisations and individuals who strive and actually do look through the Galileo telescope beyond the materialist view of the world and cosmos, I would kindly ask you to permit me, firstly, to introduce myself briefly, and secondly, to share with some of my unpolished thoughts about preserving our humankind and our indeed “blue” planet.

I come from Slovenia, a small country on the Mediterranean side of the Alps in the middle of Europe. I have a doctorate in comparative law from McGill University in Montreal, Canada, and have been working in various fields including shipping, tourism, law, reinsurance, politics, research and teaching. I was privileged to serve my country for five years as Minister of Transport and Vice-President

of the Parliament. Afterwards, I returned to academia at the University of Ljubljana and the International Maritime Law Institute in Malta. I am happily married for more than thirty years with Ester who is a judge and we have two grown-up children, Gaia Ana and Benjamin.

Perhaps ten years ago or so I realised that something was very wrong with my life as there seemed to be an increasing disorder, to use Tolle’s words, apart from the shining misleading appearance. The shift finally happened due to several shocks which turned out to be my best “teachers”:

- (i) Struggling with my two addictions - alcohol and constant approval from other people,
- (ii) health problems, probably caused by medical malpractice, and
- (iii) failure to become a judge at the General Court of the European Union in Luxembourg.

Like the prevailing majority of “successful” people I also used to believe that academic titles, success, reputation, fame, family, a new house, luxury car and



money are the most important features in somebody's life but when I managed to obtain them I was still somewhat unfulfilled, almost unhappy. Fortunately, I have been interested since my childhood in researching the depths of myself and also in personal improvement, exploring the secret world of consciousness and spirituality, the One Mind. Namely, as a "spiritual scuba diver" I strongly believe that in order to survive we, the Humans, need a new enlightened self-awareness, compassionate behaviour, global ethics based on universal love and a new reformed, much more equitable Rule of Law.

I meditate twice a day, exercise and do some yoga each morning, enjoy beautiful nature, read intensively, watch videos and study other sources of knowledge interpreted by Wayne Dyer, Eckhart Tolle, Michael Singer, Eben Alexander, Larry Dossey, to mention just a few. In addition,

I am studying enthusiastically again the ancient scriptures like Tao te Ching, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Dhammapada and the Bible because they all offer very similar ethical in spiritual messages. In short, I try to live as healthy life as possible, all in order to be a better human being present in the Now.

One of the turning points of my life was when I became a professional member of the Galileo Commission which is a project of the Scientific and Medical Network established almost half a century ago. The Commission is represented by a distinguished group of over 90 scientific advisers affiliated to 30 universities worldwide, many of whom have been active during consultation process leading up to the publication of the report entitled *Beyond a Materialist Worldview - Towards and Expanded Science*. In particular, I would like to mention the author of the Report, Professor Harald

Walach, as well as Dr. Peter Fenwick, David Lorimer, Dr. Iain McGilchrist, Richard Irwin, Dr. Eben Alexander, Dr. Deepak Chopra, Dr. Larry Dossey and a Nobel laureate Professor Brian Josephson.

The essence of the Galileo Commission Report is that existing science is too materialistic and predominantly based on absolute presuppositions. This results in the belief that consciousness is nothing but a consequence of the complex arrangement of matter, or an emergent phenomenon of brain activity. Such a belief is neither proven, nor warranted. Even more, it is contradicted by numerous reports on near death experiences, non-local perception, parapsychology, anomalous cognition and children who remember previous lives.

Hence the Galileo Commission proposes a dual aspect or complementarity model as a minimum consensus, in which

matter and mind, consciousness and its physical substrate, are two aspects of reality. Integrating an enlarged view of consciousness into science will yield a new methodology that will have to be developed: the methodology of radical introspection or inner experience.

I would very much like to assist in sharing these positive messages around Europe and the world in order to convince as many people as possible to meditate, contemplate, learn, create and help us all to achieve a paradigm shift in science and in our well-being. Just like Dr. Alexander would say, we should welcome all humans to the revolution, this awakening is crucial for the survival of life on Earth, and will bring peace, harmony and goodwill back in large measure, thus greatly improving the overall quality of life on our planet.

Therefore I propose a three-stage action: (i) Networking – bringing together as many conscious organisations as possible, (ii) acting within civil society and the existing or new political parties to gain access to parliaments, governments and other administrative bodies in order to elect and appoint new type of politicians, (iii) upgrading the existing curriculums at schools on all levels to allow, enable and encourage teaching and learning on post-materialist worldview.

Networking

Scientific and Medical Network with its Galileo Commission should become a catalyst of global paradigm(s) shift(s), bringing together, connecting, coordinating and focusing in one powerful beam advanced research and other activities performed by reputable individuals and non-governmental and non-profitable institutions, such as the Institute of Noetic Sciences, Mind and Life Institute, Hay House, Eckhart Teachings & Eckhart Tolle Now, Sounds True, Temple of the Universe, Higher Balance Institute, and many others. It is worth mentioning again that the Galileo Commission is

represented by a distinguished group of over 90 scientific advisers affiliated to more than 30 universities worldwide, which can be all of great assistance in this regard.

Acting within Civil Society and Politics

Evolution and revolution of humankind must occur from the top of the hierarchic society pyramid towards the bottom and not the other way around as it used to be practice throughout the history. A radical example of this approach is shown in the recent Spanish horror movie *The Platform* (*El hoyo*, literally *The Hole*) which is set in a large, tower-style Vertical Self-Management Centre. Its residents, who are periodically switched at random between its many floors, are fed via a platform which, initially filled with food at the top floor, gradually descends through the tower's levels, each level getting only the leftovers from the previous ones. It is a system bound to cause conflict, as the residents at the top levels can eat as much as they can, leaving increasingly little for those below. Estimating that there are 250 levels (in fact, there are 333 levels), the main character Goreng convinces his fellows to ride the platform down with him, rationing the food so all get a share. As they descend, they hand out portions to the prisoners, attacking those who refuse to cooperate.

Consequently, in order to change our world to the better we need mindful politics, a new approach to global problems in order to discover basic goodness and create the enlightened society which will cherish nature and all sentient beings, compassion, love, altruism, peace, honesty, justice, the rule of law, forgiveness, and other crucial virtues and ethical values. We need fresh, much more conscious politicians and especially leaders who will be elected to the highest decision-making positions with support from civil society (the one mind orientated organisations, associations, universities,

institutes, etc.) and even from those political parties which are sincerely concerned about the future of our planet, the nature and all living creatures. Once "in power", let us hope they will influence other political colleagues, lobbies, media and other decision makers to achieve necessary modifications of education and upbringing on all levels, from families and kindergarten to universities, working places, and beyond. The role of media will be equally crucial.

The political awakening shall occur simultaneously around the globe and not only locally since any isolated attempt would probably result in the Pala scenario of the fictional *Island* created by Aldous Huxley in his last novel, which is - according to Professor David Bradshaw - "his most pessimistic book because in a world of increasing greed, mass communication, oil-guzzling transport, burgeoning population and inveterate hostility, a pacific and co-operative community like Pala's 'oasis of freedom and happiness' has little hope of survival."

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, is a very good starting point providing a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 targets, which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

The ambitious purpose of Goal No. 4, for example, is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The UN members should ensure

by the year of 2030, inter alia that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes, as well as equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. Furthermore, the member states should ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. The supply of qualified teachers should be substantially increased, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states.

Unfortunately, there is no specific mention of *spiritual growth* beyond the religion which should be encouraged and learned during childhood, adolescence and maturity of somebody's life, perhaps in accordance with such a syllabus which is suggested below. This is definitely one of the most significant amendments to the UN 2030 Agenda which shall be adopted in the nearest future.

Conclusion

Is all this too naïve or utopian?

“Remember”, exclaimed Lao Tzu about 2,500 years ago in his legendary Tao te Ching, “A tree that fills a man's embrace grows from a seedling. A tower nine stories high starts with one brick. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

The gist of the Buddha's universe is the noble thesis that our life is shaped by our mind, for we become what we think. As Eknath Easwaran put it beautifully in his translation and introduction to the Dhammapada, it follows from this

utmost important fact that when we change ourselves, we have already begun to change the world where kindness, unselfishness, nonviolence, and compassion for all creatures achieve what self-interest and arrogance cannot, and where any human being can be happy in good ness and the fullness of giving.

The Galileo Commission has already made a giant step forward but the time has come to initiate a worldwide marathon of holistic consciousness.

Prof. Marko Pavliha studied law in Ljubljana, Split and Montreal (McGill). He was Minister of Transportation and Vice-President of the Slovenian Parliament and is presently teaching law at the University of Ljubljana and IMO IMLI, Malta. He is author of many books and as an enthusiastic member of the Galileo Commission, he is particularly interested in searching for new ethics and regulations within One Mind beyond the materialistic paradigm.



A good picnic spot! - David Lorimer



One Mind, One Planet, One Health

Eve Hicks

The webinar on *New Dimensions of Interconnectedness* was scheduled for the same weekend as the original *Mystics & Scientists 2020 Consciously Connecting with the Deep Wisdom of Nature* now postponed to 2021. Andrew Polson opened the conference by welcoming over 80 participants, who had all “Zoomed” in from diverse parts of the UK spanning Cornwall through London and Scotland all the way across Europe and as far afield as New Zealand and Santa Fe in Texas, USA! The sense of desired worldwide co-operation was almost palpable even before the opening welcome. The event marks a clear first for the SMN on this scale and was indicative of the spirit of the time being just one of new opportunities arriving out of the obvious difficulties from the Covid19 lockdown.

The warmth of expectation was picked up by David Lorimer who said a few heartfelt words and lit a candle, as a symbol of light to shine our way through dark times. David’s warmth prevalent throughout set the tone as he introduced the speakers, starting with **Dr Serge Beddington-Behrens** who had come to talk on *Surviving and Thriving in the Dark Days of Corona*.

Serge opened by saying that we were experiencing “*ferce grace*”¹. The old world had been stopped without showing us the new one. Superficially, there was tragedy everywhere with loss of both lives and jobs, institutional break-ups

and general carnage prevalent. The situation was global with absolutely no-one excluded. Inevitably, conspiracy theories would come into play leading to understandable feelings of incomprehensible error. However, whilst he agreed that we didn’t understand any of it that did not mean there was no underlying meaning.

Serge sees the whole coronavirus fall out as *intentional intervention*. As global humanity, there was grave need for something dramatic to stop us in our tracks. The starvation, hunger, the number of refugees, poverty, worldwide weather dramas and consequences from climate change, widespread depression and drugs are just examples. He pointed out that it is easier to postpone change when the impact does not directly affect us personally. For example, from a first world perspective, the fact that millions of people are starving is just an *inconvenient truth*.

Corona crisis has a huge meaning because everyone is affected. However, changes will not be brought into play from a general *knowing* and individuals have to hit rock bottom before being moved into taking steps to change. This is essentially a wake-up call for us to go into our own shadow and deal with this moment of truth. Being in it together we all need to go inside to review. The virus is our driver forcing us to confront and ask ourselves who we really are. The seclusion forced upon us gives us an opportunity to do just that.

The crisis can therefore be seen as a reflection from nature, or toxic cell². Covid19 is giving us the necessary deep shock enabling us to see the problems in a new light and can be viewed as a blessing that it is helping us to evolve together and giving us the tough love teaching needed. Much will crumble, but to bring in the new the old must die first. The very word *sacrifice* means *make sacred* and we all need to tune into this. This is an opportunity for us to serve, like our nurses who are doing an incredible job. It is a collective dark night of the soul but it is only in darkness that the light can be seen.

After sharing his own personal dark night of the soul, Serge explained that he believes we are all being given this opportunity to make a personal choice between looking back and mourning or surrendering into the new as yet unknown direction. So, challenged to go forward together, many of those at the centre of the system, including world leaders, will fall away to the edges but those on the fringes will come forward together to make opportunities opening up.

There were many excellent questions exploring different aspects of the subject. And the responses revealed that it was expected to be a shifting rather than a shedding or a war, that death is all part of life and although there remain real problems on the planet that need sorting, the best we can do to help is to simply be compassionate and tender! In answer to whether we should meditate globally or locally,

the answer was both! Serge felt that we will ultimately sort all problems and amiably agreed with the final question that hugging must surely be part of the Promised Land! We closed with a guided meditation.

Alasdair Philips presented the afternoon session on *Electromagnetic Energy Affecting the Processes of Life*. He started by explaining that the subject was necessarily highly technical with most changes happening within the last 100 years. This is a good time to be looking at the subject with 5G currently being strongly rolled out and promoted. He gave many examples of things that were initially presented as beneficial (such as x-rays in pregnancy, radium creams for “healthy glow”, smoking or asbestos) but that subsequently turned out to be rather dangerous. The overall picture is certainly not universally bad as demonstrated by Dr Becker who published widely in 2000 his view of the dangers of electromagnetic fields (EMF) but had also pioneered the use of electricity to help heal bone fractures not responding in any other way. Similarly, despite the known benefits a 2008 study from Lund University showed clear evidence of damage to rats’ brains from being exposed to mobile phones.

Global maps show a dramatic increase in the world electromagnetic fields since 1992. It is known and accepted that all of life, from bacteria and birds to humans, is influenced by both EMF and Radio Frequency (RF) in various ways. And we were given a quick review of the reported effects of geomagnetic storms and noted that ELF Magnetic Fields are classed by IARC World Health as class 2 carcinogens. There was then a display of significant and technically detailed evidence of potential damage from EMF sources. And a discussion followed about the lack of both knowledge and understanding of the sharp edges in waves forms of the new 5G networks being widely rolled out. It was explained how these sharp edges have a known greater impact on humans and the “bi-phasic response” of 5G was an important concept not recognised

and the few studies that have been made certainly report significant problems.

The EMF exposure is 10^{18} higher than a hundred years ago and there is a clear likelihood of significant effects on the Earth, which are poorly understood. To summarise, the clear message was that whilst it is difficult for science to be certain of anything, the problems for bees and small insects were certainly recognised, so at what point would 5G carcinogenesis be clear evidence for banning?

There were many questions and the broad recommendations were to avoid “Smart” internet equipment, to use only wired internet and telephones, to turn off WiFi at night, avoid mobile phones or laptops if a child or pregnant, generally minimise EMF and RF wherever possible.

Sunday’s opening lecture was given by **Shakti Caterina Maggi** on *Healing the World through Meditation*. She explained that the session format would be to start and end with a meditation followed by a short talk with questions for the bulk of time.

The meditation was a lovely taster helping us to experience how it felt to see in wholeness and perceive the world arriving from inside. This meditation led beautifully into Shakti starting to explain that life is an embodiment of our consciousness and that this time has given us a powerful invitation to realign. We now have time to go inside and realign our priorities. What was previously perceived as a curse or fearful could be re-examined and re-positioned in our minds in a different way. It was an incredible opportunity to reawaken into joy by discovering the root of the fear and labelling it as a resource rather than an enemy. She explained this could perhaps be seen as the moving of life trying to wake us up and opened the session to questions by saying these matters could not be learnt from a book but had to be personally experienced. Sharing experiences, like this session, all helps.

There were many questions exploring different aspects and we also spent a little time gathering thoughts in small group conversation in breakout rooms. The issues that arose were largely investigating how to deal with old traumas deeply embedded in our reptilian brains, processes of identifying and acknowledging traumas and the subsequent fears arising. Death was also highlighted as relevant as was workings of the mind along with requests for tools for dealing with specific problems. Shakti pointed out that traumas most certainly need a properly trained therapist to explore and examine from a psychological view. However, the process was not a battle. It was enough to recognise the attachment and then ascertain whether it is a person or an experience at the core. It is human to feel this way as we are indeed all human. All that is then needed is to stop, face, examine and listen to the pain/anger/whatever through love. True identity is pure nothingness. It is the me. We often feel so much that we are caught up in holding. Then once you remove one attachment, surely another will turn up until they are all gone and you are left with nothing!

Shakti said survival is both physical and psychological and life is now providing us an invitation into a relationship with nature and a discovery of grace of gratitude. Finally, we were given a delightful meditation on the great wisdom, gratitude, peace, the myth of separation, the garden of silence, love, connection and peace. With closing words going to a poem by the 14th Century saint and poet Lala Dev.

The final session was taken by **Dr Larry Dossey** on *Healing, Spirituality and Consciousness: emerging insights*. Larry started by discussing and defining the terms spirituality, religion and soul for clarity of expression so that we could all share what is best expressed the phrase “*We are all in this together*”, that was both seen and widely accepted around the world. Discussions led naturally into and through his key premise that health should include a vision of death and the hereafter which

was reviewed and noted that there was generally a strong aversion to death. And through the thoughts of many memorable individuals such as Sogyal Rinpoche, Woody Allen, Jung, Dyson, Hawking, Minsky, Bohm and Schrödinger Larry wove naturally and fully through how the soul is understood, immortality and consciousness, including planetary life.

There is a new science supported by many well-known speakers - many of whom attend SMN Mystics and Scientist events - that is taking hold that sees the brain as a *transmissive* rather than *productive* organ. So that as expressed by Max Planck consciousness is fundamental with matter rather than mind being a derivative. Consciousness marks the beginning of everything and raises the question of non-local events linking neatly to spirituality, health and wellness. Larry pointed out that there are many studies showing followers of spiritual paths live on average 7 -13 years longer and have a lower incidence of all major diseases. However, this was no guarantee, and we also discussed the individuals that Larry referred to as the sickly Saints as well as the healthy reprobates!

Discussions then turned this around and moved on to consider specific examples of inexplicable healings and telesomatic or non-local events. We heard reports of substantiated stories of ill individuals who had had miraculous spontaneous healing experiences that could not be explained. And Larry produced evidence that a key driver for not reporting these has been fear. We

then discussed telesomatic events that occur between some 20% of identical twins as well as some parents and children and indeed others. These events are not just mental, they can also be profoundly physical. We were given examples of the oneness and unity even at the cellular level.

There now many experiments that show clear measurable connections at the cellular and neuronal level between physically separated individuals brains. This research is now being shown on The Smithsonian/NASA Astrophysics Data System³. This work supports how individuals who have found the way to tap into the pool of what Emerson called the universal mind use their creative discoveries to go beyond their natural or physical talents and diverse examples were presented and discussed.

So if we are all connected there has to be a global view as individual health choices reverberate non-locally wherever they arise. The individual, the societal and the global are all one. And the golden rule becomes be kind to others because in some sense, they are you! So “How should we treat others?” , as Ramana Maharshi said “There are no others.” The key realisation to take away is that we are connected with all sentient life and when we deeply realise this all life becomes precious and sacred. The unitary one mind may indeed assist our own survival and in the end, it is all about love.

Larry closed with a review with quotes from just some of the many beautiful things that have been

said on this theme from scientists, authors, sages, poets, mystics and others. The final word was given to Hafiz, a 14th century poet who said

“Lets go deeper,
Go deeper.
For if we do,
Our spirits will embrace
And interweave...

Our union will be so glorious
That even God
Will not be able to tell us
apart...”

There was a wide-ranging discussion here and the questions raised essentially reaffirmed what had been said so beautifully by Larry.

As with previous sessions Ben Gross played us out with beautiful music, and David Lorimer gave us the light as he said a few warm closing words to close us out! It was a beautiful, interesting and uplifting conference.

1: Ram Dass

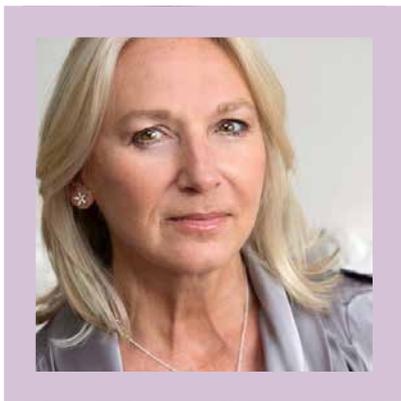
2: Rudolf Steiner

3: <http://adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/2004SPIE.5436..107P>

Eve Hicks has been an avid follower of Scientific & Medical Network activity for many years, and still enjoys writing on all matters relating to consciousness studies and anything that helps humanity create a new world view together. Now fully retired from academic finance, Eve is now engaged in working with various voluntary charitable activities.



San San Bay, Jamaica by David Lorimer



Reflections on the Power of the Sacred Feminine

Benig Mauger and Sue Bayliss

On Saturday May 16th I spent a wonderful and inspiring day listening to two very different and excellent speakers. The topic was ‘the Power of the Sacred Feminine’ with Anaiya Sophia and Christine Page. Although immediately drawn by the title, the Sacred Feminine being part of my own studies and spiritual path, I knew very little about the speakers. The first, Anaiya Sophia, a mystic, storyteller and author living in the Languedoc, drew me immediately into the mystical realm of the Goddess through her voice and her lovely presence. Living in the old Cathar heartland, she spoke about the return of the Sacred Feminine wisdom and the teachings of Mary Magdalene that is deeply rooted in the land. Underground for over 700 years, it is foretold that the Cathars and the Sacred Feminine will rise again and return. The time is now.

It felt to me that Anaiya embodied the Sacred Feminine in a very natural way. Speaking about nature as holding the spiritual wisdoms we seek in our time of great change, Anaiya reminded us of what we are now facing - the death of the ‘old’ dualistic way of being in favour of the unity of consciousness embodied by the Sacred Feminine. The energy of the Sacred Feminine is inclusive, intuitive and directly from the heart. As a Jungian therapist of many years, I know that no emotional or psychic healing happens without the Sacred Feminine and the ‘fierce love’ of the

Great Mother noted by Christine Page. Mary Magdalene, whose legacy remains in the Languedoc as the feminine counterpart of Yeshua (Jesus) is the voice of the Sacred Feminine, so long buried and so deeply yearned for today.

Referring to the current pandemic, Anaiya spoke of how the masculine principles embodied in our modern world, such as order, structure and control, have no power over what is happening now. And that we have no choice but to surrender to the Goddess and the wisdom of the Earth herself to guide us. It is the Sacred Feminine that brings us to understand that we are all connected and indeed that we need to go within and develop the spiritual qualities of the feminine to navigate our current dark night.

Feminine energies are not necessarily easy for our logos, patriarchally inspired modern way of life. For certainty, substitute being in the unknown, for control, substitute surrender and trust. And then we have fear. For me, the most memorable and ultimately enduring words Anaiya spoke were about fear, and how fear can be our ally towards developing faith. In this regard, she demonstrated a very beautiful exercise involving the right and left parts of our bodies, uniting our vulnerable unsure fearful side with our strong, resourceful, courageous side. A sacred marriage we all long for.

The sacred marriage happened for me too when our second speaker Christine Page, an intuitive, holistic doctor and author, led us on a journey back to our roots in the Goddess cultures. Outlining the historical background to the patriarchal takeover and attempted eradication of the feminine, Christine pointed out how damaging this energy has been to the feminine and women in particular. A very different woman with a different teaching style, Christine, in her more linear and left brained approach, complemented Anaiya. Bringing in her extensive knowledge and experience as a physician, holistic practitioner, and her own roots in psychic knowing, Christine focussed on our chakras and how to tap into our intuition and access the Sacred Feminine directly through the heart.

In addressing the huge changes that are happening to our planet on every level, Christine’s talk helped root in me my own Sacred Feminine ‘knowing’. Our mother the Earth and we are One. Christine helped me further understand the energies of the Crone archetype and inhabit this aspect of my soul more freely. In Jungian language, the Crone represents the third and vital aspect of the feminine responsible for transformation and spiritual change. Our guide to the underworld, Hecate the Goddess burns away all that is no longer in harmony with our souls. I especially valued Christine’s

reminder to tap into our bodies and the wisdom hidden there. In my own journey, I am learning that my body often points the way towards spiritual growth by alerting me to vital vibrational changes happening at a subtle level. It has currently become my 'muse' in my writings. Christine's meditation/visualisation to encounter the triple goddess enabling us to meet our own inner Virgin, Mother and Crone was especially valuable to me and I will continue to practise this meditation. Finally and overall, the Power of the Sacred Feminine reminded me of the importance of staying rooted in my body and in my own feminine 'knowing' and trusting that I am held in the fierce love of the Great Mother.



Sue Bayliss writes:

What a treat it was to delve into the Sacred Feminine on Saturday, May 16th, with Anaiya Sophia and Christine Page. Anaiya immediately drew me in with her powerful presence which seemed to combine strength and wisdom with openness and vulnerability. For me she truly embodied the Divine Feminine.

Anaiya spoke of the sacred landscape of Southern France where she lives, the place where the Cathars were persecuted but where they left a legacy to inspire us. Their sacred paths can still be trodden.

We are challenged at this time of great change. Trapped in the duality of 'good guys and bad guys', we need to find the third way that goes beyond, the way of transcendence. Just as the Goddess Inanna had to shed all the trappings of her identity on her descent to the Underworld to meet her dark sister, so we find our certainties stripped away, preparing us to integrate the dark and the

light in an alchemical fusion within ourselves. The Divine Feminine provides a birth canal for us to move through. The energy of the Sacred Feminine unlocks our intuitive, instinctual, visionary mind and breaks open our hearts, enabling us to sense the interconnectedness of everything. Anaiya noted this may feel overwhelming for those more attached to the desire for order, certainty and structure.

The story of Perpetua, an early Christian martyr, shows what is possible with the Sacred Feminine in our hearts. When she entered the Roman arena, a hungry lion approached her but stopped and began to lick her feet. The crowd bayed for blood and a centurion was sent to end her life. He could not bring himself to harm her, so she took his sword and cut her own throat. The duality of aggressor and victim was transcended in that moment. Dying and ecstasy merged.

How can we access such courage? Anaiya showed us a beautiful exercise, a kind of Sacred Marriage, in which the left and right sides of our bodies literally embrace and honour each other. Vulnerability and fear meet courage and resourcefulness, enabling us to step into our power and wholeness.

Anaiya spoke of the importance of a good death, especially for those who carry it with them afterwards. Having been present at my father's death, I can vouch for that. He passed easily once I had 'called up' my deceased aunt to fetch him thanks to a powerful intuition I received.

The afternoon session was with Christine Page, author of a number of books, including *The Healing Power of the Sacred Woman*. She introduced us to the Goddess cultures which date back millennia. The Great Goddess (and all nature) was worshipped from the dawn of time until the patriarchal invasions which began around 1500 BC.

It is time for women to find their voices and step forward but not by trying to imitate men. The Divine Feminine can guide us in knowing how to die to the old and birth the new.

According to Christine, we are at the end of the 26,000-year cycle foretold

by the Mayans. It is a time to jettison whatever no longer serves us and create a new way to live, one that is in harmony with Mother Earth. As the old hologram dies away, we can assist in bringing forth a new one. A new matrix is waiting for us to wake up and embrace the new thinking that will bring it into being. We must beware of the false hologram that spawns fear, shame and coercion, stopping us from achieving our wholeness.

The session ended with Christine taking us through a visualisation to meet our virgin, mother and crone archetypes. The word virgin originally meant a woman who was complete in herself. Christine also encouraged us to practise a ritual around the dark moon or based on the menstrual cycle in which we first acknowledge our learning from the preceding month and release anything we need to. Then, the following day, we connect deeply with Mother Earth before drawing inspiration from her and sharing our insights with others.

Overall, it was an inspiring day full of wisdom and practical ideas. At this time of uncertainty and potential, we need to unleash the powerful energies of the Divine Feminine. A Native American saying goes: "A thousand years of peace will come when women heal their hearts." How long will it take until all humans agree that: "The most beautiful being in the universe is a woman in her power?"

Sue Bayliss is a holistic therapist, a poet and writer and a priestess of Rhiannon, trained in Glastonbury. She offers ceremonies such as handfasting, baby naming, menarche and croning celebrations. www.sulisconsulting.com, sue@sulisconsulting.com.

Benig Mauger is a Jungian Psychotherapist, pre and perinatal psychologist and writer. A pioneer in human consciousness, Benig is a profound and engaging speaker as well as a transformational teacher, therapist and workshop leader. Author of 'Songs from the Womb', 'Reclaiming Father' and 'Love in a Time of Broken Heart', Benig's work blends Therapy and Spirituality for healing and spiritual growth and is featured on her website www.soul-connections.com. She is currently writing a book on healing and spirituality.

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.

Network Presidency



As you will have read in the articles section, Professor Bernard Carr has taken over as President from Dr Peter Fenwick, who has occupied the post with extraordinary dedication and distinction since 2001, ably and lovingly supported by his wonderful wife Elizabeth. Peter now becomes our first President Emeritus and writes about his meditation sessions from his home in Scotland below. Bernard will serve a time of five years, which will include the Network's the 50th anniversary in 2023, which will also be celebrated in the same year by the Institute of Noetic Sciences founded by late honorary member Dr Edgar Mitchell.

The Network Online – David Lorimer



It won't have escaped your attention that the Network has made some fundamental adjustments to its programme as a result of the coronavirus confinement. The first involved the cancellation of leave physical Mystics and Scientists meeting and its postponement until next April. In its place, we arranged a weekend of webinars under the heading of Mystics and Scientists Extra themed around One Mind, One Planet, One Health. These featured honorary member Dr Larry Dossey, Alastair Phillips, Shakti Caterina Maggi and Dr Serge Beddington-Behrens. Over 90 people attended the sessions over the weekend. Recordings were made, which are available to members free of charge online.

The management group of the board then asked me to create an online webinar programme, which we initiated in May. At first, numbers were relatively low, between 25 and 40, but these have grown to a minimum of 80 attenders, with more people registered who catch up on the recordings. Our most successful webinars so far have been Lars Muhl on *The God Formula* and Craig Weiler and Dr Rupert Sheldrake on *Psi Wars*. The details are available on www.mysticsandscientists.org and we have nearly one webinar a week planned and are now creating a schedule for 2021. We also have the online Beyond the Brain conference coming up in November. I have also hosted a couple of meetings on behalf of the Network for Humanity Rising on co-creating a Culture of Love and Wisdom, and Love, Trauma and the Alchemy of Transformation. Recordings of both these sessions are available online and I anticipate that we will be doing another in November. In addition, we have just held a joint meeting with the Institute of Noetic Sciences attended by 760 people on lessons from death and dying for life and living. In view of the circumstances, especially in relation to Spain, we have also decided to hold the *I Ching* seminar online.

New Events for Members

In addition to this webinar programme, we are now offering regular events for Members. Two of these – the meditation session and the virtual bar – are reported on below, and Paul Filmore reports on his weekly dialogues in his editorial. We are also holding a monthly ‘Meet the Board’ session, hosted by our President, Bernard Carr. Finally, I am now offering the monthly Book Review Briefing to all members. We have now produced five issues of our monthly newsletter digest, *Towards a New Renaissance*, which also includes the ‘book cast’ where I read one of the books already reviewed in this journal.

Network Meditation – 6.00 p.m. Sunday Evening – Dr Peter Fenwick



For the last few weeks we have been having a virtual meditation session at 6.00 p.m. every Sunday evening for Network members. Meditation is now widely practised and many people now have their own meditation method. Quite often they have been given a mantra by a teacher who

tells them that if they use that mantra conscientiously every day it will take them through to enlightenment. Although this is true in some cases, the modern view of meditation is that you have to find a practice which suits *you* – it is the ‘fit’ that is important. It is possible to spend years practicing a form of meditation which is just not right for you, so that you make very little progress.

Meditations are practised widely and have been examined by many scientists and its beneficial effects on the cardiovascular system and attention are well recognised. More recent is the discovery that it can even extend your life by lengthening the chromosomal telomeres. It is also now recognised that meditating with other people seems to enhance its effect, and also brings the group together. The Maharishi pointed out that if one in a hundred people in a community meditate, the behaviour in the community improves.

It was decided that for the first few months I would give a new meditation each week, using some of the most well-known and effective methods. I would encourage people, even those who are happy with their own meditation, to try these and see if one proves to be a better fit. I also recommend that they try their new meditation for one hour every day (no that is not a misprint), because it has been shown that the last quarter of the hour is the time the meditation has the strongest effect.

Do come and join these meditation sessions. They are from 6.00 to 6.45 p.m and consist of a brief introductory description of the method to be used, followed by about half an hour to practice it and then a short reading.

Members' Wine Bar (virtual for now)



Paul Kieniewicz writes: on Friday evenings many SMN members went the last two months to a pub (virtual for now), where they were able to hold impromptu discussions on topics that interested them. The concept began with the recognition that while the pandemic

lasts, physical meetings are restricted. We can't just drop in at the bar to shoot the breeze, as at our Mystics and Scientists meetings. Webinars offer only limited opportunity for spontaneous interaction. Such interaction has always been important to SMN members. It's in casual conversation that ideas are shared, people meet and find out about each other, where we develop as a network.

Our weekly meetings, chaired by Paul Kieniewicz, SMN Board Member, from his home in Poland have attracted between 15 to 30 members. We often spend the first half hour catching up with each other, finding out what recently we've been investigating or reading. Then we turn to a topic that we chose the previous meeting. Usually someone from the group has something to introduce to the others. Topics so far were about the beginnings of the SMN and the role of Father Andrew Glazewski, the work of David Bohm in physics and philosophy, and his relationship with J. Krishnamurti.

Natalie Tobert led a discussion on Spiritual Psychiatry, how mental illness diagnosis depends on the culture we find ourselves in. The next few weeks our wine bar took us into mystical traditions from early Christianity. David Lorimer told us about the Cathars, much respected in southern France where he lives, and who recognised the dual nature of reality. Duality was also the topic of our discussion of the early Christian poem, “Thunder – Perfect Mind”. Gerard Kuiken presented correspondences between duality – the nature of our world, and the subatomic world. I then presented the myth of Sophia, a story describing how the world we with its dual nature, came to be, and how it will end. This is mythology, but mythology that may also have a correspondence in physics.

In all our meetings, I was impressed how people from so many places across the globe were able to tune in to speak to each other. Such a group certainly could not gather physically, distances being what they are. Discussions were animated, often very serious, and our 75 minutes passed rapidly. Please join us on Zoom. We'd love to share a virtual wine with you.



LOCAL GROUP NEWS

LONDON GROUP

CLAUDIA NIELSEN
0207 431 1177,
claudia@pnielsen.uk

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.

■ **MAY - IS CONSCIOUSNESS EVERYWHERE? FOUNDATIONS FOR A NEW SCIENCE OF CONSCIOUSNESS**



This month we heard about panpsychism from PHILIP GOFF, a philosopher, lecturer and researcher at Durham University, whose work focuses on how to integrate consciousness into our scientific worldview. He has published a number of articles and is a prominent figure in consciousness academic

circles. His talk was based on his recently published book aimed at a general audience *Galileo's Error: Foundations for a New Science of Consciousness*.

Philip started his talk by quoting the old question, if there is nobody to hear it, will a tree make a sound if it falls in the forest? This question encapsulates the thinking that took place after Galileo (1564-1642) developed his theory. Before then, the world was understood by its qualities. The taste of a lemon resided in the lemon, music, in the sounds of the instruments, the beauty of the world, in the world. Galileo's theory changed this. Qualities are not in the outside world, but in the consciousness of the observer. The consequence was that the tree in the forest would make no sound, if there was no consciousness to hear it. That was the start of mathematical physics. Consciousness was taken out of the domain of science. Philip's aim is to re-integrate consciousness into modern science. Current sciences approach consciousness by studying the correlations of experiences and the activities of the brain. This is very helpful but cannot establish the nature of the experience of the person whose brain is being studied. Consciousness is about subjectivity. Two approaches to consciousness are currently mainstream: materialism, which explains consciousness as produced by the brain, and dualism, which explains consciousness as external to the physical body. Both are rejected by Philip. Materialism, because no evidence exists that matter (the brain) can generate consciousness, and dualism, because there is no evidence of the mind/soul's impact on brain activity.

An important aspect of matter as the concomitant of consciousness, is the understanding that science studies the behaviour and relationships of matter but cannot

say anything about what matter actually is. In other words, we are as ignorant about the 'intrinsic nature' of matter as that of consciousness.

This is where panpsychism comes in. We heard that Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and Sir Arthur Eddington (1882-1944) brought together the problem of consciousness and intrinsic nature. Panpsychism is in fact an ancient idea. It views consciousness as a fundamental feature of reality, its 'intrinsic nature'. Philip mentioned the hierarchy of sophistication in the nature of experience from the electron, with very primitive and basic complexity of experience, all the way to the complexity of human experience.

Philip argues that this philosophical view of panpsychism does not necessarily require a spiritual perspective, but it can accommodate it. His ideas continue to develop, and as well as this bottom-up perspective, he has also written about a top-down version, he called cosmopsychism. The link to the recording is https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szQL_SkPytU.

■ **JUNE - ARE YOU SURE ALL CROP CIRCLES ARE MAN-MADE?**



The talk this month was given from California by PROF JERRY KROTH. Jerry is an associate professor in the Graduate Counselling and Psychology programme at Santa Clara University in California. Alongside his teaching in the field of psychology, Jerry enjoys researching controversial subjects. This is one of them.

Jerry goes to academic professors in various disciplines to help him interpret the designs of crop circles and is aware that crop circles cannot be considered seriously by academics who have an eye on preserving their academic positions. He noted however that when they retire, the attitude changes.

Throughout his talk Jerry showed us a sizeable collection of crop circles from around the world. They are formidable in size and intricacy and stunning in design. Although he acknowledges that many crop circles are man-made, he questions whether that applies to all of them. He wrote a book about his research with the title *Messages from the Gods: a Scientific Exposition on the Extraterrestrial Origin of Crop Circles* which was published in 2019.

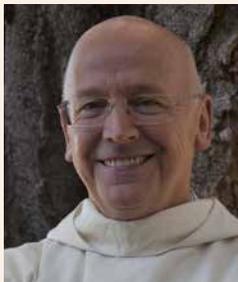
Jerry started by addressing the man-made circles and told us what he found out about the people who make them. He showed us a video made by the hoaxers. However, looking at the main body of crop circles which appear, there are some that are most unlikely to have been made by humans. There are clear tell-tale signs for instance, dead, but totally intact flies with radiation signatures have been found in crop circles. They were not squashed. The ways the stems are bent is another indication.

Following his assumptions that some crop circles are not man-made, Jerry investigates what message they may carry. He explained in detail the meaning he found in three particular circles: the first one showed two concentric circles plus two circles attached to them. He interpreted the design as showing 4 radioactive elements, Polonium, Cesium, Astatine and Beryllium.

The circles appeared across the river from the Oldbury Power Plant and his interpretation went along the idea of a warning about nuclear power. Subsequent to the appearance of the crop circle, the power plant went on to experience a problem which led to its decommissioning. Jerry sees the appearance of the crop circle as a warning. The second circle he talked about appeared in a red poppy field, was interpreted by a chemist in Australia and was said to show the structure of vitamin A detailed to the ultimate electron. At the top of this design was an arc which Jerry made sense of as a retina. The message decoded referred to vision and colour perception and a warning about vitamin A deficiency. The third circle examined two circles with a spiral in each which appeared on July 13th 2011. With the input from other academics, he concluded that this circle showed a magnetar, a rare event in which two neutron stars crash. Curiously the discovery of a magnetar was announced the day following the appearance of the circle on July 14th 2011 by two Spanish scientists.

Jerry used the acronym ET referring to the possible originators of the crop circles. Unfortunately, the use of this character does not bring us any closer to who or what may be behind these circles. The mystery of their origins therefore remains but the idea that behind the beautiful geometric designs may lie some important messages is interesting. Recording of this talk can be found at https://youtu.be/h2j_W7zJrN4. In the weeks after this talk Jerry 'decoded' the message behind a covid-19 crop circle, and this can be found on the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDhBwt-fFok&feature=youtu.be>

■ JULY – VISION AND VISIONS OF REALITY



This month we welcomed FR. LAURENCE FREEMAN OSB, the Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) a global, inclusive contemplative community. As Director of the Centre, he now resides at Bonnevaux, the WCCM international home in France, and a Centre for peace where

meditation is practised and taught as a way to personal and organisational transformation. Laurence is a monk, a teacher and also the author of many books, including a collaboration with the Dalai Lama on the book *The Good Heart*. In 2010, he launched Meditatio – the outreach programme of the World Community – bringing meditation to the secular world in the fields of Education, Medicine, Leadership, Science, Business and Social Justice.

This evening Laurence addressed the meaning of the words Vision and Visions, in which the plural indicator points to a totally different idea and state of being. Visions, we were told, are ideas formulated by means of our rational mind, based on matters learned and imagined. They can be fragmented, confused and at odds with other people's visions, leading potentially to conflict and misunderstandings. A vision is something totally different. It is a felt experience an insight, a light bulb moment. Laurence gave the example of Emma in Jane Austen, who had a moment of awakening, realising that 'Mr. Knightley must marry no one but herself'. Reading from the text, Laurence underlined the insight which Jane Austen so pointedly described. When we

have a vision, we have a moment of purification of the heart, when the heart has no doubts. It knows. It is a moment of enlightenment and the language of 'seeing' expresses the experience. Everything becomes clear.

What were previously visions, different possibilities or scenarios, at the moment of 'vision', lose their reality. Laurence also mentioned St. Augustine's vision of God, the insight that God is beyond form, beyond understanding, yet a deep sense of knowing God. Laurence addressed the experience of taking visions as vision, or false vision. How to avoid these? The answer is self-knowledge leading to humility. Meditation is a powerful path towards such self-knowledge. Simone Weil says attention, the tool of meditation, purifies the heart. Through deepening our attention, we can get to the place where we can 'see' God – when attention turns away from the self towards the other. We can never see God as an object, said Irenaeus, but only in participation in God's own life. This non-dual vision indicates that the whole person has to take part in this vision. The dualistic approach which says the person has to repress a part of themselves before being able to participate in the divine, needs to be jettisoned. The great teachers of all spiritual traditions embody this vision in their way of being.

We have a number of – what Laurence called videos - playing in our minds, which can be confusing and at times frightening. By calming the mind through focused meditation, those videos can lose their power and we can see them for what there are – not real. The insight of vision takes us to clarity, a deeper understanding and realisation in which we have the sense of mystery of reality as infinite in which the world of contradictions becomes a world in which paradoxes can live side by side. At this time of confusion and fear in which the world is going through the Covid-19 pandemic, meditation can help individuals to be agents of transformation and embody the beatific vision of 'seeing' God in each other. Recording of this talk can be found at <https://youtu.be/9avE5ttkGiA>

■ AUGUST - BEYOND NIHILISM: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM NIETZSCHE?



Our August speaker was PROF JOHN CLARKE. John taught philosophy as well as history of ideas at various universities in the UK and abroad in the past and wrote a number of books. His previous books were about CG Jung and also about philosophical dialogue between Eastern and Western traditions. His most recent book was an

exploration of emergentist theory – *The Self-Creating Universe: The Making of a Worldview*.

As a former chair of the SMN, John started by mentioning that current existential anxiety, the failure of reductionism to explain the fundamental nature of reality and the subject of meaning have been ongoing themes in the SMN going back many years. These topics were also present in the life of Nietzsche as a result both of personal and societal circumstances. Friedrich Nietzsche was born in 1844 and lost his father, a priest, at the young age of 5. This was an important loss which had repercussions throughout his life. His mother was powerful and controlling, as was his sister Elizabeth. Nietzsche suffered from debilitating

ill health all through his life, which meant that he often had to stay in a dark room for long periods of time. To make up for it, he wrote furiously. He was a brilliant academic and was appointed Professor in Classical Philology at age 24, the youngest person ever to hold this post at the University of Basel. He had to resign this post due to his ill health 10 years later. At the age of 44 he started losing his faculties and died in 1900 aged 55.

Nietzsche lived at a time of fundamental changes in German society, unification of the country by Bismarck, as well as important changes brought about by scientific progress, in particular by Darwin's evolution theory which demoted the place of God and religion in people's lives. A sense of anomie and world weariness was taking over Europe with the resulting breakdown of moral values. This was the backdrop against which Nietzsche lived his life. Nihilism was everywhere.

Nietzsche's message is often misunderstood partly because he did not define the meaning of various words in his writings and partly because his sister Elisabeth was later a Nazi sympathiser and twisted the message. In reality, Friedrich would have abhorred Nazism and often mentioned the importance of the Jewish community in German society. The central message of his work – the will to power – is about self-mastery. He would say that this energy of self-empowerment is built into everything in the universe. It is a natural *telos* of the world, which includes human beings. The English translation of *Übermensch* as Superman is incorrect, Nietzsche proposes that the *Übermensch* is the empowered person, which is not a state of being, but a process. This aspect has been taken up by Sartre who developed the concept of authentic being. It was a fascinating talk, which you can listen to at this link <https://youtu.be/ETu15Y4cJVk>.

Sir John Houghton, FRS, (1931-2020), Honorary Member



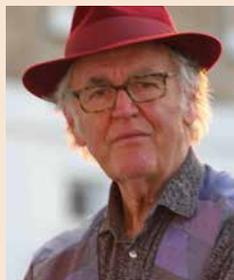
Readers may have read obituaries for Professor Sir John Houghton, FRS, in the mainstream press. He spoke at our launch conference for my book about the Prince of Wales, *Radical Prince*, chaired by Sir Crispin Tickell at the Royal Geographical Society. After a spell as Professor of Atmospheric Physics in Oxford (he won a scholarship to Jesus at the age of 16). He was

appointed Chief Executive of the UK Meteorological Office in 1983 and was in office when the Great Storm struck in October 1987, using the event in the title of his engaging autobiography. *In the Eye of the Storm*, which I reviewed in Issue 114.

In 1988, with the establishment of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sir John was asked to chair arguably its most mission-critical panel, the scientific assessment working group. He held this post until 2002 and wrote a number of popular summaries, also reviewed in these pages. He also chaired the UK's Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution from 1992 to 1998. His contribution to the scientific understanding of - and international collaboration on - climate change led to his being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 on behalf of the IPCC, shared jointly with former US Vice-President Al Gore, whose overall view he shared.

As a Christian, Sir John had a lifelong interest in the relationship between religion and science, and in the late 1990s he helped found the John Ray Initiative (JRI), an organisation that seeks to connect science, environment, and the Christian faith for sustainability and action. As recounted in his autobiography, he played a significant role in helping engage leading US Evangelical church leaders with the reality of climate change, leading to the publication in 2006 of "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action". Andy Atkins, writing in the *Church Times*, said of Sir John that 'in debating with the most irrational and often aggressive of climate sceptics, John was politely forthright, calmly drawing his detractors back to the evidence of the science and the biblical mandate to care for creation.'

Prof Peter Reason – *Response to Rise*



Response to Rise is a cultural and arts engagement with the ecological catastrophe of our times, a poetic response to Rise: From one island to another, the video produced by the campaigning

organization 350.org. In the video two young women poets, one from the Marshall Islands and one from Greenland, connect their realities of rising sea levels and melting glaciers. Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner and Aka Niviãana use their poetry to showcase the linkages between their homelands in the face of climate change. This video offers a glimpse of how large, and yet so small and interdependent our world is.

Last July, Bath Writers and Artists watched the video and were so moved by it that we screened it again, this following with readings of our own poems written as response—honouring, celebrating, echoing the indigenous poets. We created a kind of poetic ceremony, an experiment that we wanted to share more widely as part of Fringe Arts Bath.

We have been delighted to welcome more poets from the region to join the original group—some twelve altogether. We are sorry not to be able to offer our work as the live ceremony at Walcot Chapel as we had hoped, so instead we are recording our poems in a series of short videos and are happy to be able to offer the first on the FAB website.

Please see <https://www.fringeartsbath.co.uk/rise>

MEMBERS' ARTICLES AND ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Available through links or from dl@scimednet.org

MEDICINE-HEALTH

Independent anonymous scientists

- *Evidence SARS-CoV-2 Emerged from a Biological Laboratory in Wuhan, China (80 pp.) Examines the probability of claims in relation to the evidence.*
<https://project-evidence.github.io/>

Paul Gilbert

- *Creating a Compassionate World: Addressing the conflicts between sharing and caring versus controlling and holding evolved strategies*

Wayne B. Jonas

- *The Myth of the Placebo Response (6 pp. from Frontiers of Psychiatry, 2019)*

Lilia Samoilo, Diane Corcoran

- *Closing the Medical Gap of Care for Patients Who Have Had a Near-Death Experience – Project Muse (7 pp.)*

David Peters

- *The Neurobiology of Resilience (9 pp.)*
- *Why We Need a New Model for Integrated Healthcare (5 pp.)*

Jeffrey Smith and Zach Bush

- *COVID-19, Glyphosate and the Nature of Viruses (15 pp. interview)*

Asok K Mukhopadhyay and Jay Relan

- *The Deep Science of Neurocardiology (9 pp. from Annals of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience)*

- *Examples of Wikipedia's Assaults and Bias Against Alternative Medicine (2 pp.) – a revealing pattern*

CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

Emmanuel Ransford

- *Can we Crack the Mind-Body Problem? Making Sense of Quantum Randomness (8 pp.)*

Simon.X.Duan

- *Digital Consciousness and Platonic Computation: Unification of Consciousness, Mind, and Matter by Metacomputics (from Philosophy and Computers Newsletter, 2018)*

Mukhopadhyay AK

- *Consciousness, Cognition and Behaviour (23 pp. from Journal of Neurosurgery Imaging and Techniques)*

Craig Weiler

- *Transcript of his webinar on Psi Wars (17 pp.) Comment by Prof Marilyn Monk (1 p)*

PHILOSOPHY-SPIRITUALITY

Bryon K. Ehlmann

- *The Theory of a Natural Eternal Consciousness: The Psychological Basis for a Natural Afterlife (28 pp, from Journal of Mind and Behaviour, Winter 2020)*

GENERAL

Sir Crispin Tickell

- *The Quality of Life. What Quality? Whose Life? (13 pp., from Environmental Values, 1992)*

Dr. Sally J. Goerner

- *The Collapse of Oligarchic Capitalism and the Rise of Regenerative Learning: How the Energy Systems Sciences Clarify What's Happening Today And What Comes Next (25 pp. from World Futures 2019)*

Matt Colborn

- *We Must Disarm: Why Online Shaming Must End*
<https://medium.com/@matt.colborn/we-must-disarm-why-online-shaming-has-to-end-c9e7b58a35a>

- *Glimpsing Utopia*

<https://medium.com/@matt.colborn/glimpsing-utopia-evolving-a-healthy-society-3dde408e298a>

Bernard Carr

- *Graduands Speech for Alef Trust (4 pp.)*

Sheila Scotese Spremulli

- *The Chartres 4 Peace Labyrinth (7 pp.)*

Steven Jones, Robert Korol, Anthony Szamboti and Ted Walter

- *15 Years Later: On the Physics of High-Rise Building Collapses (of 9/11 – 6 pp.)*

ONLINE ARTICLES BY ANTHONY JUDGE

- *COVID-19 as a Memetic Disease Learning from terrorism, communism, fascism, and evil, as pandemics of the past*
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs10s/memedise.php>

- *Reframing the Righteousness Enabling Repetition of the Titanic Disaster Comprehension of 144 Distinctions -- Mahjong as "Angels" versus "Demons"*
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs10s/mahjong.php>

- *Sustaining the Quest for Sustainable Answers on COVID-19 Beyond the divisive preoccupation with unquestionable assertions and unanswered questions*
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs20s/covquest.php>

- *Humanity's Magic Number as 1.5? Dimensionless constant governing civilization and its potential collapse*
<https://www.laetusinpraesens.org/musings/onefive.php>

book reviews

Books in this section can be purchased via the Network web site (www.scimednet.org) from Amazon.co.uk and the Network will receive a 10% commission. In addition, the Network receives a 5% commission on all sales if you log on through our web site!

SCIENCE-PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

CATEGORIES IN FERMENT

David Lorimer

■ ENTANGLED LIFE

Merlin Sheldrake

Bodley Head, 2020, 340 pp., £20, h/b – ISBN 978-1-847925-19-0

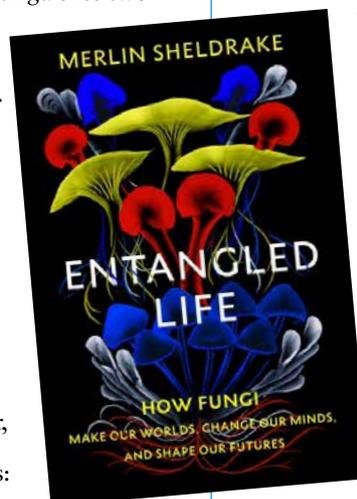
In *Adventures of Ideas*, the originator of process philosophy, Alfred North Whitehead, writes that ‘no science can be more secure than the unconscious metaphysics which tacitly it presupposes.’ He continues that the certainties of science are hedged around with unexplored limitations and that our handling of scientific doctrines is controlled by the diffused metaphysical concepts of our epoch. He distinguishes two aspects of scientific ideas, formed by ‘the meeting of two orders of experience. One order is constituted by the direct, immediate discriminations of particular observations. The other order is constituted by our general way of conceiving the Universe. They will be called, the Observational Order, and the Conceptual Order.’ He continues: ‘the first point to remember is that the observational order is invariably interpreted in terms of the concepts supplied by the conceptual order... We inherit an observational order, namely types of things which we do in fact discriminate; and we inherit a conceptual order, namely a rough system of ideas in terms of which we do in fact interpret.’ Merlin Sheldrake’s radical and ground-breaking book is quite remarkable in that it proposes modifications to both orders and initiates a

reframing process - what he calls the ‘loosening of categories’ in relation to our understanding and experience not only of the fungal world but of life itself and the very notions of individual autonomy and independence, which are in fact always contextualised in relationships.

Merlin received his PhD in tropical ecology from Cambridge, where he took an additional First in history and philosophy of science. In the epilogue, he describes his introduction to the fungal world through his biologist father Rupert and a pile of chestnut leaves in their garden, which he put into a bath tub before submerging himself ‘buried in the rustle, lost in the curious smells.’ He found that the pile sank over the months and that the damp handfuls began to resemble soil, also with worms. He asked his father why this was happening and on receiving the answer asked why again: ‘no matter how many times I

asked why he always had an answer.’ And, typically for Rupert, he proposed an experiment, cutting off the top of a clear plastic bottle and placing ‘alternating layers of soil, sand, dirt leaves, and finally a handful of earthworms.’ Merlin found that nothing stayed still, ‘sand crept into soil and leaves crept into sand. The hard edges of the layers dissolved into each other.’ This activity was also the result of tiny creatures invisible to the naked eye ‘able to mix and stir and

dissolve one thing into another.’ He reflects that ‘composers make pieces of music. These were decomposers, who unmake pieces of life. Nothing could happen without them.’ This then leads to the thought that ‘unless decomposers unmake, there is nothing that composers can make *with*. It was thought that changed the way I understood how life happens.’ Similarly, Goethe once said that death was nature’s way of making more life. Just in this passage, the reader can



experience a microcosm of the lyrical brilliance that pervades the book as a whole (Merlin is also a professional accordionist).

Now back to the beginning: *Entangled Life* takes the reader on an epic journey into the amazing world of fungal intelligence using a scintillating blend of unique personal experience, in-depth conversations with world experts in the field and a hugely impressive grasp of the scientific literature - there are over 80 pages of notes and references. The reader immediately gains a clear idea of the scope of the book in the introduction where Merlin describes that fungi are 'eating rock, making soil, digesting pollutants, nourishing and killing plants, surviving in space, inducing visions, producing food, making medicines, manipulating animal behaviour and influencing the composition of the Earth's atmosphere.' These activities are vividly and engagingly described in the chapters that follow, in the course of which readers will have their ideas about the central importance of fungi totally transmuted, for instance by sentences such as 'plants are socially networked by fungi' (p. 13), 'many sophisticated problem-solving behaviours have evolved in brainless organisms' (p. 16), 'biological dark matter' (p. 19), and 'in scientific circles imagination usually goes by the name of speculation and is treated with some suspicion... Sneak backstage and one might not find people at their most presentable' (p. 21). So Merlin wants to 'let these organisms lure me out of my well-worn patterns of thought' while hoping that the book will analogously loosen some of the reader's certainties - it certainly has in my own case.

In bringing them alive, Merlin relates a series of incidents and experiences involving fungi, including hunting for truffles, being submerged in hot rotting wood chippings, taking part in an LSD experiment while reflecting on how this changes his understanding of his work, investigating lichen in British Columbia, undergraduate brewing experiments, and scrumping for apples in Cambridge - not just any apples, though, but apples tenuously connected with Newton's tree - see below. As indicated above, these experiences lead to lively discussions with world experts in the various fields and a detailed consideration of the relevant scientific literature, further explored in the notes. The result is a richly woven and textured narrative that carries readers along while helping them navigate this complex subterranean realm.

In his chapter on lichen, Merlin notes that their behaviour 'presents

ways for humans to think beyond a rigid binary framework: the identity of lichens is a question, rather than an answer known in advance.' (p. 102) Mechanistic binary frameworks tend to use linear analysis involving control rather than symbiosis, whereas lichens are dynamic systems (this is also the approach of the Gaia hypothesis) involving complex symbioses. Later (p. 236), he criticises the use of mechanistic metaphors to understand organisms: 'organisms grow; machines are built. Organisms continually remake themselves; machines are maintained by humans. Organisms self-organise; machines are organised by humans.' He reminds us that our bodies are also dwelling places and that 'life is nested biomes all the way down.' In a chapter on mycelial minds, he refers to the effect of psilocybin in reducing brain activity in the Default Mode Network, which 'lets the brain off the leash', resulting in an explosion of cerebral connectivity, which also has documented therapeutic effects. He reminds us that it is people rather than brains who have experiences and that this process of ego dissolution results in a feeling of merging with something greater, exactly parallel with the outer activity of fungi 'in challenging our well-worn concepts of identity and individuality', but this time 'in the most intimate possible setting: inside our own minds.' (p. 124)

The chapter on mycorrhizal fungi is a revelation, for instance that they are 'so prolific that their mycelium makes up between a third and a half of the living mass of soils' where 'the total length of mycorrhizal hyphae in the top 10 cm of soil is around half the width of our galaxy.' (p. 142) Merlin explains that plants and mycorrhizal fungi are in active polarity, where shoots engage with light and air while fungi and roots engage with the solid ground. Astonishingly, the amount of carbon dioxide and oxygen in the atmosphere and therefore global temperatures, 'all varied according to the efficiency of mycorrhizal exchange.' And the carbon found in soils 'amounts to twice the amount of carbon found in plants and the atmosphere combined.' (p. 161) He recounts the history of the concept going back to Albert Frank in 1885, along with the resistance it encountered, paralleled more recently with the initial reception of Lynn Margulis' ideas on endosymbiosis.

He reports a study published in 2018 suggesting that the 'alarming deterioration of the health of trees across Europe was caused by a disruption of their mycorrhizal relationships, brought about by nitrogen pollution.' (p. 159) This takes him back to the work of Sir Albert

Howard, whose seminal *Agricultural Testament* appeared in 1940, and who was 'a passionate spokesman for mycorrhizal fungi.' Merlin finds Howard's concern for the life of the soil more than justified by recent studies finding an abundance of mycorrhizal fungal communities in organically managed fields compared with none in conventionally managed fields - this represents an arguably unsustainable 'ecological sacrifice'. Then there are further parallels in the ecology of our gut microbiome, the importance of which is now being increasingly recognised. He rightly concludes that we need to question some of our categories and alter our behaviour accordingly, so as to ensure sustained mutual cultivation between plants and fungi.

The chapter on Wood Wide Webs provides a more critical and nuanced account of the phenomenon, beginning with a quote from Alexander von Humboldt with his expression 'net-like, entangled fabric'. Trees can share a mycorrhizal network leading to what Sir David Read calls 'a distribution of resources within the community.' For instance, 'a study published in 2016 find out 280 kg of carbon per hectare of forest could be transferred between trees via fungal connections.' (p. 171) Some old trees act as 'hubs' and Kevin Beiler found that the most well-connected tree in a particular area was linked to 47 other trees. Here again, we need a variety of metaphors and imaginative tools, any single one of which is problematic. With his incredibly fertile mind, Merlin suggests a number: super-organism, metropolis, living Internet, socialism in the soil, fungal feudalism, and even a deregulated market 'with fungi jostling on the trading floor of a forest stock exchange.' (p. 191)

The chapter on radical mycology begins with Merlin lying naked in a mound of hot decomposing wood chips, which leads him to wonder about the remedial potential of fungi as well as its contribution in terms of decomposition to carbon emissions amounting to 85 gigatons annually, compared with 10 gigatons from fossil fuels. Among the innovations emerging from the work of Peter McCoy and building on that of Terence McKenna and Paul Stamets are the development of fungi that can thrive on a diet of used diapers, polyurethane plastic and cigarette butts (over 750,000 tonnes are thrown away every year) - this is 'myco-remediation' and there are also 'mycofiltration' processes to filter polluted water. A further innovation is the fabrication of mycelial products, for instance in packaging. Such trends, Merlin reflects, could go 'fungal' rather than 'viral'.

The final chapter introduces the role of yeasts, also in relation to brewing and alcohol with its power to 'forge and corrode human cultural categories' (p. 229). Merlin recounts his own experiences beginning at University, including experimenting with recipes from historical texts, one of which resulted in what he calls 'bottled havoc'. This chapter culminates in such a good story about fermenting overripe fruit - in this case Newton's apples - that I read it out loud last night. There is an amusing interplay of myth and fact around the Newton apple incident (Merlin quotes the account of a 1726 conversation between William Stukeley and Newton). At any rate, the director of the Cambridge Botanical Garden told him that he couldn't pick any apples as they have to be seen by the tourists to fall from the tree. He located a community apple press which had been successfully used to manage a problem with young people using the fruit as missiles: 'community violence was pressed into juice. Juice was fermented into cider, cider was drunk into community spirit. The principle was sound. Human crisis was being decomposed by a fungus.' (p. 245) Merlin and a friend harvested the 'Newton' apples surreptitiously by night, leaving a few on the tree for the sake of the myth. This turned into 30 litres of juice, resulting, to his amazement, in the transformation of bitter and sour apples into a delicate floral and taste - he called the cider Gravity, in Newton's honour.

Entangled Life positively bristles with insight, dry humour and a passionately curious intelligence more interested in raising fresh questions than in reaching definitive conclusions. The book is a landmark achievement with profound implications for how we collectively contribute as partners with nature in shaping a sustainable - even regenerative - future for the whole of life on the planet. I would recommend keeping *Entangled Life* firmly on the top of your pile lest it be submerged in accumulating layers of other reading material subject to a 'bookworm' effect.

A SERIOUSLY INCONVENIENT TRUTH

David Lorimer

■ THE INVISIBLE RAINBOW

Arthur Firstenberg

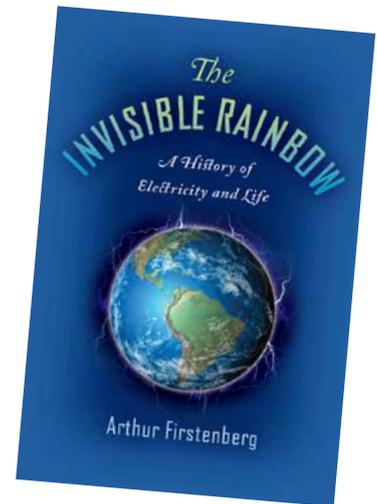
Chelsea Green, 2017/20,
564 pp., £18.99, p/b - ISBN
978-1-64502-009-7

This seminal book, subtitled 'a history of electricity and life', will transform your understanding of this relationship and especially of the environmental

and health effects of electricity and radio frequencies. The book contains 160 pages of references related to individual chapters and topics. Many readers will have come across of Arthur's work with his International Appeal to stop 5G on Earth and in Space (www.5GspaceAppeal.org). During the lockdown, the launch of 5G satellites has continued, and Elon Musk's SpaceX now has nearly 600 in the ionosphere of a planned 42,000. The total envisaged is 100,000 distributed among a number of companies, with a lifespan between 5 and 10 years, so they will eventually need to be replaced at a rate of 10,000 per year.

Arthur points out in summary (from a recent email) that 'the threat to life comes from the fact that all these satellites are located in the ionosphere. The ionosphere is a source of high voltage that controls the global electric circuit, which in turn provides the energy for life.' He continues: 'all animals and plants are polarised positive to negative from head to feet, or from leaves to roots. An electric current of a picowatt per square meter amplitude flows from the positively charged sky to the negatively charged earth in fair weather, courses through the earth beneath our feet, and returns to the sky via lightning bolts during thunderstorms. Every living thing is part of this circuit. The current enters our heads from the sky, circulates through our meridians, and enters the earth through the soles of our feet. This current provides the energy for growth, healing, and life itself. We do not live by bread alone, but by the energy provided to us by the biosphere. Oriental medicine calls it qi, Ayurvedic medicine calls it prana, and atmospheric physicists call it electricity. It provides us energy for life, and information that organises our bodies. If you pollute this circuit with billions of digital pulsations, you will destroy all life.' We are electrical as well as biological and chemical beings.

The history of electricity, and life begins in the 18th century and its therapeutic use with electrotherapy aimed at restoring the electrical equilibrium of the body, but its negative effects were also soon apparent, as shown in a revealing table on page 28. Contemporary electrosensitive people will immediately recognise the list of largely neurological symptoms; these were also suffered by pioneers such as Benjamin Franklin, and later by Marconi and many telegraph workers at the end of the 19th century. A key early philosophical development is reflected in the tension between the biology of Galvani and the physics of Volta, later developing into the battle between mechanism and spirit, the material and the vital, with the ultimate



triumph of the mechanistic view over vitalism.

The most important figure in the mid-19th century was George Miller Beard MD, who coined the term neurasthenia in 1869, coinciding with the widespread introduction in the US of telegraph wires 30,000 times stronger than the natural electric field of the Earth at that frequency. In 1885, the German physician Rudolph Arndt specifically proposed that 'electrosensitivity is characteristic of high-grade neurasthenia.' Then along came Freud in 1894, who crucially relabelled neurasthenia as 'anxiety neurosis' and its crises 'anxiety attacks'. This immediately transformed a physical into a psychological condition, a diagnosis that continues to this day with many physicians arguing that chronic fatigue syndrome is just psychological. It is important to note that our nervous systems are susceptible both to electrical load and toxic chemicals - these may be mutually reinforcing and make it harder to discern the relative importance of cofactors in disease.

The chapter on the behaviour of plants reports the work of Sir Jagadis Chunder Bose FRS (1858-1937), who 'proved the exquisite sensitivity of all living things to electromagnetic stimuli' related to the strength of the current. Later, Vernon Blackman discovered that electric currents averaging less than 1 milliampere per acre increased the yields of several types of crops by 20%, while increasing the current to 1/10 of a microampere was always harmful. Bose also discovered that radio waves could slow the ascent of sap.

A currently controversial aspect of Firstenberg's thesis is the association of electrification with the emergence of influenza in 1889. The epidemiologist Edgar Hope-Simpson proposed that the flu virus is not actually spread person-to-person, but remains latent until 'reactivated by an environmental trigger of some sort.' The author

cites extensive other work connecting influenza with sunspots or atmospheric electricity, which might go some way towards explaining why pandemics begin in widely scattered parts of the world (p. 85 ff.). The confusion arises from the fact that ‘influenza is a virus and it is also clinical illness’, and not all people carrying the virus will show symptoms, as is also the case with the current pandemic. The author argues that in each major influenza outbreak of 1889, 1918, 1957 and 1968 ‘the electrical envelope of the earth... was suddenly and profoundly disturbed’ – as it is also the case with the current rollout of 5G, although to propose any such a connection on the Internet is immediately labelled misinformation and taken down. I think that part of the problem arises from our tendency to seek out single rather than multiple systemic factors in analysing aetiology. This is reinforced by scientific specialisation where ‘atmospheric physicists do not study astronomy. Astronomers do not study electricity. Electricians do not study biology. Medical doctors do not study acupuncture. Doctors of oriental medicine do not study atmospheric physics. But the universe is not fragmented, it is a whole, and our culture has forgotten this, to its peril and to the peril of everything alive.’

The next chapter explains the nature of Earth’s ionosphere as an electric envelope, as already mentioned in the quotation at the beginning of this review. The important point to note is that all life has co-evolved with these natural frequencies, but humans have altered them out of all recognition: our electromagnetic environment is radically different from what it was before 1889. As a background to his consideration of the influence of electromagnetic radiation on heart disease, diabetes and cancer, the author explains the critical role of porphyrins in the manufacture of heme and as molecules interfacing between oxygen and life – they are also present in the nervous system - (pp. 136 ff.) and explains the work of Nobel laureate Albert Szent-Gyorgi on piezoelectricity and therefore the connection between electricity and biology; this followed up on Otto Lehmann, who had proposed as early as 1908 that ‘the very basis of life was the liquid crystalline state.’

The common aetiological factor identified by the author behind diseases of civilisation is oxygen starvation to the cells resulting in slow asphyxiation – and also a slower metabolism overall. It might be argued that although the author provides a great deal of circumstantial evidence, he overstates his case here, but there is no doubt that the role of electromagnetic radiation in the genesis of disease has

been almost completely neglected in favour of other factors. In the chapter on heart disease, the author points out that animals in zoos were similarly affected (also by obesity), which makes an interesting control group. In both cases ‘microwave radiation, and electricity in general, starves the heart of oxygen because of effects at the cellular level.’ (p. 177) The central mechanism is that the mitochondria cannot efficiently use oxygen and nutrients, thus starving the whole body of oxygen. The same mitochondrial mechanism is present in bees, but at a much faster metabolic rate – see below. In all these cases of disease, the rate of cellular metabolism is reduced and the Krebs cycle impaired (p. 215).

With respect to cancer, as I also mention in my review of Travis Cristofferson’s book below, Otto Warburg homed in on the importance of metabolism, identifying the central causative factor as ‘nothing other than oxygen deficiency.’ The author reports that it has now been shown that the protein HIF (hyperoxia inducible factor) ‘is activated under conditions of low oxygen, and that in turn activates many of the genes necessary for cancer growth.’ (p. 239) Later, he discusses the implications of the fascinating finding and implications for ageing, based on the electron transport system in the mitochondria of our cells. Research has shown that calorie restriction can extend lifespans by slowing metabolism, but this is also a side-effect of poisoning the electron transport chain *whereby our cells are starved of oxygen rather than calories* (my emphasis). Paradoxically, while both calorie restriction and oxygen deprivation slow metabolism and prolong life, ‘where calorie restriction prevents cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, electromagnetic fields promote cancer, diabetes, and heart disease.’ (p. 270) So ‘radiation always produces two opposite kinds of effects: injurious effects that shorten the lifespan, and a reduction in basal metabolic rate that lengthens the lifespan’ – these results are also found in experimental animals.

One of the most disturbing chapters reports research on bees, birds and trees as well as humans with 15 pages of detailed scientific references. The bottom line is that all species of birds are affected by cell phone antennae – examples are given from London and Edinburgh – in terms of fertility and therefore population. Pigeons lose their navigation skills and radio tagging ironically alters the behaviour of the animals under investigation. Extensive research has been carried out on the damaging effects of cell phones on bees, and electromagnetic radiation is arguably a more critical factor than mites in triggering colony collapse

disorder. Similar damage is reported to trees and forest soil where ‘needles and leaf-ribs of trees are resonant absorbers like antennas... the electrons migrate as ionic bonds from the leaves, the trunk and then through the roots into the soil... generally making the soil acidic similar to the effect of acid rain.’ Detailed and persuasive location studies involving population health are also given here.

All this brings us back to the present where official radio frequency radiation safety levels are set by regulators like the FCC and ICNIRP that have been captured by the telecommunications industry in a similar way to health agencies by the pharmaceutical industry. Governments do not want to know about extensive scientific research that might undermine the economic growth promised by the current 5G rollout, with 6G in the pipeline. Documentaries and even Senate hearings admit that no prior health research was carried out prior to the rollout, although the more general literature on the topic is vast, as this book demonstrates. Researchers like Olle Johansson from the Karolinska Institute who concluded that electrosensitivity is environmentally induced lose their jobs and funding – and an attempt was even made on his life by sawing through 27 spokes of the rear wheel of his motorcycle. As I imply in the title of my review, the findings of this hugely important book are a seriously inconvenient truth and it is high time that we looked more closely at the relationship between electromagnetic radiation and the health of all life, not just ourselves. This is potentially a crime against nature, and we are part of nature.

MEDICINE-HEALTH

UBUNTU AND UNIFYING CONSCIOUSNESS

Dr Natalie Tobert

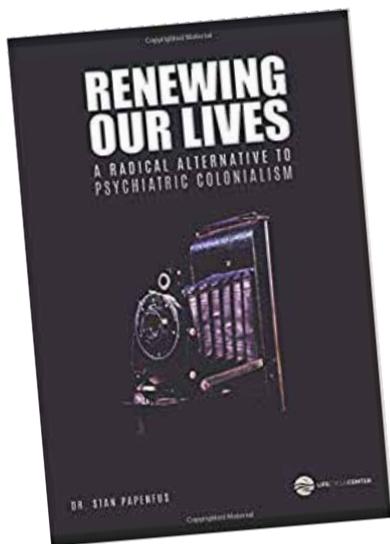
RENEWING OUR LIVES: A RADICAL ALTERNATIVE TO PSYCHIATRIC COLONIALISM

Stan Papenfus

Life Cycle Publications, 2019,
589 pp., £12, p/b - ISBN
978-1-09233-444-0

Author’s personal history

Stan Papenfus was born in South Africa in 1943, and grew up in Cape Town, where he experienced a fusion of cultures including African, Asian, and European. His wife was a singer of traditional African jazz music.



However, in order to marry her they had to travel to Swaziland, as a marriage between a white man and a black woman was forbidden in those days. It was illegal, prohibited under Mixed Marriages Act (1949, repealed in 1985). Later the couple smuggled their son across the border from Swaziland into South Africa.

Today Stan Papenfus lives in Northern Ireland, where he joined the Bede Griffiths Sanga. When he arrived he worked as a clinical psychologist in psychiatric hospitals, and founded groups to manage anxiety, panic and stress. He is a committed Christian and a follower of the New Testament.

Papenfus' experience and education

Stan Papenfus trained in psychiatry, psychologies, psychotherapies, sociology and anthropology. He was also a musician and writer, and supported people to overcome psycho-spiritual crises. In South Africa he conducted ethnographic participant observation studies, by pretending to be a patient in a psychiatric hospital in Swaziland, and then wrote up this research for his PhD (1972). As a 'patient' living on a ward under observation, he discovered many human actions were considered by staff to be diagnostic of mental illness. This experience made him want to find ways of dismantling not only apartheid in South Africa but also apartheid between patients and staff in psychiatric hospitals.

In his 20s he had a mystical experience, where his personal self ceased to exist: *"I knew the balance and harmony of God to be infinitely and eternally present"*. His mystical experience took him to a level of ultimate reality and truth. At the time of this experience he studied medicine, but after his mystical experience he developed radical insights into ways mental health patients were treated.

When he worked as a nursing assistant, he realised it was possible to compare the domination of patients to the racial control of people under the apartheid regime.

Proposition

His book stands out: he proposed that the way patients were treated in psychiatric hospitals was similar to how black people were classified under apartheid practices in South Africa. Today he claims there are radical alternatives to the way past psychiatrists treated hospital patients, and he offers us alternatives to what he terms 'psychiatric colonisation'.

He questioned assumptions around 'chemical imbalances in the brain' which he suggested do not exist at all. Furthermore, he claimed that pharmaceutical companies used unscientific strategies for testing the psychiatric drugs they offered, and suggested that fraudulent offerings of medication globally ruined millions of lives each year.

He called for traditional bio-psychiatry to be replaced with social psychiatry, as his observations highlighted there was always a social aspect to mental distress. He suggested biomedical models of mental distress dehumanised patients. His book proposed alternatives to psychiatric colonisation, and offered us transformative ways of addressing mental distress. His work was committed to supporting vulnerable people and those exploited in society.

Structure of the book

Papenfus claimed this book was a journey, which offered a tapestry of threads around stories he gathered while in hospital as a pretend patient. He offers us deep understanding of how the medical model of mental illness failed patients who were mentally distressed, and denied them their humanity. He claimed modern psychiatry failed to recognise a patient as their self, rather it focused on what was wrong with them. It is a long book, full of stories and anecdotes which are good to delve into.

The author invites us to consider whether it was possible to live authentic lives under apartheid. His spiritual quest was to discover how any person could feel authentic inside the psychiatric hospitals of South Africa. During apartheid, black and white people could not sit together in a park or in the street. Places were labelled "whites only" or "non-whites only". They could not travel together, nor eat together, nor attend the same schools.

Mystical experience of Unifying Consciousness

While he was 21 studying medicine in Johannesburg, Stan Papenfus had a mystical experience, where he entered the essence of all reality, a state of non-duality beyond good and evil, and experienced total truth and unconditional love. However, when he tried to write about this experience, he didn't have any words. He had transcended his own personal reality, and discovered implicate order. He wrote *"consciousness of ourselves in a culturally self-limiting context can be understood only if we are also able to transcend this context and its power over our self-limiting mindset"*. In his mystical experience there was no separate self, no ego.

Stan used spiritual principles gained during his mystical experience to support people in mental hospitals. After his experiences of "Unifying Consciousness" he left medicine to study psychology and social anthropology. He considered it his duty to explore how one set of people could define and dominate another, and how groups agreed to and maintained this domination. In order to gain experience, he worked in psychiatric hospitals to gain a better understanding of the separate worlds of staff and patients, and he firmly believed that the relationships he saw in psychiatric hospitals mirrored apartheid.

In the same way in which under apartheid black and white people were separated, patients in psychiatric hospitals embodied their diagnoses, and became outcasts to normal people: *"I took what I called psychiatric colonialism to be a microcosm of the macrocosm in which we lived."* He writes (p. 30) *"the medical model of mental illness, like apartheid, is an ideology that claims to substantiate a whole hierarchy of positions and counter positions, diagnoses, classifying, defining, and controlling, all in the name of ostensibly rational and scientifically proven facts."*

Concept of Ubuntu

Papenfus introduces readers to the concept of "Ubuntu": the essence of being human and basic to all human relationships. He wondered how he could be a free person in a psychiatric hospital when patients were not. He explored how humans had lost their consciousness and their love of God. At the same time, he noted the case in psychiatric hospitals that as long as there was one group of people defining and dominating all other groups, then these hierarchies could be used to create 'psychiatric colonisation' (p. 67). He writes:

“psychiatry invokes the concept of ‘the medical model of mental illness’ and the idea of ‘redressing a chemical imbalance in the brains of mentally ill people’, so creating a whole underclass of human beings, considered alien to the rest of us” (p. 68). He claims that psychiatric colonisation was the practice of “medical science creating ‘mental illness’”, rather than us all being integral to each others’ lives.

Structure of book

The first few chapters introduced us to Papenfus’ life in South Africa, and his insights into hierarchies of being human. The early chapters talk about his existence as a student and white man who wanted to marry a black South African woman, and how he received permission from Swaziland’s Minister of Health in order to experience being a pretend patient in a psychiatric hospital. His texts set out the minutiae of interactions with others. At the end of each chapter are a series of helpful points and principles which summarise the content for the reader. Some of his suggestions seem similar in concept to the work of the new/ancient principles of Open Dialogue in the west.

Psychiatric Colonisation and Ubuntu

From Chapter Eight onwards he explores psychiatric colonialism and how it relates to apartheid and white privilege. He insists that we need to acknowledge what is happening in psychiatric hospitals: i.e. that categorising and controlling patients outweighs their well-being. He wants us to use open systems to achieve shared understanding, like the New/old Open Dialogue in the West. He calls this Ubuntu or deep democracy.

Papenfus identified one key problem: biomedical psychiatry assumed that disturbed patients were suffering from a biological medical condition, whereas he insisted that there was no abnormality to be found in the bodies or brains of mental patients. “No test of blood, urine or biopsy has been able to identify any biologically-based mental illness” (p. 113). He points out that we have medicalised life and personal problems. This means that a person’s psychological problems were “defined as symptoms of mental illness despite the fact that no abnormality exists in the brain or body”. “...No chemical imbalance has ever been demonstrated.” He suggests that we need to reconsider patients as people with problems. The key problem was that staff stopped treating people as if there was any relationship between themselves and their environments: staff assumed patients were sick.

These insights affected him deeply: “Psychiatric colonialism shamed me beyond measure, as I faced my apparent inability to do anything about the whole colonised population, worldwide” (p. 122). He continues: “the ideology of bio-psychiatry, aided and abetted by a multi-million pound drug industry, creates colonies of de-humanised people, around the world” (p. 143). In his book all statements and comments are well referenced throughout.

Chapter Nine forms a long narrative (100 pages) describing his becoming a pretend patient in a mental institute, in order to see what it was like first hand, to be subjected to psychiatric colonialism. He participated in day-to-day life, moment to moment. His aim was to understand what was going on in order to transform and enhance patients’ lives. His quest “led me to become one of the wretched of the earth” (p. 142): when one entered these institutions, the meaning, purpose and value of human life was suspended. While he was a ‘pretend patient’ he meditated to clear his mind, and received a realisation of pure awareness, inner peace, and bliss, then he explored how to offer meditation so patients could use it for their personal transformation.

Ways Forward

He stresses the importance of listening to a person’s narrative, which offers multiple perspectives influenced neither by rigid points of view nor dogmatism. In later chapters he offers us a series of exercises to use for ourselves or train others: harmonising body-mind, accepting universal self. He gave us a series of exercises to release tension, resolve conflict, and to become conscious of how we feel. Then he invites us to observe a state of grounded personhood, to master anxiety states.

In later chapters Papenfus offers strategies and exercises that readers can follow to enhance their well-being, to retrieve Ubuntu, the essence of humanity. He emphasises Ubuntu as where we cease to separate ourselves from others. As we open our feelings to each other, we enter a higher state of consciousness, which allows a profound sense of divine presence. People were heard and accepted by all those present.

Overthrowing Psychiatric Colonisation

Papenfus suggests that in order to overthrow psychiatric colonisation we need to acknowledge the fraudulence, the manipulation of scientific method, and false reporting. He repeats that no data has ever been provided to link psychological states to brain

dysfunction. He stresses that there were no mind brain correlates to mental illness: it is always functional rather than biological (p. 491). Everyday life has been medicalised: “the medical model of mental illness, biochemical imbalances, and so on, are used to fraudulently justify psychiatric colonisation. As a result, the authentic meaning, purpose and value of human life is undermined” (p. 494).

Stan Papenfus suggests that psychiatric colonialism is spreading, worldwide, and he fears that “psychiatric medication directly causes all kinds of impairment of brain and body functioning” (p. 501). He claims that scientific standards are routinely compromised and research reports are fraudulent (p. 498). He insists that psychological problems are not illnesses, and wants us to understand psychiatric colonialism, so that we can work together, with compassion, to move forwards. What strategy might we use at the Scientific and Medical Network, to explore his proposition, discuss any insights, and create change?

A CHARGED AFFAIR

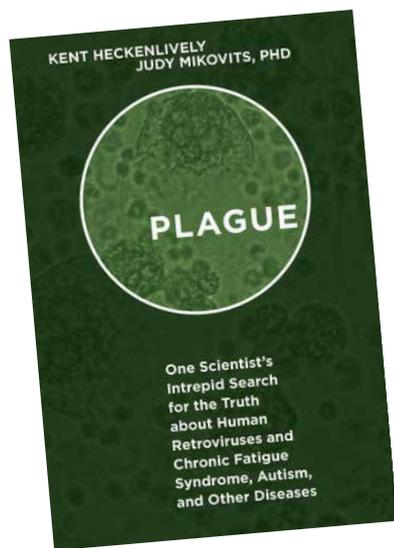
David Lorimer

■ PLAGUE

Kent Heckenlively and
Judy Mikovits PhD

Skyhorse Publishing, 2014/2017,
415 pp., \$19.99, p/b – ISBN
978-1-5107-1394-9

Few people had heard of Dr Judy Mikovits six months ago, though she is no stranger to scientific controversy, as this revealing book explains in sometimes harrowing detail. Her various interviews have been viewed by millions of people but many have been taken down on the basis that they contain ‘misinformation’, which in this context means that they question the mainstream narrative about causes of and potential treatments for Covid-19. In the meantime, so-called facts checkers work to reinforce the perception that Mikovits’ work has been thoroughly discredited by follow-up studies. As the full version of ‘Plandemic’ documents, the emergence of the prevailing medical industrial complex can be dated back to the Flexner Report commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1913. This resulted in a radical reorganisation of US medical education and the exclusion of natural and nonpharmaceutical methods from the curriculum. 100 years on, the pharmaceutical industry politically and economically dominates every aspect of medicine – government



institutions and committees, political lobbying, research, publications and journals, conference sponsorship, education, advertising, media and even Wikipedia, with its systematic denigration of other approaches to health as pseudoscience. Threats to its economic and political influence are not taken lightly, and Mikovits is not the only person to feel the heat – Professor Peter Gotzsche, whose books I have reviewed in these pages, was sacked from the Nordic Cochrane Collaboration in 2018 after publishing a critical study on the HPV vaccine.

Plague has been followed up by a new book entitled *Plague of Corruption*, which I have not yet had time to read. It took some weeks to arrive as the stock had sold out due to the author's recent high profile. My impression from interviews I have watched is that Mikovits is a very articulate scientist of real ethical integrity interested in discovering the truth, whatever its implications. The book shows how it was this very quality of honesty and integrity and that landed her in so much scientific, political, legal and economic trouble. It is written in narrative form, although the interspersing of the story with her time in jail is somewhat confusing. Her early work was on HIV-AIDS, where her data suggested that antiretroviral therapies should be employed, contrary to the then received opinion.

Mikovits' scientific quest was to get to the bottom of CFS/ME with a view to relieving the suffering that afflicts around 20 million people worldwide, many of whom she met personally at conferences. Her major discovery was that 67% of these patients and 4% of healthy controls were infected with the XMRV mouse retrovirus, an association also found in cases of autism and prostate cancer. As she says in the introduction, 'my

real crime was saying that if this retrovirus was causing CFS/ME in adults, it might well be causing autism in children' in a similar way to children of HIV-infected mothers. Her theory is a nuanced one: that retroviruses hide out in the B and T cells of the immune system, which are the very cells that vaccinations are designed to stimulate. Hence the vaccination may unwittingly act as a signal that activates the dormant XMRV retrovirus in susceptible children (in one study, 14 of 17 autistic children were positive for XMRV – p. 271). So the XMRV is the underlying cause, and the vaccination a selective activator. The public health implications are explosive as a follow-up to the positive 4% of controls (this represents millions of people) found that blood supplies were also contaminated with these retroviruses – the authorities then spent tens of millions of dollars secretly decontaminating these with the Cerus Intercept system.

In all these cases of XMRV retroviruses present in CFS/ME, blood supplies and children with autism (now 1 in 50), the financial implications in terms of potential compensation are off the chart, hence the expediency and even necessity to overturn these findings (the US granted immunity against damage from vaccinations in 1986, and cases amounting to billions of dollars in compensation have been settled in the Vaccine Court with minimal publicity). Fascinatingly, the story goes back to 1934 and the development of the polio vaccine, where the virus was passaged multiple times through mice, and in the trials, 198 nurses and physicians who had taken the vaccine were struck down by a condition that we would now identify as CFS/ME. The issue concerns vaccines developed by the passage of human virus through animal tissues, where it might pick up a virus from a mouse that turned out to be highly toxic to humans and produce a disproportionate cytokine storm (pp. 63 ff). There is also circumstantial evidence (p. 77) that these 200 staff members received an out of court settlement with no blame assigned.

Mikovits' paper was published in *Science* in October 2009, but in July, the National Cancer Institute had convened an invitation-only meeting to discuss the implications of the findings for public health. It was noted that 65 of the 109 new human disease-causing pathogens were animal viruses, and at the time (this would change later) leading specialists like Dr John Coffin concluded that the XMRV results could not be explained by lab contamination. The

confidential summary reveals the sensitivity of linking XMRV with CFS and the need to manage the process carefully. It seems that Coffin turned against her when she began to talk about the politically and economically charged question of autism in relation to vaccination: 'when you give a vaccine you send your B and T cells into overdrive' but this can break the existing delicate balance between the immune response and the virus, allowing it to replicate and create an immune deficiency (p. 173).

Various follow-up studies were performed, but the CDC moved the goalposts by switching to more stringent PCR conditions and only accepting a particular sequence of XMRV as infectious – this later turned out to be a laboratory recombination with no natural history of infection (p. 235). Any sequence variation was then deemed to be contamination, hence the study design was not a replication and, not surprisingly, led to negative results even though another published paper by Lo and Alter confirmed Mikovits' findings. In addition, a study proposed by Dr Ian Lipkin would not include any of her original patients. Ironically, new studies from 2013, also commented on by Lipkin, found retroviruses in 85% of the sample pools but without saying whether or not this might be clinically significant.

Meanwhile, Mikovits was research director at the Whittemore Peterson Institute, largely funded by attorney Harvey Whittemore. In September 2011, she gave her view that a lucrative blood test developed by the Institute could no longer be recommended, and two days later she was fired and arrested without a proper charge and all her notebooks removed, although it seems that they were later planted in her house in order to frame her in terms of a fraudulent contract stating that these belonged to the laboratory, and where her signature had been appended from another document (p. 160). That same week, her photo appeared in *Science* as an indication of her disgrace. She then had to appear in court, where the judge issued a default judgement not allowing her to present a defence. Moreover, Whittemore had sued her for \$15 million, so she had to declare bankruptcy. Later, it turned out that the same judge had received money from Whittemore, and in 2014 Whittemore himself was indicted and imprisoned on multiple cases of fraud. Meanwhile, her scientific reputation had been destroyed while other associates continued to receive Federal grants.

In November 2011, Mikovits received an email from Ian Lipkin saying that she would be the principal investigator of a new study in his lab, but just two days later she was condemned in an unofficial internal review of the XMRV affair, and received an email from none other than Dr Anthony Fauci that she would be arrested if she set foot in the NIH. Of course, this meant that the subsequent study could not be a full replication, and Mikovits came under pressure to retract her original paper entirely (it did contain data provided by Andrew Silverman subsequently found to be unreliable) and put her name to the new study that ostensibly falsified her findings but which was not a proper replication – she refused to do this.

This shocking story is one of scientific, political, economic and legal travesty and injustice where an ethical scientist interested in the truth regardless of its economic consequences has her reputation destroyed, and is falsely imprisoned on a trumped-up charge in front of a corrupt judge by an attorney subsequently convicted for fraud. As Nobel laureate Luc Montagnier remarks on the cover of the new book: ‘this rampant corruption hides from the public scientific truths which might go against corporate economic interests.’ The very integrity of the scientific process is at stake, as we can also see in the current crisis with respect to the handling of evidence for the clinical efficacy of HCQ, so truly impartial and independent science has never been more important.

THE WARBURG EFFECT

David Lorimer

■ TRIPPING OVER THE TRUTH

Travis Christofferson

Chelsea Green, 2017,
258 pp., \$18, p/b – ISBN
978-1-60356-935-2

The German biochemist, Dr Otto Warburg (1883-1970), won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1931 for work he had done the nature and mode of action of the respiratory enzyme. His father was professor of physics in Berlin and while serving in the army during the First World War Warburg received an unexpected letter from Albert Einstein begging him to find a way of extricating himself from the front in the interests of scientific research. He had already been appointed a Professor at the Kaiser Wilhelm Society for the Advancement of Science, and this gave him high status and no responsibilities so that he could devote himself entirely

to research. His aim was to find a cure for cancer. This readable and informative book tells the history of approaches to cancer, but with special emphasis on Warburg’s metabolic theory of cancer in relation to the prevailing orthodoxy of somatic mutation theory (SMT).

This theory was succinctly stated by Warburg himself: ‘Cancer, above all other diseases, has countless secondary causes. But, even for cancer, there is only one prime cause. Summarised in few words, the prime cause of cancer is the replacement of the respiration of the oxygen in normal body cells by a fermentation of sugar.’ The underlying message is that researchers have become enmeshed in a complex web of genetic analysis, culminating in The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA), and that this has distracted them from considering the possibility that ‘cancer is not a disease of damage to DNA but rather one of defective metabolism.’ As it happens, this overwhelming complexity in terms of potential mutations may turn out to be catalysing factor in shifting the mainstream view. The book explains in detail how cancer came to be known as a genetic disease.

Warburg’s theory, by contrast, is simple, orderly and elegant. He discovered that ‘unlike normal cells, cancer cells ferment glucose in the presence of oxygen’, producing energy in a different way through fermentation; also abnormal amounts of lactic acid. He discovered this defective metabolism in all types of tumour cells, where ‘the shift from aerobic to anaerobic

energy generation was the significant difference between cancer cells and normal cells.’ Moreover, when normal healthy cells are deprived of oxygen, they turn cancerous without any other factors being required. The decline of the popularity of Warburg’s theory also signalled a shift in primacy from biochemistry to molecular biology, as observed by James Watson: the therapeutic emphasis was on agents that inhibited cell division. By the time he died, colleagues felt that Warburg’s theory was completely outdated – it was ‘too simplistic for serious consideration.’

His work was taken up by Pete Pedersen at Johns Hopkins, who thought that the ‘metabolism of

cancer might be the missing piece to the puzzle that genetics not been able to solve.’ The book describes his decades of research before the advent of epigenetics provided a new context of understanding. As early as 1977, he had discovered that a single molecular alteration in the cell – in mitochondrial hexokinase – was responsible for the shift in ATP energy generation using oxygen to a much less efficient process involving glucose and generating lactic acid as a waste product. (p. 62). It is this mechanism that is addressed in ketogenic diets where the idea is to starve the cancer cells of the necessary glucose by shifting energy generation into fats. Later, Thomas Seyfried realised that the crucial link is epigenetic signalling from the mitochondria to nuclear DNA: ‘the signal then altered the expression of a plethora of key cancer-causing oncogenes – a classic epigenetic system’ involving the transformation of hexokinase to hexokinase II.

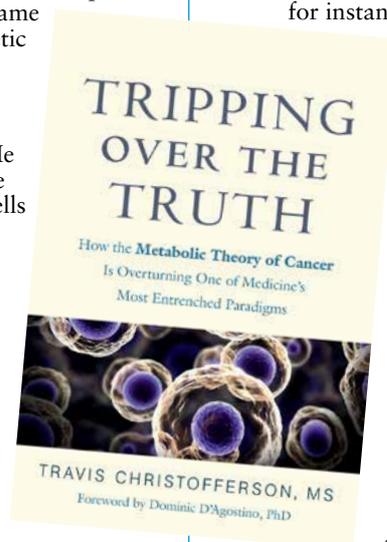
As mentioned earlier, the sheer complexity emerging from the TCGA called into question the predictions of SMT in terms of causal mutations,

for instance in breast-cancer

(p. 113) – the samples were heterogeneous, and neither a single mutation nor a combination of mutations to initiate the disease could be found. Moreover, ‘mutations are rare and infrequent events.’ Even Robert Weinberg has now added ‘the reprogramming of energy metabolism’ to a list of cancer hallmarks. All this led James Watson to reconsider the significance of

Warburg’s legacy, recommending that ‘we may have to turn our main research focus away from decoding the genetic instructions behind cancer and towards understanding the chemical reactions (metabolism) within cancer cells.’ (p. 126)

Werner Heisenberg famously observed that ‘what we observe is not nature in itself but nature exposed to our method of questioning’, a remark we would do well to remember and reinforced by the physicist Paul Davies, who was brought in by the NCI for an outside view on causation and cancer. He was highly critical of SMT, remarking that ‘never has science offered a clearer example of a preoccupation with



trees at the expense of the forest.’ (p. 189) Contrary to the genetic complexity view, the metabolic theory proposes that cancer is a disease of order, whereby ‘to transition to energy creation by fermentation means that the cell must drastically alter its enzymatic profile in an orderly manner. (p. 181) As a non-specialist, this makes a great deal of sense to me and suggests that the way forward is along the lines proposed by Watson in terms of focusing on metabolism as well as genetics, especially in the light of the activating role of epigenetic signalling. The 1976 accusation by Sidney Whitehouse that Warburg’s theory was too simplistic may in fact transform this pejorative word into the elegance of simplicity – time will tell.

PHILOSOPHY- SPIRITUALITY

PROPHETIC DEMOCRACY

David Lorimer

■ THE CHRISTIAN GOSPEL FOR AMERICANS

David Ray Griffin

Process Century Press, 2019,
499 pp., \$30, p/b – ISBN
978-1-940-44742-1

It is hard to disagree with a statement on the back cover of this book by Thomas Jay Oord that this is David Ray Griffin’s Magnum Opus, bringing together as it does his philosophy of religion, systematic theology and socio-political analysis. Unusually for a philosopher of religion, David also takes an interest in psychical research, and is a founder and co-director of the Center for Process Studies as well as being author of over 40 books. His more recent books that I have reviewed in these pages have been concerned with a critical view of 9/11 and American foreign policy, as well as a further major study on the environment. Here he returns to his roots in the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, whose thinking was decades ahead of its time with its emphasis on process and experience.

Although written specifically for Americans, the book will have a much wider appeal as a formulation that transcends traditional dichotomies of conservative and liberal, while also presenting both universal and local perspectives. In the introduction, David distinguishes between what he calls the primary doctrines of Christian faith and secondary doctrines that have achieved undue prominence such as the virgin birth

and the idea of divine omnipotence that in turn entails a huge challenge with respect to the problem of evil. Here his distinction between ‘God’ and ‘Gawd’ is very useful, where the latter is omnipotent in the traditional sense and male – it is this concept that is in fact the target of the new atheism. A further preliminary is the status of doctrines as respectively literally true, symbolically true, or simply false, which brings up demythologisation and David’s transition from supernaturalism to what he calls theistic naturalism. He points out that modern liberals accept naturalism as embodied in scientific materialism, but it is possible to formulate a constructive post-modernist position drawing on William James and Whitehead whereby ‘there are no supernatural violations of normal rules of nature.’ Importantly, this does not exclude the findings of psychical research.

The book is structured in five major parts: God, the Bible and humanity; the prophets, Jesus and other religions; sin and the demonic; salvation and the reign of God. David begins by considering traditional theological method compared to science and philosophy with their criteria of self-consistency and adequacy to the facts. Theology, by contrast, has historically put the emphasis on revealed doctrines and apostolic tradition, an approach that has been progressively undermined by biblical criticism. David argues that the world was created out of chaos rather than nothing and exhibits anthropic fine-tuning for life. This is a particularly interesting section, where he argues, persuasively in my view, that the hypothesis of a cosmic mind makes more sense than resorting to the logically unparsimonious multiverse, especially when one takes into account other factors such as ‘the existence of truth, religious experience, evolution, the reality and efficacy of moral and mathematical forms.’ (p. 47) Process theism maintains that our universe was fine-tuned for life and that divine power is persuasive (‘luring’ in Whitehead’s terminology) rather than controlling – even the greatest possible power, according to Hartshorne, is one power among others.

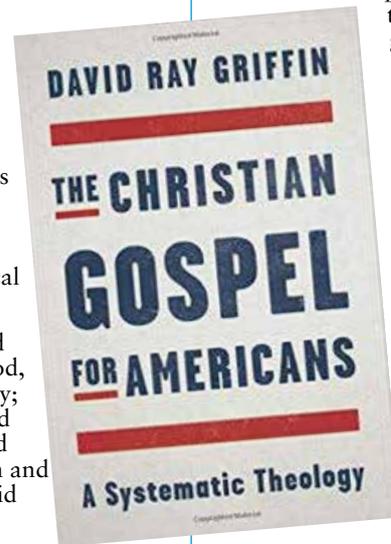
In a chapter on human consciousness, David analyses the reasons for the modern denial of soul and spirit based on the conviction that ‘human

perception is limited to *sensory* perception’, reflecting the position of Kant vis-à-vis Swedenborg, although this is not mentioned. Panexperientialism provides a framework that bypasses the philosophical difficulties associated with materialism and dualism while asserting the possibility of freedom, soul-brain interaction and moral and religious experience, without resort to supernaturalism.

David places Jesus firmly within the Hebrew prophetic tradition that champions the Kingdom of God over worldly values and dominating power, introducing the anti-imperial gospel of Jesus in the context of the Roman Empire, which he later compares in detail with the American Empire. The earliest gospel text, Q, depicts Jesus as a prophet crucified as a threat by the Roman authorities for proclaiming the coming ‘Reign of Divine Values’ rather than as a sacrificial lamb dying for the forgiveness of sins. From this, David draws the important

conclusion that American Christians today should likewise be anti-imperialistic, a position sure to be anathema those who still believe in American moral exceptionalism. Further chapters in this section address religious pluralism, Christology, Trinity and the nature of the Resurrection, which David places, rightly in my view, within modern research on apparitions (p. 177). He quotes Whitehead’s reference to the need for wider truths ‘within which a reconciliation of a deeper religion and a more subtle science will be found’ (p. 194) – a central aim of our Galileo Commission.

The section on sin and the demonic sums up David’s recent work on American foreign policy, for instance *The American Trajectory – Divine or Demonic?* He first places these categories within traditional the Christian thought, retaining their mythological but not the realistic aspect where the demonic represents a power and a risk inherent in a creative universe. Culturally, the demonic is embedded in the war system and the drive for domination and therefore imperialism as a response to the anarchical state of civilisation. David’s case for the



American Empire as demonic is built on their overthrow of thirty governments during the Cold War and a further seven since that time; then on the use of false flag attacks and other events justifying engagement in war including Pearl Harbour, Northwoods and 9/11; the development and use of nuclear weapons in Japan; and finally climate destruction by means of the current economic system and its impact on the environment. This leads him to the conclusion that the American Empire is extremely demonic because, 'for the sake of power and money, it is in the process of prematurely destroying the Holocene, all forms of life that depend on it, and all that creativity made possible by the development of civilisation.... also because its leaders have been too preoccupied with military projects to devote time and money to the evidently boring task of saving humanity and civilisation.' (p. 326)

The final two parts come back to theological issues and their social expression in terms of the nature of salvation and the relationship between the Reign of God and the emergence of global democracy. Here David treats the position of modern philosophy against life after death, given its commitment to scientific materialism and reading evidence exclusively from this perspective. He advances the idea of the resurrection of the soul, arguing that this can be understood in terms of degrees and that the capacity for life after death may be an emergent possibility (as also argued by the philosopher Tim Freke). He puts this in the context of Whitehead's contention that the purpose behind the evolutionary process 'is the development of creatures with increasingly greater capacity for intrinsic value.' (p. 350) He then looks at evidence for life after death, especially well-documented veridical out of body experiences and apparitions, though he could have added cases directly suggestive of survival in terms of veridical messages through mediums.

David sees the advent of global democracy as a necessary development, and draws here on the work of Reinhold Niebuhr, illustrating this with two pertinent quotations: 'Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary; evil is always the assertion of some self-interest without regard to the whole.' The question becomes how to combine power and goodness in terms of a moral order that is fully informed, impartially benevolent and impartially sympathetic; we need to move towards a universalist

logic and beyond both statist and imperialistic logic – needless to say we are currently a long way away from this and the trend is towards more surveillance and control. I agree that we need to embrace a perspective where global democracy is 'necessary for the very survival of human civilisation.' (p. 385)

The final part discusses morality in relation to the golden and silver rules, attempting to reconcile the 'thin' universal with the 'thick' local and particular. David suggests that the golden rule of doing to others what you would like done to yourself should apply to our immediate circle, while the silver rule of *not* doing to others what you would *not* want done to yourself should be applied on a larger scale and should also be embodied in the principles of foreign policy. He spells out the social implications of his position of resistance to imperialism in the final chapter, drawing parallels with German Lutherans, who developed a binding doctrinal stance (*status confessionis*) on socio-political questions during the 1930s. In the light of prior analysis, this is a powerful challenge to the American people to go beyond narrow patriotism (Make America Great Again) and to embrace a more universalist logic – one has to say that there is little sign of this at present, but it may represent the ultimate direction of travel. This magisterial work deserves the widest possible readership for the way it brings together philosophy, theology, science, ecology and politics in a coherent intellectual synthesis – it is a crowning achievement.

SURPRISING PATHS IN THE HISTORY OF YOGA

Nicholas Colloff

■ THE STORY OF YOGA: FROM ANCIENT INDIA TO THE MODERN WORLD

Alastair Shearer

Hurst & Company, 2020,
419 pp., £25, h/b - ISBN
978-178781-92-6

When I learned Transcendental Meditation in my early teens in the 1970s, I kept it quiet from my peers for fear of appearing weird. A decade later, when helping to found the Prison Phoenix Trust (PPT) to provide opportunities for inmates to learn yoga and meditation, the situation had not greatly improved. The work being fitfully supported within pockets of the prison service and looked upon with varying degrees of

suspicion by its chaplaincy service.

Fast forward and the landscape is transformed - yoga is a multi-billion dollar industry and mindfulness is practised in the boardroom. Happily too, the work of the PPT enjoys widespread support from the Prison Service, it appears to have entered the mainstream.

Yet there also is a legitimate concern with this explosion of interest. After all, is not yoga meant to be an exacting spiritual discipline enabling the practitioner to discover their fundamental, underlying reality as one with the Self that manifests all that is?

Not necessarily for 'yoga' has developed multiple meanings and many of its contemporary practitioners are, at best, focused on improving their sense of well-being and, at worst, shaping an improved body image in a competition driven by multiplying social pressures (as well as spending 'loads of money' on faddy 'yoga accessories')!

How has this evolved? What is yoga's story?

Telling this is the task of Alistair Shearer's erudite, informative and witty. 'The Story of Yoga: From Ancient India to the Modern West'; and, I cannot over-emphasize the grace and humour of the text as well as its seriousness of purpose. He begins by establishing an essential distinction between 'mind yoga' and 'body yoga'. The former is a structured process of meditation and accompanying disciplines whose aim is liberation. The latter is a physical practice of movement and posture that may support the former, but may simply be a way of achieving better well-being, health and body image.

Both are thought to have ancient roots in Indian tradition but whilst the evidence for the former (mind yoga) is robust flowing out of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Mahabharata and Patanjali the evidence for the latter before the 'middle ages' is surprisingly sparse - and indeed often, within the context of mind yoga, the body is seen as an impediment to progress on the path, rather than an aid. Shearer's account of these developments is lucid, engaging and balanced - recognizing, but never disparaging, the Indian fondness for 'myth-history' to fill in the gaps of what is often in early Indian history huge absences of record.

'Body yoga' appears to emerge in the historical record with the Nath Yogis who emerge in the 8th century CE and were to remain influential well into the 18th century. We begin

to see the emergence of structured physical exercises that sustain the ability to navigate one's nervous system, build resilience and withstand (as well as understand) the fruits of meditation practice. Yet, even so, what we imagine today as a fully developed system of 'body yoga' with a comprehensive range of asanas or postures continues to be notably absent.

At this point, we find ourselves in the nineteenth century and India responding to the colonial yoke of the British. The complex phenomenon that is Indian nationalism often finds itself borrowing from its oppressor to boost its self-confidence and resources to achieve its liberation - and remarkably the story of yoga participates in this drama too. First, because it stimulated the recovery of tradition, but like all recovered traditions this often includes creative invention; and, second because it recognises and responds to the implied criticism of colonialism in new ways.

Witness the life of Swami Vivekananda (pictured above) who blends a recovery of a Tantric meditation tradition focused on non-duality, with a recognition of the importance of social mission and the need for India to embrace a more robust 'manliness' that includes care for its physical well-being (and the latter ironically mirroring the British observation of the relative weakness of the Indian male and its promotion, through the YMCA and others, of gymnastics)!

This call, and others like it, for a renewed physical culture, unfolding in a series of complex interactions, both with the past, with patterns of physical culture from abroad, and genuine creativity gives birth to what we would think of as contemporary hatha yoga. Undoubtedly a product of the Indian imagination, rooted in history, but not an 'ancient system' simply handed down from a mythical past. Some of its greatest modern exponents came to yoga in this emergent context, and often, like B.K.S. Iyengar, from youthful illness or frailty that was substantially transformed by these bodily practices. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, they then tended to focus on the body in yoga, over the mind, and see yoga outside of or only weakly aligned with a spiritual purpose.

This tendency was then amplified when yoga came to the West - what interested most people, most of the time, was not an entrance to the mystical East, but a ticket to enhanced well-being and health; and, this was often how it was

marketed. As Shearer points out even the propagators of 'mind yoga', such as Swami Vivekananda, Swami Yogananda, and the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi all found different framing for what they were doing in ways that would appeal to a Western audience; hence, for example, the Maharishi emphasis on relaxation, stress, and well-being in the uptake of TM as well as on scientific research into meditation's benefits.

It is a bifurcation that remains with us to this day - and one exacerbated by the reasonable desire to regulate yoga. A regulation that tends to look only at the recognizably outward aspects of practice as criteria for the judgment of quality. Regulation of some form is probably necessary because as yoga has expanded, alongside gathering evidence of its potential benefits, it has come to a renewed concern for the possibly damaging consequences of practicing too zealously, with the wrong or inexperienced guidance. Both benefits and drawbacks are amply detailed and illustrated in Shearer's text. However, regulating an ever-expanding universe with a plethora of apparent 'yogas' - my favourite in Shearer's lively account is 'nude yoga' - will be difficult but necessary as, sadly, it is a world too that has been accumulating its plethora of scandal - sexual, cultist and financial.

What does the future hold? It would make sense, I think, to return to Shearer's opening, the deeply helpful distinction between 'mind yoga' and 'body yoga' recognising that the latter can be practised in support of the former but may not be. It may come with more limited, if valuable aims, of better mental and physical health if so it ought to be judged and contextualised within those aims. However, 'mental yoga' too can act as a healthy critique of 'body yoga' excesses - the multiple ways in which 'exercise' simply becomes a way of strengthening a misplaced identification with the body, not its health, for example, of how it looks, especially to others, feeding the anxieties of identity rather than their calming liberation. As is often the case, the intentionality of what we do, how we frame the journey, will determine the appropriateness of the destination. Shearer's book reminds us that 'mind yoga' ought to be the master and 'body yoga' the helpful emissary of our liberation.

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

HELLENISM'S PROFOUND RELEVANCE TODAY

Larry Culliford

■ PHILOSOPHY AS A WAY OF LIFE

Pierre Hadot

Translated from French by
Michael Chase

Edited with an Introduction by
Arnold I Davidson

Blackwell, 1995, 320 pp., £26, p/b
- ISBN 978-631-18033=3

A former *Collège de France* Professor of the History of Hellenist and Roman Thought, Pierre Hadot (1922-2010) fully reappraises what it means to engage in philosophy. "*In Antiquity*", he writes, for example, "*The philosopher regards himself as a philosopher, not because he develops a philosophical discourse, but because he lives philosophically*". (p 27) Not necessarily a professor or writer, etymologically, "*A philosopher is in love with wisdom*". (p 57)

Hadot's prose is clear, eloquent and persuasive. Written in four parts comprising eleven chapters, it demonstrates his prodigious knowledge, not only as historian but as a genuine wisdom-lover, a rigorous thinker who 'professes' his subject by living it, writing with deep, yet entirely self-effacing, conviction. This is what makes his work so valuable, accessible and exciting.

Readers like me, with regrettably threadbare knowledge of ancient Greek philosophy, will be surprised and delighted to discover how relevant are its fundamental messages today. People throughout the world are currently enduring a deadly pandemic during an already worrying period of climate change, eco-destruction, increasing natural disasters, widespread conflict, and many other causes of human suffering. Elsewhere I have suggested, "*Wisdom is the best remedy for all the complex inter-related ills of humankind*", and it is satisfying to have one's ideas convincingly validated by such time-honoured authorities. For them, according to Hadot, the essence of wisdom - self-transformation - is not just the best but the *only* way forward when confronting persistent adversity. Referring to Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic and Epicurean branches of Hellenism, he writes, "*All schools believed in the freedom of the will, thanks to which man has the possibility to modify, improve, and realize himself*." (p102)

Self-improvement has likewise today become, then, the inescapable duty of every citizen.

The book's first two parts (*Method and Spiritual Exercises*) reveal how, with different emphases, these schools taught people to grow in wisdom, mainly through 'spiritual exercises'. Hadot's defends the term as follows, "*These exercises are the result, not merely of thought, but of the individual's entire psychism... By means of them, the individual raises himself up to the life of the objective Spirit; that is to say, he replaces himself within the perspective of the Whole*". (pp 81-2) Later, he adds, "*All spiritual exercises are, fundamentally, a return to the self, in which the self is liberated from the state of alienation into which it has been plunged by worries, passions and desires*". (p 103)

There are strong reminders for me here of Christian writer, Thomas Merton, who wrote, for example, "*He who attempts to act and do things for others or for the world, without deepening his own self-understanding, freedom, integrity, and capacity to love, will not have anything to give others*".

So, what are spiritual exercises? Explaining that, "*They all consist, above all, of self-control and meditation*" (p 59), Hadot gives us a list: research, scrupulous investigation (*skepsis*), reading, listening, attention, self-mastery, and 'indifference to indifferent things'. 'Meditation', he clarifies, is, "*The exercise of reason... a rational, imaginative, or intuitive exercise that can take extremely varied forms*"; a definition which clearly surpasses sterile intellectualisation, describing an activity similar to what Merton, in a truly memorable book, refers to as 'contemplation'.

Central to all schools are '*meditation upon death*' and, '*attentive concentration on the present moment*'. Hadot says such deliberate attention (*prosoche*) is strongly associated with freedom from the passions; i.e. attachments and aversions provoking strong emotions; "*Which are always caused by the past or the future - two areas which do not depend on us*". (p 84-5) This is 'indifference to indifferent things'; psychological detachment from past burdens and future anxieties, over which we can have little control. Furthermore, such attentiveness, "*Allows us to accede to cosmic consciousness, by making us attentive to the infinite value of each instant, and causing us to accept each moment of existence from the viewpoint of the universal law of the cosmos*". (p 85)

In Chapter 4, Hadot moves to the Christianity of the Middle Ages, describing Loyola's spiritual exercises as deeply rooted in those of his Greek forbears, while *prosoche* (attention to oneself, implying self-mastery) becomes the fundamental attitude of the monk. But he warns against exaggerating the similarities. For Christians, the birth, teachings, miracles, death and resurrection of Christ have changed everything. Already declining towards academic obscurity, philosophy is being suppressed by theology.

In Part 3 (*Figures*) the philosophical 'figure' is distinguished from the historical person in chapters on both Socrates and Marcus Aurelius. Socrates - both from Plato's *Symposium*, and as perceived by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche ("*Those two great Socratics*") - represents, "*The portrait of a mediator between the transcendent ideal of wisdom and concrete human reality*". (p 147) Marcus Aurelius is explained with helpful reference to his Stoic contemporary Epictetus, appearing rather more sympathetic than usually considered. Hadot quotes: "*We must love other people with all our hearts, for rational beings are not only parts of the same whole, but limbs of the same body*". (p 198)

In the brief Chapter 7, called *Reflections on the Idea of the "Cultivation of the Self"*, using contrasting Stoic and Epicurean themes, Hadot respectfully criticises the work of Michel Foucault who, he says, did not sufficiently insist on people seeking a radical transformation of perspective through appreciation of a universalist, cosmic dimension to being-in-the-world.

Part 4 (*Themes*) begins with a chapter on Goethe, appraised through Hellenist philosophy emphasizing '*The Value of the Present Instant*'. With references to a mystical dimension of Stoicism, to the Epicurean notion that, "*The secret of joy and serenity is to live each instant as if it were the last, but also the first*" (p 225), to Horace's dictum, "*Carpe diem*", to Seneca, and even more to Nietzsche, Hadot brilliantly brings Goethe to life here as an inspired and inspiring teacher of wisdom.

In the remaining chapters; *The View from Above, The Sage and the World*, and, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*; with reference to numerous ancient and more recent philosophical writings; including from artists, Cézanne and Klee, and poet Rilke; Hadot brings things even more neatly together,

skilfully weaving ancient Greek wisdom into the underlying fabric of contemporary culture. Philosophy, he summarizes, is, "*An exercise consisting in learning to regard both society, and the individuals who comprise it, from the point of view of universality*". (p 242)

Many more quotations from this splendid volume would surely resonate powerfully with Network members but, in conclusion, space allows only two. Firstly, "*In order to recognize wisdom, we must, so to speak, go into training for wisdom*". (p 261) Secondly, regarding genuine wisdom-seekers, "*To be sure, there is only a small number of such people; they are like embers of wisdom kept smouldering in our cities, so that virtue may not altogether be snuffed out and disappear from our race. But if only people everywhere felt the same way... and became lovers of wisdom... then our cities would be brimful of happiness*". (pp 264-5)

These pertinent observations are equally echoed by Thomas Merton. They also, I mention humbly, support much of my own work, especially in recommending a regular routine of updated '*wisdom practices*'. Hadot's lucid book testifies repeatedly to the universality, supremacy, and indispensability of wisdom, and I cannot recommend it more highly.

Larry Culliford is an independent scholar and author. A retired psychiatrist long-fascinated by the subject of supreme mental health, and a former Chair of the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland, he has written numerous 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.

Endnotes

- 1 See also, for example, Potari, A. D., *The Light of Hellenism, Paradigm Explorer*, 2020/1, 132: 12-15
- 2 Culliford, L. *The Big Book of Wisdom*, London, Hero Press, 2020, p 33.
- 3 Merton, T. *Contemplation in a World of Action*, New York, Doubleday, 1971, pp 178-9
- 4 Merton, T. *New Seeds of Contemplation*, New York, New Directions, 1962.
- 5 See, for example, Merton, T. *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, New York, Doubleday, 1966, pp140-2.
- 6 Culliford, L. *The Big Book of Wisdom*, London, Hero Press, 2020, pp 138-142.

PATTERNS OF TRANSFORMATION

David Lorimer

■ KABBALAH AND HEALING

Maggy Whitehouse

O Books (John Hunt), 2020, 211 pp., £11.99, p/b - ISBN 978-1-78904-069-2

Maggy Whitehouse is an independent sacramental minister and teacher of Kabbalah in the Toledano Tradition who has recently found a second strand of work as a professional stand-up comedian. In this remarkable and profoundly wise book, she leaves her own journey to the final chapter entitled 'a life of miracles' where she describes various critical turning points, including a near fatal encounter with a barracuda where she was saved by her inner voice. She studied New Testament Greek before encountering the Kabbalah, the structure of which provides the mystical scaffolding of this book. She draws on the correspondence between inner attitudes and outer circumstances from her own life to help readers reflect on this topic for themselves. In this respect, we all need to listen to what life is trying to tell us, and Maggy remarks that 'every time, every time I have given over control and asked for help, then the situation has been resolved.' (p. 203) This represents the dance between active intervention and surrender, though one needs the wisdom to know when each mode is appropriate.

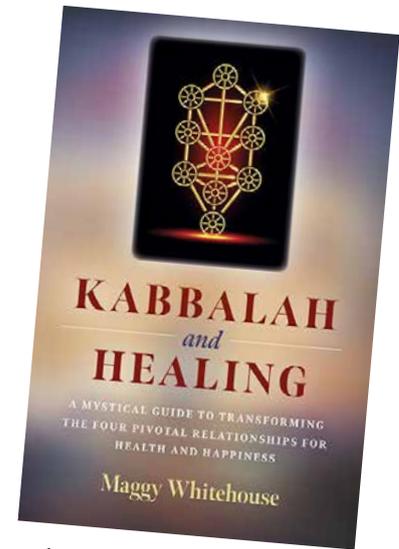
The structure of the book is provided by the four pivotal relationships with the divine, ourselves, others and the Earth based on the fact that all of creation is One, so all life is relationship. The author relates how a passage from Psalm 118 synchronistically turned up at a number of critical moments: 'I shall not die; instead I shall live to praise the Lord my God.' The initial part of the book explains the four relationships in more detail, where readers come to realise the centrality of their relationship with God and the fact that we are extensions of each other. This fundamental pattern is reflected in money and health where a connection with the life force is fundamental in terms of flow, balance and abundance: 'we need to receive, appreciate and then give for the whole system to work healthily.' (p. 26) The scaffolding provided by the Kabbalistic tree of life is universal, and beautifully explained here in various different contexts, for instance in climbing and descending the tree; the author revealingly applies this

to her own experience of illness as a challenge to heal and transform.

In the section on the divine, the author explains the various Hebrew terms and their meanings – Elohim as a plural expression of masculine and feminine, Yahweh as a non-gendered verb meaning 'To Be Being' and 'Ruach Elohim' as the feminine spirit of God. All this is a long way from our cultural conditioning of a wholly masculine fundamentalist Trinity. I agree with her argument that religion's problems are always caused by adherence to law rather than openness to spirit, and that faith is the opposite of certainty since it is 'mysterious, receptive, transformative and always open to the new' – and to Grace. The section on the Divine is the longest one, dealing as it does with various aspects of God and the deeper meaning of the commandments – here there is much to contemplate, including the danger of making graven images, setting ideas in stone, and taking the divine name in vain by doing evil in the name of God. However, the author gives various methods for healing our relationship with God such as contemplative prayer to anchor ourselves in our true self, creating an altar in your home, using affirmations, and expressions of gratitude (100 are provided).

Our relationship with ourselves at different levels comes next, distinguishing between the ego and persona that die and the soul that is both individual and eternal. The process involves loving and transforming the shadow, taking space and time out, and being kind to ourselves. We also need to be aware of self-destructive forces within us and the hazard of covering up pain through distraction and denial. Here again there are many healing techniques and activities, including meditation, gardening, dancing, 'watching a butterfly hatch' (I love that one) – these should settle us within ourselves. The author also suggests doing something new every day and practising the Hawaiian forgiveness mantra: 'I love you, I'm sorry, please forgive me, thank you.'

Having made some progress in sorting out our relationship with ourselves we can now move on to our relationship with others – each of the chapters is tellingly illustrated with respect to the Kabbalistic tree. The author comments on the significance of the exodus, the wilderness and the ten plagues, leading into a treatment of the everyday commandments seen in a new light where bearing false witness can be equated with presenting a mask or marketing glamour. She also advises us to remove ourselves from harmful environments and to practise the Buddhist lovingkindness meta



meditation:

'may all beings be safe, may all beings be well, may all beings be happy, may they live in peace.' Like the forgiveness mantra above, this is a simple but powerful practice that we can all undertake.

Our current relationship with the earth could be characterised by covetousness in terms of envy and greed that also require healing. Again, the author provides many constructive suggestions to become more conscious and to earth ourselves, perhaps spending time contemplating flowers or in the company of a favourite tree. We have to tune into the silence if we are to listen to that still small voice and keep ourselves on track on this journey of life. This richly textured book is an instructive companion on the path.

PSYCHOLOGY- CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

CREATIVE ALIGNMENT

David Lorimer

■ MIND TO MATTER

Dawson Church
(www.mindtomatter.com)

Hay House, 2019, 326 pp., £14.99, p/b - ISBN 978-1-78817-115-1

The author is the founder of the National Institute for Integrative Healthcare (www.niuh.org) for the study and implementation of evidence-based psychological and medical techniques, including EFT. His starting point for this informative book is that every creation begins as a thought. The computer on which I am writing this began as a thought, and this review itself is a series of thoughts. One of the essential messages of the book is that we need to move away

from the language of substance to that of fields, vibrations, energy, resonance, coherence, self-organisation, flow, entrainment and alignment. We ourselves are dynamic and self-creating beings through the ways in which we direct our attention and thinking processes. The content of the book weaves together scientific experiments, theory and personal experiences.

The chapter headings gave a good indication of the overall argument: how our brains shape the world; how energy builds matter; how our emotions organise our environment; how energy regulates DNA and the cells of our bodies; the power of the coherent mind; entraining self with synchronicity; and thinking from beyond local mind. All this is the exact opposite of the prevailing scientific view that consciousness is epiphenomenal and that free will is an illusion. The process of life and thought is inherently creative, bringing science together with metaphysics. One immediate example is neuroplasticity, where Eric Kandel has shown that the number of connections in a neural bundle can double in one hour of repeated stimulation, demonstrating the creative power of focus and concentration; the opposite is also true, that neural pathways will disassemble through neglect. Another example is a journalist who in eight weeks of mindfulness practice increased the volume of nerve cells in his dentate gyrus – responsible for emotional regulation – by a staggering 22.8%. This means that ‘the consciousness of your mind is becoming the cells of the matter of your brain.’ (pp. 10, 122) Later in the book, the author shows how these same principles can apply in healing. On a more mundane level, we can create a stress-filled reality through overexposure to news channels (each chapter also contains practical activities and online resources).

The next chapter recounts the history of work with fields, including the work of Harold Saxton Burr (‘Energy is organising matter’) who found that cancer was showing up in the field of energy before it appeared in the biological cells (p. 44); then cymatics, acupuncture and EFT, all of which point in the direction that matter is in fact an epiphenomenon of energy and fields. The work of early Network member Maxwell Cade is covered in a chapter on brainwave patterns in relation to emotional and mystical experience, where delta waves seem to have a connection with nonlocal consciousness and healing. Mirroring and empathy enhance coherence within groups, which also reflected in synchronised brainwaves – though emotional contagion can be used for negative purposes and mass manipulation. The author sums this

up by stating that coherent mind = coherent matter, and that mind change = field change = cell change, which he brings together in his technique of Ecomeditation. A further implication is the long-term link between our inner states and the signalling involved in epigenetic expression – switching genes on or off.

The author quotes a fascinating study of human intention in a coherent state on placental DNA. The implications of this extend into the experimental method as a whole, beginning with entanglement and the observer effect in quantum physics and moving onto the experimenter effect in parapsychology, where it is clear that beliefs, expectations and intentions influence the outcome: ‘the beliefs held in the minds of scientists shape the material reality they discover at every turn’ (p. 189), which the author also correlates with the replication crisis and what one might call an emerging objectivity crisis. If we live in a resonant and entangled universe, then from a personal angle our best path is to align and entrain ourselves with the universal mind, which is then likely to show up in synchronicities. Here, the author interestingly correlates of the work of Jung with emergent properties and self-organisation. We are also entrained to the frequencies of the Earth, although in my review of Arthur Firstenberg’s book above, I agree with his thesis that this is under threat from wireless technology.

Along with many other thinkers whose books I review in these pages, Church sees the brain as a transducer and bridge in the relation to local and nonlocal reality, a view which we are beginning to understand through analysis of psychic and mystical experiences, although this is also ancient shamanic knowledge. In his workshops, the author has observed that people are effortless masters in one of five areas of life: work, love and relationships, money, health and spirituality. If it is true that we all inhabit a thought field that shapes our material reality, then we may have to work more consciously on some of these other areas in order to bring about any change of pattern. In any event, the starting point is tuning your mind to the highest possible state, where we are ‘no longer functioning as an isolated, separate, lonely fragment, cut off from the whole by the illusion of separateness.’ (p. 277) On a planetary level, our collective thoughts are creating our collective reality, and nothing could be more important at this time than the co-creation of a positive world infused with love and coherence rather than dominated by fear. This thesis is eminently possible on the basis of the argument of this powerful book.

A COPERNICAN REVOLUTION

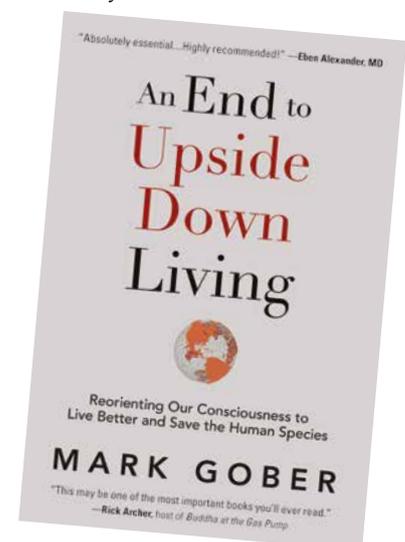
David Lorimer

■ AN END TO UPSIDE DOWN LIVING

Mark Gober (SMN)

Waterside Productions, 2020,
178 pp., \$19.95, h/b – ISBN
978-1-949001-04-4

I met Mark at the conference that we arranged with the Laszlo Institute in the summer of 2018. He had just finished his first book, *An End to Upside Down Thinking*, which I reviewed in the December 2018 issue, in which he also contributed an article. He was originally a Wall Street investment banker and subsequently a partner in a Silicon Valley technology group. He found himself in an existential vacuum coming up to the age of 30 – what Oliver Robinson calls a quarter life crisis. In spite of his high achievements, his life lacked meaning and purpose so he set off on a quest to understand more about theories of reality and consciousness. Over a period of intensive research lasting several months, he gradually came to realise that the conventional neuroscientific premise of physicalism – the belief that the brain creates consciousness – is in fact completely unproven and is contradicted by a raft of evidence with which most readers will already be familiar. This forms the point of departure and thrust of the Galileo Commission (www.galileocommission.org). This evidence is set out in his excellent first book and complemented on his website with an impressive 50 episode series of interviews (www.markgober.com) and a shorter series of podcasts available at <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/where-is-my-mind/id1470129415> and both are entitled *Where is my Mind?*



Mark realised that his life crisis was fundamentally rooted in our predominant physicalist and materialistic worldview, which we both believe is at the true origin of our current mental health challenges. Instead, like almost all advisors to the Galileo Commission, Mark proposes that consciousness is fundamental and, like Schrodinger and Larry Dossey among others, that there is only One Mind, a position I also share. This model predicts that psychic phenomena would be true and that consciousness survives bodily death, unlike physicalism where this is categorically excluded. He succinctly summarises the familiar robust evidence and advances a view of consciousness closely aligned to the work of Bernardo Kastrup. He also rightly analyses the academic and scientific pressures to accept consensus physicalism, with which SMN members are only too familiar. Metaphysically, the shift to One Mind (a position also advanced by Emerson and New Thought writers like Thomas Troward, Ralph Waldo Trine, Charles Haanel and ultimately Walter Russell) involves moving from the primacy of separation to the primacy of interconnectedness, a position consistent with quantum theory as many writers have pointed out. This represents a Copernican shift of centre from the separate ego to the One Mind of which we are all microcosms. This shift also corresponds to the essentials of the spiritual journey where forgetting becomes remembering, ignorance is transformed into knowledge, and spiritual sleep morphs into the awakening of gnosis.

The next chapter introduces a series of inferences with justifying commentary to the effect that the One Mind is conscious, intelligent and inherently loving, that our ultimate identity is not the body, that the golden rule is built into the fabric of reality, and that karma and reincarnation are the engine of evolution. This involves encountering paradox and ambiguity. Mark criticises fashionable panpsychism for positing that consciousness is an inherent property of matter, preferring Rupert Spira's view that only consciousness is conscious and that the One Mind (Absolute) is the substrate of all (relative) experiences. Metaphorically, he proposes that we are both a whirlpool and the stream simultaneously: God is both immanent and transcendent, as spiritual traditions insist. He also advances a critique of randomness, drawing here and elsewhere on the seminal work of psychiatrist and mystic David Hawkins. If you are not yet familiar with his work, I urge you to read it (*I, Reality and Subjectivity*).

Mark moves on to approaches to right side up living with a list of ten qualities, which will be familiar

to those on the spiritual path: nonjudgmentalism, surrender, nonresistance, nonattachment, forgiveness, compassion with discernment, authenticity, stewardship, nonconceitedness and commitment. The discussion is informative and illuminating, drawing on his own experience and reiterating the dynamic that 'we *are* the One Mind, veiled from itself, seeking itself.' The following chapter explores various paths to and mechanisms for awakening, corresponding to the transcendence of the ego. Mark then examines some obstacles along the way, including spiritual materialism and spiritual bypass, noting Ken Wilber's advice that we need to wake up, clean up and grow up.

The book concludes with a short chapter on right side up living, where the point of departure is a compass aligned with his new understanding of reality that turns physicalism on its head. The spiritual journey takes people beyond what they have and what they do – having and doing – to highlight the essential nature of being – in the formulation of Adyashanti that 'what I had been chasing was what I am.' Mark summarises the intention for his life that he has now arrived at: 'to perfect myself so that I can be a pure vessel of the intelligent One Mind, thereby allowing me to search without obstruction.' The last five years has brought Mark to the realisation that we need to enact a fundamental Copernican revolution of consciousness, shifting the centre from the primacy of the individual separate mind to the One Mind with its radical implication of an ethic of interconnectedness, as I argued in my own book *Whole in One* (now *Resonant Mind*) 30 years ago: One Mind, One Life, One Planet, as the strapline for our webinars expresses it. Mark's lucid exposition makes for essential reading as he spells out the implications of the One Mind framework in both metaphysical and ethical terms.

INNER WORK FOR THE OUTER WORLD

David Lorimer

■ GATEWAYS TO THE SOUL

Serge Beddington-Behrens, PhD (SMN)

Findhorn Press, 2020, 301 pp., \$18.99, p/b – ISBN 978-1-64411-045-4

In this wise and compassionate distillation of his life journey, my dear friend Serge has given us an invaluable handbook for spiritual and psychological health and development

in our complex era of unparalleled challenges and opportunities. He has been working in the spiritual and psychotherapeutic field for 50 years, and shares his formative personal experiences at Findhorn that initiated a process of moving beyond his elitist background, also profoundly catalysed by a severe illness in the course of which he fundamentally reassessed his values and priorities. The tone of the book is refreshingly personal and direct, with the author addressing the reader as a friend and fellow-traveller but one who is challenging us to embrace and live up to noble ideals in a somewhat cynical age. Each chapter has at the end pertinent questions and exercises for further personal work.

The first part, Understanding the Challenge, paints a picture of what is wrong with the current world in spite of progress in many areas. Serge's basic diagnosis is that our overall level of collective consciousness and operation is too low, and that this shows up in systemic inequality, exploitation ('extractivism'), unsustainable use of resources, the predominance of neoliberalism, and the rise in populism and authoritarianism, all within the context of 'the myth of continual growth'. He characterises this by using the Algonquin term *wetiko* as a cannibalistic spirit of the times, and also the Hindu categories of rajasic and tamasic modes. Overall, he sees our self-serving system as 'eminently soulless' so that our deepest crisis is in fact a spiritual one – see also my review of Jonathon Porritt below, who makes the same point in a different context. In order to address this, Serge argues, we need to learn 'how to activate soul inside ourselves'. He defines this as 'the animating principle that makes living things alive and links all of life together'. He comments on the failure of the 1960s counter culture of which he was a part, but is inspired by it in calling for a more soulful politics, religion, psychology and leadership, encouraging readers to make bold use of their imagination in envisioning a New World.

The second part is devoted to 'growing soul', beginning with three chapters on gateways to inner work, inner work in action, and daily life as a gateway to sacred practice. This involves understanding, commitment, healing our emotional wounds, and taking responsibility for our evolution. In this context, Serge suggests fourteen areas to work on so that we can become more sensitive and open to life, seeing more acutely, feeling and listening more deeply, connecting the conscious and unconscious in terms of self-

knowledge and self-reflection, and trusting our inner knowing. Specific areas include letting go of regrets, working on our relationships and viewing ourselves more objectively – again there are detailed exercises for readers to practise. Daily life is ‘where the rubber hits the road’, and Serge has fifteen recommendations in this regard, with corresponding exercises and affirmations for example on gratitude and generosity – and I was glad to see that one of these was having animals around as we have two dogs, two cats, two horses and three chickens...

The rest of this part is devoted to various key gateways – to the heart, to power, through our dark side, into other realities, into friendship, into courage, into forgiveness, into joy, then good work, the possibilities of the corporate world, death, and spiritual activism in world service. This is a rich menu perhaps best absorbed course by course rather than all at once – there is a useful chart (p. 154) on differences between current and new concepts of power, and the importance of forgiveness and shadow work is rightly emphasised, the need for which exists on both personal and collective levels. There is very good advice on maintaining friendships – we did a joint workshop on this topic – and also on the development of courage in service to the whole.

The heart of Serge’s message is expressed in the following italicised passage: *the reason why we have all come into being, is because as we embark on the journey of discovering who we really are – as we gradually become more fully human – we become the forms through which the divine can potentially be known. To become fully human, then, is to be divine.* (p. 262). The epilogue applies the content of the book to our current world situation, trying to steer a middle course between naively positive and doom-laden scenarios. The key question is if enough people can come together to envision, trigger and enact radical change. This has to go beyond the Great Reset proposed by the World Economic Forum, based as it is on technocracy and a materialistic understanding of the human being.

We stand at a crucial moment of evolutionary choice and human development: our future must include the heart dimension represented by right hemisphere brain function integrated with left hemisphere technological expertise – otherwise the result will be dystopian in rather than utopian. Serge concludes with a long visionary prayer for the emergence of a new, soul-filled society, setting out his deepest aspirations – it

is a rich and rewarding prospect that we have the potential to step into but only if we succeed in mustering a focused passionate commitment allied with radical and decisive action. None of us is exempt from this responsibility, but we need a sufficient coherent mobilisation as well help from inner spiritual forces to bring this vision to fruition. Standing passively by is no longer an option.

ECOLOGY-FUTURES STUDIES-POLITICS

A CIVILISATIONAL ISSUE

David Lorimer

■ HOPE IN HELL

Jonathon Porritt

Simon & Schuster, 2020,
365 pp., £16.99, h/b – ISBN
978-1-4711-9327-9

The recent webinar that Jonathon gave us on this book happened to coincide with the 90th birthday of Honorary Member Sir Crispin Tickell, who attended his first Zoom meeting on that occasion, and we dedicated it to him and his environmental work. He was involved in helping draft the landmark environmental speech to the UN given by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 1989 when he was UN ambassador in New York. Subsequently, he became Warden of Green College in Oxford and is still involved with the James Martin Institute for the Future. He was also the Founding Chair of the St Andrews Prize for the Environment. In anticipation of the webinar, I looked up one of Sir Crispin’s papers from *Environmental Values*, written in 1992 – the year of the Rio Summit – here is the all too prescient abstract, a generation on:

‘As a consequence of industrialisation, we face unprecedented pressures on the carrying capacity of the earth. Desertification, pollution and climate changes can only intensify these pressures, and will cause vast increases in the number of refugees and widespread risks to human health. Increasing inequalities between rich and poor nations are potential causes of conflict. Since the industrial countries are mainly responsible for our economic problems, they must give a lead in global arrangements to alleviate them. A major change in our habitual patterns of thought is essential, in which we reassess how we perceive values, and how we measure wealth and wellbeing. This must be accompanied by government action: on population and the refugee problem; on the efficient use of energy; on new methods of land

use; and on regulation of damaging industrial activities. To act in these ways, governments must reorganise their domestic policies and increase international co-operation.’

This abstract could almost serve as a summary of Jonathon’s book, and in fact he refers to the Thatcher UN speech, also quoting the draft from her papers of an earlier speech given to the Royal Society that includes a proposal for a world levy on fuel prices to support improved energy efficiency and the linking of the protection of trees in Third World countries to debt retirement. The then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, now a prominent ‘climate change sceptic’ had the passage deleted on the grounds that such bizarre ideas were contrary to government policy, and ‘political dynamite’(!). This is realism of the old school responsible for 30 years of prevarication and procrastination where neoliberal policies favouring economic growth have continued to dominate the political landscape.

I have known Jonathon for over fifty years as he was two years ahead of me at Eton and already a star in terms of intellect and sporting prowess as a hurdler (his father had won the bronze medal in the Olympic 100 m in 1924). He began his career by teaching English at a comprehensive school in West London, during which time he joined the Green Party and wrote its manifesto, then becoming Director of Friends of the Earth in the 1980s, co-founding the Forum for the Future in the 1990s, and becoming Chair of the U.K. Sustainable Development Commission from 2000-2009. He has worked at high levels of government, voluntary organisations and in interfacing with industry. In his latest and most personal book, subtitled ‘a decade to confront the climate emergency’, he spells out in detail the scope of climate science, the power of technological innovation, the dimensions of the ecological emergency and ways of addressing it, lethal structural incumbencies putting a brake on the necessary changes, populist risks to democracy and the rise of authoritarianism, and finally the prospects for a just transition to what Lester Brown called an eco-economy (his name is notably absent from the book, when he advocated a similar war footing approach, and was one of the first to highlight one aspect of the challenge posed by China in his book *Who Will Feed China?*, published some 25 years ago). Jonathon’s analysis is cogent, penetrating and passionate, and his frustration apparent after 45 years of campaigning.

However, the book is also about hope: to what extent is hope justified in the light of what we know, not only about ecosystems, but also about human nature? When I was co-authoring my book *The Protein Crunch* 10 years ago, I was struck by the number of environmental books that provided a grim analysis of trends until the last chapter, when they would say that there were still hope if we acted in a timely fashion. I call this conditional hope. In this respect, Jonathon quotes Greta Thunberg as saying ‘you can’t just sit around waiting for hope to come. You don’t seem to understand that hope is something that you have to earn.’ And also Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez: ‘Hope is not something you have. Hope is something that you create with your actions. Hope is something you have to manifest into the world, and once one person has hope, it can be contagious.’ Hence, the condition for hope is engagement and action.

Jonathon considers three variants or shades of opinion in a key chapter. First, the position that it is already too late – full stop. This raises the key question: ‘Have we still got enough time to do everything we know we have to do and avoid runaway climate change?’ The answer from this group is no. The second position is that it may well be too late, unless – as reflected in the thinking behind Extinction Rebellion; this also embodies the assumption that ‘only governments can legislate for the kind of accelerated transformation we now need.’ The third position and Jonathon’s current view is that it is definitely not too late as the future always forks and ‘there is always a difference to be made.’ However, a continuation of ‘today’s prevailing growth at all costs economy, with all its built-in wastefulness and disregard for the natural world’ is literally a hopeless prospect – but there are signs of radical thinking and action emerging from the younger generation.

Having worked on the inside track for the last 25 years, Jonathon now believes that incremental gradualism is totally inadequate and that it is ‘incontrovertible that our political leaders will not move far enough or fast enough without a great deal of pressure being brought to bear on them. Only a sustained period of renewed radical campaigning, including many different kinds of civil disobedience will provide that kind of pressure.’ (p. 124) In arriving at this conclusion, Jonathon considers potential parallels with the history of the abolition of slavery and the campaign for women’s suffrage. In both cases, there was

huge resistance and pushback that required radical courage and uncompromising advocacy over an extended period. The elites in power do not readily give way and they strive to maintain their advantages in the current system.

In the course of the book, Jonathon covers a great deal of ground both in terms of critical analysis and proposed regenerative policies. Nor does he shy away from naming names, for instance in relation to the continuing subsidising of fossil fuels to the tune of \$500 billion a year, and also the massaging of UN poverty figures to maintain a good news narrative. He points out that if the definition of poverty was living on \$5 a day instead of \$1.90, this would represent 4.3 billion people living in poverty, or 57% of the world population. Moreover, under today’s business as usual model, it would take 207 years to reach this level of \$5 a day for everyone, entailing a completely unsustainable growth of the global economy to 170 times its present size (p. 205). His comment: ‘Farewell, planet Earth.’

In the final part of the book, ‘All in it Together’, Jonathon asks if we can achieve what he calls ‘a just transition’ with such measures as a universal basic income and policies to maintain social cohesion in a more communitarian world corresponding to Riane Eisler’s partnership system as opposed to the prevalent dominator systems well illustrated in the current US administration. Indigenous peoples exemplify the philosophy of harmony with nature that we so badly need, but many of the 164 environmental rights defenders killed in 2018 were indigenous people protecting their own land from exploitation. At a deeper level, Jonathon feels that the climate crisis is in fact a spiritual crisis of disconnection from the world and from each other – as far as I know, this thesis was first proposed by Seyyed Hossein Nasr in his seminal 1967 book, *Man and Nature*. His final chapter brings him back to hope in disobedience, and I myself was persuaded that widespread disruptive political action is a vital component of any radical strategy going forward. The questions raised are both personal and political, as we are all implicated in the world situation in terms of our choices and decisions whether we acknowledge it or not. This challenging, powerful, hugely informed and trenchant book is essential reading for concerned citizens of every generation.

A NEW BOTTOM LINE

David Lorimer

■ REVOLUTIONARY LOVE

Rabbi Michael Lerner

University of California Press,
2019, 290 pp., \$24.95, h/b – ISBN
978-0-520-30450-5

Subtitled ‘a political manifesto to heal and transform the world’, this brilliant and prophetic book is required reading for anyone actively participating in the co-creation of a sustainable humane future. I was in contact with Michael a few weeks ago in order to make arrangements for a webinar on his book and he mentioned that he had spent some time at the Tamera Community in Portugal with one of its founders, Dieter Duhm, and that their visions combining spirituality and politics were very similar. So I went back to my review of Dieter’s book *Terra Nova* in December 2015, and found that my first sentence read: ‘the central theme of this visionary yet practical book is how we generate a new form of humaneness based on trust and mutual support.’ I could have written identical words about the present book, whose message is all the more urgent in view of the current turbulence in the US and the dispiriting choice of Jo Biden over Bernie Sanders – let alone Marianne Williamson – as prospective Democratic presidential nomination, supported by the usual corporate line-up. So no fundamental change will come about until at least 2024, when one hopes that the US population may finally have the vision and indeed courage to choose a more radical candidate with their real interests at heart.

The two parts of the book effectively set out a diagnosis and cure in terms of transcending the crippling dynamics of oppression and strategies for building the Caring Society. The book opens with a powerful sentence: ‘We earthlings need to build a fundamental change of consciousness in ourselves and in every part of our national and global society, in order to achieve the economic and political changes necessary to prevent the destruction the life-support system of Earth; to end global and domestic poverty and wealth inequality; to defeat racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of xenophobia; to protect human rights; to achieve social, economic, and environmental justice; and to achieve lasting global peace.’ If this sounds like a tall order, it is, but it is also an evolutionary imperative, and the first step is to proclaim a new form of realism and to repudiate the equivalence of realism with the plutocratic status quo and a one-sided portrayal of human nature and selfish and materialistic.

This entails that ‘liberal and progressive

movements need to move beyond the focus on economic entitlements and political rights to embrace a new discourse of love, kindness, generosity, and awe.' Hence the need for a new bottom-line moving from the instrumental maximisation of money, power and ego to the globalisation of love and generosity, kindness and forgiveness, ethical and environmental sustainable behaviour, social and economic justice. This is revolutionary love, and the goal is the creation of a Caring Society, which means caring for each other and caring for the Earth in a new Love and Justice movement. A key part of Michael's thesis is the need to address people yearning for community and a sense of higher meaning in their lives, which he calls a Great Deprivation (of love, generosity, respect, community and higher purpose), corresponding to a Great Yearning for these very things. The religious right has responded to this agenda in their own rather narrow terms, but spiritual progressives must now build a new movement based on respect for all; nor is change only on the inner or outer level sufficient.

A transformation of consciousness must be accompanied by political engagement, hence the proposed combination of love and justice, imagination and courage (pp. 53ff.). This stems from revolutionary love as the love of life and all beings and 'recognising oneself and all others as part of the fundamental unity of all being – and caring for the welfare of every part of that unity' (p. 39). Revolutionary love is both an ethical psychospiritual strategy *and* a social/political path. (p. 56)

Michael is the leader of *Tikkun*, representing 'the idealism, hope, and commitment to heal and repair the world that are the keys to saving the human race from further destroying ourselves and the life support system of Earth.' (p. 43) In analysing the dominant intellectual, political and economic worldviews of western societies, he distinguishes between science and scientism with its reductionist materialism that effectively denies the basis of human reality in consciousness, whose 'essence is freedom and transcendence.' The corresponding neoliberal economic logic embedded in the capitalist order is that systems are only rational, productive, efficient, or successful 'to the extent that they maximise money or power.' By contrast, the new bottom line will use the criteria of love, respect,

compassion, empathy, generosity and caring as yardsticks. A further challenge is the current need to appear tough and the corresponding fear of appearing weak (on defence, for instance) justifying the vast US military expenditure and relative poverty of social and medical provision. The answer is a new bottom line of credibility: being 'courageous and powerful in advocating for a world of love and generosity.' (p. 61)

The remaining chapters in the first part consider in detail the corresponding systems of fear and domination versus love and generosity in the flow of social energy, the challenge of toxic self-blaming and powerlessness, and the fundamental requirement for respect rather than an elitist and classist smugness and sense of superior entitlement if society is to change. This last agenda includes emphasising our shared humanity, honouring diversity of faiths, overcoming demeaning versions of identity politics and articulating a positive vision of what the left of stands for and not just what it is against.

Here Michael introduces the notion of prophetic empathy in terms of helping people reconnect with their higher meaning and purpose.

The second part outlines strategies for building the Caring Society: overcoming the dictatorship of the capitalist marketplace, major institutional changes for building a love and justice movement, and a look back at

the development of the Caring Society from the 22nd century. We can no longer afford to be estranged from our highest aspirations represented by what Michael calls a politics of meaning. Government is redefined as the vehicle through which we demonstrate that we care for each other, and every proposal must be implemented 'in the spirit of love and generosity' representing the new bottom line (p. 151) of what was originally called fraternity in the French Revolution. Work is reframed in terms of loving service and detailed policies are set out, including a guaranteed basic income. There are also policies for families and society, education, economic systems and a health care system that heals. Proposals around racism include restorative justice, a truth and reconciliation commission and a dismantling of police forces to be replaced with neighbourhood security committees 'trained in

de-escalation and empathic intervention' – current events show how important this is. The Fourth of July will be reconstructed as global interdependence day. A new Environmental and Social Responsibility Amendment (ESRA) to the Constitution will be introduced with strict component conditions, and money will be removed from politics; the Electoral College will be abolished so that the president is elected on popular vote; global security will be achieved through a global generosity plan that finds ways of involving China constructively rather than defining the country as a permanent enemy (this could be really challenging). However, 'the only protection for the future of the human race is for us to become the kind of loving and caring, generous and awe-filled beings that our prophets and poets, our spiritual leaders, and our own inner voices have been calling us to become.' (p. 229)

The transition to the Caring Society may well take decades, but the time to begin is now, a Great Reset for freedom rather than surveillance and control, a re-assertion of our common humanity, a humane revolution of love and justice rather than an enslaving transhumanist fourth industrial revolution based on humans viewed as sophisticated machines – we urgently need to work out collectively how to reconcile basic human freedoms with AI and technological development so that we can become, in the words of Albert Schweitzer, more finely and deeply human. This inspiring and visionary book points the way.

GUINAO

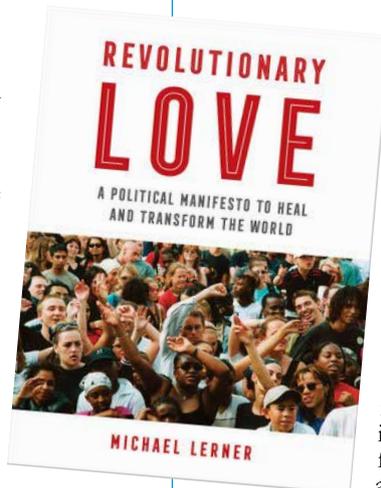
David Lorimer

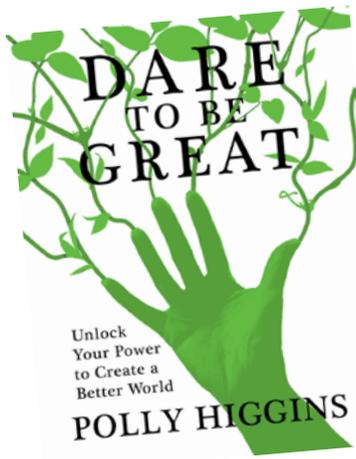
■ DARE TO BE GREAT

Polly Higgins

Flint Books, 2020 (2014),
191 pp., £7.99, p/b – ISBN
978-0-7509-9410-1

In this gripping and inspirational book, the late lawyer Polly Higgins tells the story about a diplomat friend who heard that a close friend of his had been badly beaten up, teargassed and was being refused to treatment because of her political beliefs after speaking publicly about environmental injustice. He took a diplomatic car to the hospital, knowing that this could compromise his career and found her in great pain and 'shaking so badly that she could hardly hold a pen.' At the top of a page she had written 'GUINAO'. Although she could hardly speak, she asked him to live by these words, which stood for Giving Up Is Not An Option. The diplomat immediately applied these words by whisking her off to a safe place – this was





Wangari Maathai, the first African woman to win a Nobel Peace Prize, an award that would also have been appropriate for Polly herself as the instigator of Earth Law involving Ecocide.

The title throws down a direct challenge to the reader ‘to unlock your power to create a better world.’ The first part is entitled ‘stepping into greatness’, a state of being and ‘a predilection for life itself plus a willingness to give of the self in service to something greater than all of life.’ (p. 29) Later, Polly adds that ‘true greatness lies in the thought and the decision to take action on it, not the outcome – greatness lies in the person who gives form to the thought, which, in turn, creates the outcome.’ (p. 81) In the case of radical initiatives, this involves defining a new norm and speaking truth to power. The new norm for Earth Law entails a new understanding and new values: to view the Earth as a living being rather than a thing or commodity to exploit; correspondingly, the sacredness of life is embraced as an intrinsic value as opposed to the imposed value of so-called ecosystem services.

The inner journey and the creation of sacred space in your life is a key basis for outer action, whereby we combine what the Greeks called *mathesis* with *askesis* – theoretical knowledge with practical training – in a process of self-formation. We need to purge our own pain and examine elements of inner ecocide, tapping into our innate self that will give the strength to become what Polly calls a disruptive influence. The second part explains the relationship between self-care and Earth-care, setting out a number of key tools: the language of care, the capacity to self-authorise, setting intent, manifesting intent (the art of intent made physical), planning on your legacy, nourishment, and the power of story – all in the service of moving

from command and control to a model of accountability and support (powerfully summarised in some choice recommendations on page 110).

The section on Earth-care begins with the observation that without an enforceability provision in a criminal court of law, there is no accountability and no legal duty to care. In the Ecocide Act, ecocide is defined as ‘extensive damage, destruction or loss of ecosystems’, premised on an expansion of concern for the Earth community and our relationship with all beings. Criminal law can prohibit, prevent and pre-empt certain acts as no longer acceptable, but the backing for this has to come from public opinion. Here there is an interesting analysis of stages with 2.5% radical innovators, 13.5% early adopters, 34% early majority and 50% late adopters after a tipping point has been reached. Proposals move from being radical and impossible to cutting edge and potentially feasible in this process of adoption. A central plank is to move from ownership rules to trusteeship rules, where trustees have a fiduciary duty of care on behalf of the beneficiary, in this case the Earth as a sacred trust which it is our responsibility to pass on to the next generation in a better state – this is emphatically not the case in our current system where companies are not held to account for ecocide. The fundamental injunction is similar to the Hippocratic oath: first do no harm, which, taken to its logical conclusion, implies not simply sustainability but regeneration, working with rather than against nature.

A first step is to publicise and support the notion of ecocide as an international crime and a new form of genocide, a task to which Polly devoted her life and one which also promotes beauty. We recently had a direct experience of this walking through a natural forest path and suddenly coming upon an area of brutal destruction by man and machine – the sense of disruption and lack of care was painfully palpable. In our own lives and agendas, we can follow her process of setting an intent: ‘life meets that intent by putting in place opportunities for greatness to be explored’ – and enacted for the greater good. Marianne Williamson, Jane Goodall and Michael Mansfield all contribute to this book and its powerful message. We can sign up as Earth Protectors at www.StopEcocide.org and sign the founding document to become a Trustee of the Earth – see also www.EcocideLaw.com. This book essential reading for inspiration, intent, energy and commitment to service of the greater whole.

GENERAL

LOST, LONELY, ENABLED AND DYSFUNCTIONAL

Martin Lockley

■ TOO MUCH AND NEVER ENOUGH

Mary L Trump

Simon and Schuster, 2020,
225 pp., £20, h/b - ISBN
978-1-4711-9013-1

In a letter penned to the American Philosophical Society in 1797, Thomas Jefferson, the third US president, described the qualities of a colleague as exemplifying “genius, science, modesty, purity of morals, simplicity of manners ... one of nature’s best samples of the perfection.” One wonders what this iconic president would have made of Donald Trump, a man evidently unable to show genuine respect for others. Would he have been horrified? Or would he have settled for his circumspect observation that “the government you elect is the government you deserve?” So, as Obama recently opined, don’t elect someone not up for the job.

In the 24/7 news cycle, books and editorials critical of Trump appear daily, many expressing outrage at the dismantling of norms and the loss of civility for which the president has become the so-called poster child. Mary Trump, Donald’s niece, a PhD psychologist, takes a longer view, tracing Trump’s psychology back to his childhood and the damaging influence of his sociopath father Fred Trump, a real estate tycoon who left an estate worth a billion dollars. Mary ends her book by arguing that Donald and his four siblings, including her own father Freddy, the oldest son, suffered “an epic tragedy of parental failure.” The lack of empathy which many have noted in the 45th president is described by his niece as an inability to recognise that people, other people, have “intrinsic worth.” Donald, she contends “is and always will be a terrified little boy.” Accusing an adult of egregious and destructive behaviour is one thing, it is quite another to commiserate with a terrified child.

When writing a book review, I rarely read the reviews of others beforehand. However, curiosity got the better of me and I found *The Guardian* describe the book as a “scathing takedown” revealing “the twisted dynamic of America’s malignantly dysfunctional first family”. Strong words, and consistent with many of Mary Trump’s sentiments. However,

there is another “sins of the father” message, which Mary Trump certainly intended, and is eminently qualified to deliver both as an insider and psychologist. SMN members of a psychological bent will surely find her interesting exposition rings true. The blame falls most squarely on her sociopath grandfather Fred Trump, though how parental failure compromised his own psyche, history apparently does not reveal. Mary’s memoir walks us through Trump family history decade by decade, showing us how Fred’s authoritarian lack of empathy scarred the psyche of all five of his children, making them live in his shadow, unable to be their own people, something Mary seems to have managed to accomplish a generation later.

She paints a contrasting picture of how grandfather Fred visited cruel emotional abuse on his oldest son Freddy, his second child and Mary’s father, mocking him for being weak and reluctant to capitulate to his father’s unsympathetic authority, and the very different treatment Donald experienced and learned to cultivate to his advantage. The contrast is stark. Donald, from an early age learned to please his father, whose simplistic “shallow philosophy” was derived directly from Norman Vincent Peale’s famous book *The Power of Positive Thinking*. Fred was so enamoured of this singular “toxic positivity” philosophy that no one, especially young Freddy, was allowed to express doubt or sadness or a down moment without being ridiculed as weak and pathetic. Freddy’s mother Mary could also not express misgivings or suffer serious illness, without being waved aside with the assurance that “Everything’s Great.” As a result, she withdrew from any intimacy with her husband and the children’s needs.

Young Donald learned that, to please his father, he would have to be tough and cruel, in short, a bully, so as to avoid the disdain his father had visited on his older brother Freddy. It was his defence mechanism and it was a strategy with which he had some success. But the price he paid for his father’s approval was generally making himself unpopular with his siblings. However, in a family where success was measured according to Fred Trump’s cut-throat, material, win-lose business standards the approval Donald received from Fred translated into large financial bailouts. New Yorkers familiar with the reputation of the Trump family’s shady history of real-estate dealings in the ‘Big Apple,’ already know that Donald is also the poster child for surviving bankruptcies ostensibly unscathed. All Donald had to do was get in front of the cameras

and declare “everything’s great.” So, what’s changed? Declare “All’s well” and “fantastic” when things are falling apart, especially if you are responsible and unable to admit it, or even fully believe it.

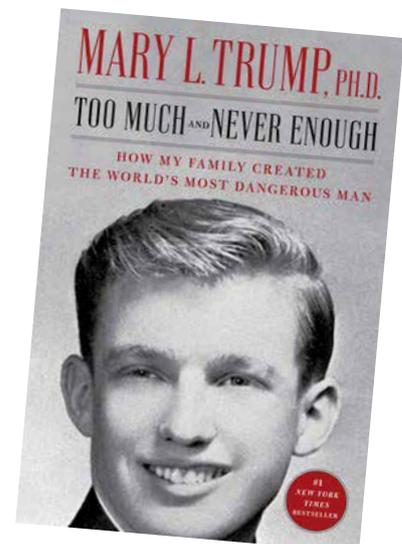
There is rich psychological fodder here. Mary saw close-up how her grandfather had effectively ruined her father’s life, which ended with alcoholism at 42-years-old, and near poverty, despite his father’s excessive wealth. So, critics, no doubt legion among Trump supporters, will surely use the same criticism as Fred Trump: young Freddy was weak, and Mary is resentful and only seeking to vindicate her father. But this is classic Trump finger pointing. Far from seeking revenge, Mary was, like her father, aunts and uncles, aware of the cloud of fear, denial and lack of intimate and honest communication that pervaded the family. Her *modus operandi* had, for decades, been to stay, for most of the time, distant from most of the difficult relatives, particularly Donald.

So, despite the often-scathing language, Mary was for a long time reluctant to speak out or apply her psychological training to an analysis of uncle Donald. She claims she was only prompted to do so when she saw Donald elected president and realised what he was doing and capable of. She and her oldest aunt Maryanne, a federal appeals court prosecutor, like many, never believed Trump would win the 2016 election. This is the point at which the Trump family psychological disorders converged with financial corruption. When Fred Trump died, Donald was quick to make sure he did everything to ensure that his relatives received as little of their rightful inheritance as possible. In a family known for poor communication the short story was that Donald *et al.* convinced the uninformed relatives that Fred Trump was worth a ‘mere’ 30 million, not a billion. (Donald sold the estate at a 300-million loss, and pocketed his ~170 million share which, reportedly, he soon mismanaged). Just to add salt to the wound, Donald and his allies convinced Mary that Fred senior had never wanted Freddy Junior to share in the inheritance. Mary knew little if any of this at the time, and even when a *New York Times* (NYT) reporter knocked on her door, she initially turned her away.

As the truth of the shady inheritance dealings began to come to light, Mary realised she and her brother legally owned a vast archive of Trump family financial records, and this gave her the confidence and incentive to speak up. She turned these over to the NYT and the rest is history. Three reporters

put together the Trump family tax expose for which they won Pulitzer prizes. One might argue that this was divine poetic justice. The “shrinking violet” niece avoids confrontation and the dark Trump family cloud only to find she holds a treasure trove of documentation with the potential to rebalance the scales and hold the dastardly uncle accountable. More poetic justice that Mary’s book sold a million copies on the first day! Incidentally, aunt Maryanne had to resign her position when the family’s finances came under scrutiny!

Many of the credible expositions on the phenomenon that is D. Trump have been written by ex-cabinet members, high-level civil servants, ousted generals and experienced political commentators, and very few are complimentary. There is also a 2017 collection of essays *The Dangerous Case of Donald Trump* written by 27 psychiatrists, but a book written by a family member is a first. *Too Much and Never Enough* pulls no punches, especially in the final chapters that underscore the subtitle *How my family created the world’s most dangerous man*. One wonders if Trump’s supporters accept or excuse his aggressive and blame-game behaviour because they somehow see it as a sign of strength, and empathy as weakness, accepting, as Grandpa Trump had, simply that “all’s well” because I say so and any dissenters should be mocked, dismissed out of hand, cast aside, even locked up. Those with the capacity for empathy and a little psychological insight will read Mary Trump’s book and find her message compelling, realising that inside the grown man is a lost, lonely, dysfunctional and defiant child, who has been allowed to play with dangerous and powerful toys, and always protected from the consequences of mishandling them.



DARK SPIRITUAL FORCES CONSTRAINED?

Martin Lockley

■ WAR FOR ETERNITY: INSIDE BANNON'S FAR-RIGHT CIRCLE OF GLOBAL POWER BROKERS

Benjamin R. Teitelbaum, 2020

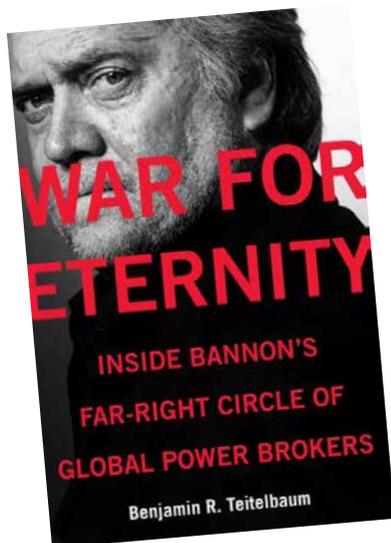
William Morrow, 317 pp.,

\$ 24.99, p/b -

ISBN 978-0-06-297845-5

Politics, propaganda, backroom deals and conspiracies reflect the shady, “dark spiritual forces” at play in the evolution of culture and society. What then are the more transparent uplifting manifestations of our culture, in which we can rejoice? Persons and institutions with aspirations to uphold the moral high ground, the best of community and humane spiritual traditions? Contrasting such ideals is tricky as attested by the history of war and peace and spiritual and secular endeavor. There are tides in the affairs of humankind. When I first read *The Fourth Turning*, published a generation ago, I found the notion of cyclic changes in the mood of society from crisis (winter) to rebirth (spring), the awakening (summer), unravelling (autumn) and back to winter’s crisis, quite compelling.

For those trying to make sense of the bizarre and discombobulating dynamics of the Trump presidency there is plenty of fodder including dozens of books, including one compiled by 27 psychiatrists, and others written by some of his closest advisors, most of whom have left his administration disgruntled or worse. It is no secret that after the Obama presidency, Trump’s administration has been a shock to the system,



however system is defined, and that it has all the hallmarks of an extreme swing to the right, which along with changes and shifts in regimes in other countries (Brazil, China, Hungary, Russia) have been recognised by history and political science as “authoritarian.”

Benjamin Teitelbaum’s book *War for Eternity* is part biography of Steve Bannon, the so-called architect of Trump’s electoral campaign. As a University of Colorado “ethnographer” Teitelbaum also delves into the shadowy world of semi-secret international operatives with political objectives that can only be described as bizarre and disconcerting. Most moderately well-informed contemporary observers of secular and extremely bipartisan American politics now Bannon as the former CEO of Breitbart News, the “alt-right” media outlet. What most probably don’t know is that behind the scenes Bannon is a fan of the Hindu cycles of Gold, Silver, Bronze and Dark ages, with their respective dominance by priests, warriors, merchants and slaves. CNN and BBC are unlikely to broadcast Bannon’s notion that the Kali Yuga (dark age) is a necessary season of destruction and “upending of value systems.”

It is, I submit, one thing to recognise society’s generational mood swings, but quite another manifestation of character and motivation to deliberately engineer and hasten crises and destruction of one’s fellow citizens. To do so behind the scenes smacks of the secretive archetypal villain destroying world order. If Teitelbaum is James Bond unmasking a conspiracy, his approach, unlike Bannon’s is decidedly soft touch. Bannon openly admits to Teitelbaum, that he persuaded Trump to issue a series of provocative rapid-fire executive orders expressly designed to disorient the populace and the political opposition, giving them no time to digest and react to one before being blind-sided by the next. Evidently it was a Bannon hasten-the-Kali-Yuga strategy, not merely Trump’s impulsiveness, and clearly the antithesis of a cautious transition of power approach deferential to the other party, one that had won the popular vote.

In the age of conspiracy theories (conspiracy meaning to *breathe together*) some fundamentalists naively believe (pray) they are the chosen minority who will be beamed up in the rapture: but do they believe Christian charity should wish a hastening of the end times destruction of those left behind? Do they equate their beliefs with the 432,000-year-cycles of Hinduism, or even the

century-long, four generation cycle of society’s mood swings? Are these even tangentially-significant spiritual questions, in an age of unravelling and crisis?

Teitelbaum explains that Bannon and a number of his shadowy associates belong to a loosely knit cadre of associates who self-identify as Traditionalist, “with a capital T... an underground philosophical and spiritual school with an eclectic if miniscule following.” Elsewhere he describes these persons as “a handful of intellectuals in the radical right disinclined toward skin head street gangs or populist party politics.” [If you can’t join ‘em, find another cadre]! For anyone interested in this miniscule, eclectic cadre, members include Rene Guenon, a Muslim convert from France, Julius Evola, an Italian baron, Aleksandr Dugin, a Putin associate, Olavo de Carvalho, Brazilian president Bolsonaro’s Education Minister. For good measure we can add John Morgan, an American seriously involved in a Hare Krishna ashram in India. An eclectic group indeed, and between them they have published a number of books through the far-right intellectual outlet *Arktos*, with titles like *Man and his becoming according to the Vedanta* (Guenon) ostensibly suitable for any religious studies library.

Perhaps due to the intriguing intellectualism behind this brand of far-right philosophy or simply due to the ethical norms of objective ethnological research, Teitelbaum adopts a neutral arm’s length stance towards his subjects, which probably helped with access. Teitelbaum expresses surprise at the willingness of his subjects to open up and espouse their Traditionalist philosophy which, argues that the secular material world is decadent, bureaucratic, conformist and complacent, and so in need of a “spiritual” shake up. Given Bannon’s personal wealth (~50 million), associates and political intrigues one understandably wonders about the authenticity of his spiritual aspirations and may wish to call on a persistent ethnographer for clarification! The subject once lived in a tent listening to the *Grateful Dead*, he then joined the Navy for seven years, and spend his down time meditating and reading Helena Blavatsky and Huxley’s *Perennial Philosophy*, before making a fortune with Goldman Sachs, and graduating to become Trump’s Traditionalist advisor.

Ostensibly Teitelbaum’s exposition helps us understand how such a *self-aggrandising* individual (*his italics*) might formulate and justify their idealism under the cloak of spiritual and or intellectual conviction.

Those of a different philosophical persuasion, likely find such radical right postures myopic and misguided, however much one allows for ingrained beliefs. Sadly and ironically, it is the humble unwashed masses who probably lay greater claim to spiritual clarity and a humble sense of social justice. Conversely, the misguided idealism driving extreme nationalism and thirst for political power manifests a certain arrogant conviction that one knows what is best for humankind. When this extends to the point of believing in, and scheming to intervene in the age old Abrahamic and non-Abrahamic cycles of destiny, hubris takes on new meaning and risk.

Ultimately Teitelbaum concludes that Traditionalism is too general and vague a philosophy to have long term traction. For all its opposition to globalism, social progressivism and professionalism, Traditionalism clashes with populism and nationalism. "Populism and democracy are able to coexist... so long as populism does not come to power...[and] require undemocratic actions." Could Traditionalism "share a space with right wing populism ...that functioned as the establishment"? Traditionalism "offers little incentive to be concerned about material inequalities" or "rally populations around ... the belief that earthly destruction is necessary" or to sell us all on "the messianism of evangelical Christians." Dark spiritual forces certainly exist, but it seems we can take heart from humankind's aversion to them. Teitelbaum's book, while ostensibly a neutral ethnographic exposition, is nevertheless a subtle manifestation of a wave of spiritual resistance to the darker forces of political extremism, which democracy is still capable of constraining.

STOP PRESS: 20-8-2020: Steve Bannon arrested and indicted for fraud by Federal authorities in New York.

A SHOOTING STAR

David Lorimer

■ FRANK RAMSEY

Cheryl Misak

Oxford, 2020, 500 pp., £25, h/b – ISBN 978-0-19875-535-7

Frank Ramsey (1903-1930) was a rising star in the Cambridge intellectual firmament during the 1920s, but his early death meant that his career was literally meteoric in its brilliance and brevity. Appropriately subtitled 'a sheer excess of powers', this scintillating and highly readable biography is

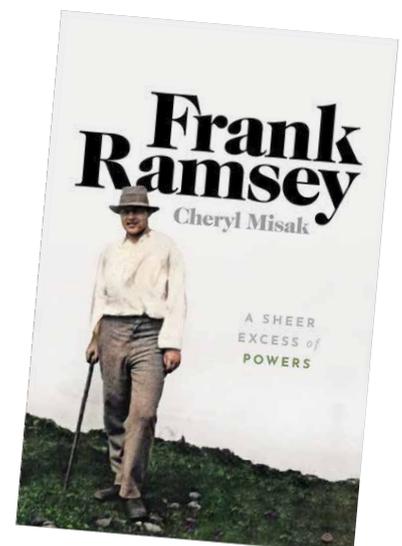
the first of a man who, despite his short career, made fundamental contributions in up to seven disciplines: philosophy, economics, pure mathematics, mathematical logic, the foundations of mathematics, probability and decision theory. He has an incredible 19 innovations named after him. Ramsey started reading almost as soon as he could talk, and took the top scholarship to Winchester College at the age of 12, then the top scholarship to Trinity College Cambridge at 16, becoming a fellow of King's College at 21. He was already an atheist by 13, and it is somewhat ironic that his brother Michael subsequently became Archbishop of Canterbury. At Cambridge, he was a member of the famous Apostles and read papers to the Moral Sciences Club in the presence of the likes of GE Moore, Keynes, Russell and Wittgenstein, all of whom were also personal friends. He was also part of the London Bloomsbury group with its advanced views on society and free love (it is quite an eye-opener to read about the early stages of his relationship with Lettice in view of the then prevalent social restrictions on extramarital sex).

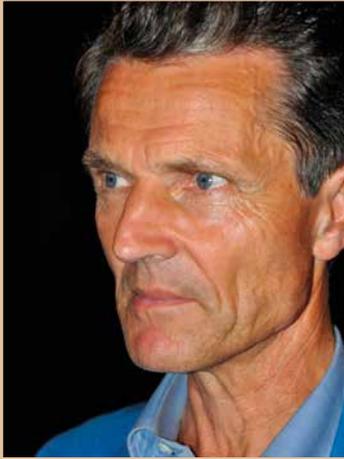
Writing a biography of a man with such an amazing capacity and range of interests is itself extraordinarily demanding, but the author succeeds admirably, also drawing on other thinkers to explain more specialised developments in his work in boxes throughout the book. I enjoyed this comment about him from GE Moore: 'he had an exceptional power drawing conclusions from a complicated set of facts... But sometimes I feel that he fails to explain things as clearly as he could have done, simply because he does not see that any explanation is needed' (a similar complaint was made about Alan Turing). On another occasion, at a meeting of the Heretics, Ramsey ostensibly read the minutes of the previous week, giving a very learned and complete summary of a philosophical lecture, but when he passed the book for signature to the chairman, the pages were completely blank! Ramsey was the intellectual equal of Keynes, Russell and even of Wittgenstein, whose *Tractatus* he translated by dictation from German into English at the age of 19. Max Black wrote that 'the *Tractatus* was a book of tremendous mystery and only Wittgenstein himself could have known what he meant by it, but he'd forgotten.'

All this might give the impression of a purely cerebral existence, but nothing could be further from the truth, as his life was equally full of interest. Ramsey went to Vienna to be psychoanalysed, where he was treated

by one of Freud's students. There are vivid accounts of his interactions with his peers and of the contributions he made in the various disciplines already mentioned. Sir Roy Harrod writes that he discussed philosophy in an extraordinary easy style: 'subtle thoughts were distilled into simple straightforward sentences. In an entirely effortless and almost gossipy way he set out the quintessentials of a problem...' His personal life culminated in his marriage and two children, although both he and his wife continued to have affairs during this period, somewhat turbulent emotionally even if they were both intellectually committed to free love. Keynes compared Ramsey to David Hume in their parallel scepticism and in making major contributions to philosophy before the age of 27 and extending their intellectual reach into economics.

Another parallel that sprang to mind is the Admirable James Crichton (1560-1582), who lived an even shorter life. He completed his degree at St Andrews at the age of 14. At the age of 20, he could discourse in poetry and prose in 12 languages as well as being an accomplished horseman, fencer, musician and orator. In Paris, he challenged professors to ask him any question on science or the arts in any one of 11 languages, including Slavonic and Syriac – and at the end of the day, no one had caught him out. Tragically, he was assassinated by a rival lover in Mantua at the age of 22. So in both cases, one can ask the question what if, yet life is as it is and Ramsey's legacy is still extraordinary by any standard. I can't recommend this biography highly enough - hugely informative as well as entertaining and a vivid picture of the contemporary Cambridge intellectual landscape.





David Lorimer

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

Books in Brief

SCIENCE- PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

■ The Science Delusion

Rupert Sheldrake (Hon SMN)

Coronet 2020, 440 pp., £10.99, p/b.

This is a revised and updated edition of Rupert's book that came out in 2012, which was reviewed and awarded the Network Book Prize in the same year. I think it is one of his most important books in terms of scope and impact and it appears in the US under a different and better title, *Setting Science Free*. For me, Rupert embodies the spirit of scientific enquiry in terms of curiosity and openness subjected to the rigour of scientific experimentation. In spite of this, he and his ideas are vehemently attacked by sceptics – most readers will know that his TED talk related to the book was taken down at the behest of its scientific committee but subsequently received more than 5 million views. The content of the book embraces history and philosophy of science in spelling out ten dogmas of modern science – assumptions that are taken for granted and are subliminally absorbed during scientific training. Rupert also addresses upfront the question of science, religion and power – his orthodox critics are the ones currently in power in terms of what is regarded as acceptable and respectable.

Rather than expressing the 'dogmas' as statements, he poses them as questions such as: Is nature mechanical? Is matter unconscious? Is nature purposeless? Are minds confined to brains? Are psychic phenomena illusory? Is mechanistic medicine the only kind that really works? Only the last two chapters on objectivity and scientific futures are without question marks. Each of the main chapters contains at the end a good summary and questions for materialists – for instance, is the mechanistic worldview a testable scientific theory, or a metaphor?

If it is a metaphor, why is the machine metaphor better in every respect than the organism metaphor? If it is a scientific theory, how could it be tested or refuted? The answer, of course, is that the mechanistic worldview is a presupposition or assumption functioning as a metaphor and can neither be tested nor refuted. It is rather a lens through which the world is seen. Tellingly, in the same section, Rupert asks: do you think that you yourself are nothing but a complex machine?

This new edition is 40 pages longer than the original and covers new developments in the sciences since 2012. These include a discussion of the missing heritability problem, the epigenetic revolution, and the extended evolutionary synthesis. In relation to memory, Rupert covers recent findings with respect to optical genetic techniques enabling the activity of nerve cells within the brain to be more closely studied. Here he argues that 'this makes the theory that memories are stored as material traces more problematic than ever.' And in relation to illusions of objectivity, he discusses the reproducibility crisis where it turns out that many reports in scientific journals cannot be replicated. Overall, the book represents an argument for open enquiry and liberated imaginations, which Rupert himself embodies. This is a book well worth revisiting and essential reading if you have not yet done so. The topics it covers could not be more important.

■ Land of Wondrous Cold

Gillen D'Arcy Wood

Princeton 2020, 287 pp., £22, h/b.

Subtitled 'the race to discover Antarctica and unlock the secrets of its ice', this engagingly-written book tells the story of the epic and heroic adventures of French, British and American expeditions to Antarctica from 1838 to 1842. The names of these intrepid explorers, James Ross, Dumont D'Urville and Charles Wilkes (the model for Captain Ahab) are commemorated in the geography of the area, although

for D'Urville, it is his wife's name that features, also in the Adelie penguins. The conditions of pack ice in relation to the wooden structures of 19th century sailing ships were terrifying, especially given the possibility of getting stuck and freezing to death. The book recounts the stories of these rival expeditions in relation to each other in vivid detail, bringing out the various personalities involved, including the young Joseph Hooker who was carrying out a pioneering work on biological oceanography. The national stakes were very high in terms of prestige and reward. Nor is there any shortage of tragedy when, for instance, D'Urville receives a letter from his wife saying that their son had died of cholera; and, ironically, both D'Urville and his wife were incinerated in a dreadful railway accident on his return to Paris.

Various interludes punctuate the text with interesting background material and create a link with the other main theme of the book in terms of the history of Earth's climate and the extraordinary transformations that Antarctica has undergone. Nowadays, the danger is the potential melting of the ice sheets and the resulting rising sea level. Its initial glaciation occurred 34 million years ago and two principal warm periods since that time, the mid-Miocene and the mid-Pliocene, involved atmospheric carbon levels ranging between 400 and 600 ppm. The danger is warm water erosion and tipping points for East Antarctic sea surface temperatures leading to marine ice sheet instability. Antarctica enthusiasts will find this essential and gripping reading.

■ Not Born Yesterday

Hugo Mercier

Princeton 2020, 364 pp., £25, h/b.

The central thesis of this thought-provoking book about the science of who we trust and what we believe is that people are not as gullible as generally thought – the narrative of widespread gullibility is not just misleading but actually wrong, according to findings in political science, history and anthropology. In fact, we have a sophisticated cognitive system - what the author calls open vigilance – as a resistance mechanism to propaganda and advertising. Moreover, from an evolutionary point of view and especially in relation to communication, gullibility is not adaptive, although it may give the appearance of being so in the short-term. Interestingly, this phrase 'open vigilance' corresponds closely our aspiration within the Network to balance openness and rigour. The author asks a series of questions in terms of what to believe, who knows

best, who to trust and what to feel. This always involves plausibility checks, reasoning and assessment of arguments as well as of trusted experts.

The two chapters on demagogues, prophets, preachers, propagandists, campaigners and advertisers argue that these people are in fact much less successful than we generally think and that successful campaigns play on existing opinions; moreover, we are in fact much more resistant than generally acknowledged, as evidence from the history of the mediaeval Catholic Church demonstrates. Authoritarian regimes rely more on force and coercion than on persuasion in maintaining orthodoxy: 'mass persuasion fails when it encounters resistance.' At this point, the author could have mentioned surveillance and tracking systems as a further form of coercion, especially in China. The next series of chapters consider a number of issues where what the author regards as false beliefs have nevertheless prevailed in terms of rumours, circular reporting, fake news, shallow gurus and skilful conmen.

The author shows his colours in the final chapter, though, in using the sceptical phrase 'quack doctors' in the same line as flat-earthers who 'ignore all the scientific evidence thrown at them.' In discussing 'anti-vaxxers' (the term itself is pejorative and rhetorical) the author accuses them of failing to put their trust in the right place in terms of the scientific consensus and conviction by sound arguments. However, this ignores the explosive political context that has been all too apparent over last few months; in addition, evidence suggests that and those who are sceptical are in fact more informed and educated (see www.childrenshealthdefense.org run by Bobby Kennedy Jr). The same applies to his discussion of 'conspiracy theories' and the use in this context of the word of debunking – these issues have been covered in one of our recent monthly newsletters. However, these are small criticisms within the overall context of this eye-opening study full of fascinating case histories.

■ Cracking Nature's Code

J.B. Head (www.headcase.global)

Balboa Press 2019, 135 pp., £9.95, p/b.

J.B. Head is an independent scientist with a background in microbiology and industry. In this relatively technical work based on 40 pages of references, he outlines an approach to taking our next evolutionary step through understanding nature's laws and operating system by implementing new technology based on biomimicry.

In connection with the rollout of 5G, he quotes Buckminster Fuller as saying that 'human beings always do the most intelligent thing... after they've tried every stupid alternative and none of them have worked.' He advances the concept of 'an orchestrating organism within a self-organising nonlinear physical process', commenting that the reductionist framework is not fit for purpose in relation to highly complex systems. The criterion for success is environmental adaptation rather than manipulation and survival of the fittest. His central concept was new to me – the protein actin as the universal architect of life as information, although I myself would hesitate to describe this as the 'root cause of universal consciousness', which I think comes from another level. Actin operates through a dynamic feedback loops, which the author sees as the 'foundation for universal communication, cooperative, physiological, dynamic adaptive evolution according to the electromagnetic laws of attraction and resistance that is natural selection.' This is certainly an idea worth pursuing, also in relation to its possible role as a substrate to microtubules in the theories of Penrose and Hameroff. Most readers will agree that we urgently require an evolutionary course correction, and this book provides a promising scientific angle that also encourages the engagement of people power, without which the current system is likely to stay in place, even if in a slightly modified form.

MEDICINE-HEALTH

■ The Resolution Zone

Barry Sears

Hammersmith Books 2020, 436 pp., £15.99, p/b.

Dr Barry Sears's new book is the most comprehensive statement of his ideas in 25 years of writing books on what he calls the Zone. His central contention is the critical role of diet in controlling inflammation that underlies the emergence of chronic disease. Reaching the resolution zone is the path to healing. He expresses this in a simple equation whereby inflammation equals damage and resolution equals healing. The three key components are the Zone diet to reduce diet-induced inflammation mediated through eicosanoids, Omega-3 fatty acids to resolve residual cellular inflammation, and polyphenols to repair damaged tissue once this residual cellular inflammation is sufficiently reduced.

The book explains the elements of the process very clearly, including the roles of various factors and in particular of sufficient protein intake, where the author provides a helpful chart, especially so for nonmeat eaters. There is a useful comparison with other diets, also referring back to his book on the Mediterranean diet, the last one I reviewed in these pages. Later chapters address obesity and the ageing process with advice on how to maximise one's health span. He sees the future of medicine in terms of evidence-based wellness on the basis of genetic diversity as a way of addressing chronic disease through diet and lifestyle. A series of appendices gives more technical detail, with one on using pro-resolution nutrition to control viral infections, including Covid-19. He is sceptical about the prospects for a vaccination, partly due to rapid mutation. Then at the end, there are nearly 70 pages of references. A landmark exposition.

■ Heal the Pineal

Githa Ben-David

Gilalai Soulbooks, 2020, 255 pp.
DKK150, p/b – www.gilalai.com,
also for accompanying chants and
explanations.

This must be the most comprehensive handbook about the pineal gland and how to heal and decalcify it, especially in relation to Hung Song chanting, based on the musician author's own experience (she is also the wife of Lars Muhl). She goes back to the work of Tesla, who showed that the ionosphere represents an infinite electric energy source, a technology that was not taken up for commercial reasons and in the interests of power and control. The book puts bio-electricity in a central role, as I also discuss in my review of Arthur Firstenberg's book above. The author explains the pivotal role of the pineal gland in the distribution of melatonin and in capturing light frequencies. She is careful to distinguish between healthy and harmful frequencies – the latter including the impending 5G rollout. The work of Dominique Belpomme shows that we are in fact living light batteries and that of Dietrich Klinghardt that heavy metals act as antennas for radiation, reinforcing toxicity from chemicals. The next section explains the origins of Hung Song and its role in the healing the pineal gland, itself related to the third eye and therefore to spiritual perception.

The cultural history of the pineal gland (so-called because of its spiral shape resembling a pine cone) is fascinating, as is the scientific background and its susceptibility to toxins and

calcification. The recent discovery of the interstitium – a network of fluid-filled spaces in connective tissues – can explain why the energy of sound healing can be felt throughout the body. The author describes various healing techniques that she uses, some involving breath, and other methods such as sun gazing (with appropriate cautions). The pineal gland plays a critical role in the circadian rhythm through its secretion of a variety of hormones, including melatonin, but many elements of modern life have interfered with its proper functioning. Restorative sleep is also crucial through the operation of the glymphatic system, which prevents toxins from building up in the brain. Unfortunately, pesticides such as glyphosate have been found to bind to melatonin receptors, leading to a disruption of the endocrine system. The toxicity of modern life means that we have to maximise the effectiveness of the body's regenerative systems, and the book is an eye-opener in relation to the symptoms of pineal calcification (p. 160). There is an interesting section on the therapeutic effect of boron and the work of Dr Rex Newnham, especially in relation to arthritis (www.earthclinic.com). Towards the end of the book, all these approaches are helpfully summarised into a comprehensive self-help programme. The underlying content of the book is not only healing, but also a return to our inherent Oneness in a world of separation.

PHILOSOPHY- SPIRITUALITY

■ Formations of Belief

Edited by Philip Nord, Katja Guenther
and Max Weiss

Princeton 2019, 328 pp., £35, h/b.

Subtitled 'historical approaches to religion and the secular', this volume offers a multifaceted and nuanced approach to the origins of secularist thought, and the recent calling into question of secularism as a historical inevitability, as had been predicted by Max Weber 100 years ago. It also shows how secularism itself is a form of belief and reminds readers that metaphysical naturalism is taken for granted across a large range of scientific and academic disciplines. Specific essays draw on many different cultures – Jewish, Spanish, Mexican, Russian, Iranian and Pakistani. What began as a movement for emancipation has itself become a new orthodoxy, the 'immanent frame' and context of the modern university. The fall of theology from its position as Queen of the Sciences in Medieval universities has been precipitous.

Religious truth claims have been moved to the margin, even though they can still be rationally justified. However, as Victoria Smolkin demonstrates in her essay on scientific atheism in relation to the development of socialist rituals in the Soviet Union, culturally embedded forms remain powerful.

For me, the most interesting essay was Brad Gregory on the Reformation era and the secularisation of knowledge. He explains the critical role of doctrinal pluralism brought about in the Reformation, but also the implications of the principle of non-contradiction when theologians so clearly disagree with each other – only one view can be correct. The modern epistemological space within universities inherits the scientific narrative of secular objectivity contrasted with subjective belief, defining itself in the traditional sense as knowledge rather than opinion. The rise of research universities such as Berlin in 1809 refocused their purpose as the accumulation and transmission of knowledge, *Wissenschaft* in the service of individual *Bildung*. The social sciences also adopted an empirical and objective methodology and the overall project becomes consilience within a naturalistic framework. This narrative is largely taken for granted, as we highlighted in the Galileo Commission Report. However, I believe that the nature of consciousness (a word not in the index; nor is spirituality or world view) poses a fundamental challenge to this agenda and that we will need to develop a framework that embraces this and that furthermore provides a moral and existential foundation missing from secularism – a significant reason for its recent decline.

■ The Tao of Thomas Aquinas

Matthew Fox

iUniverse, 2020, 224 pp., \$15.99, p/b.

This is the shorter of two books by Matthew Fox on Thomas Aquinas that will appear in this year. The longer one is entitled *Sheer Joy*, structured around conversations on his notion of creation spirituality. As Rupert Sheldrake observes in his endorsement, the insights of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) 'have been hidden behind a fog of scholastic and non-scholastic commentary and interpretation.' This book – subtitled 'fierce wisdom for hard times' – brings Aquinas alive in a way relevant to contemporary social and philosophical concerns. Each of the 31 chapters is a direct quote from Aquinas himself with an explanation and commentary. These are strikingly brought together at the end in a

format resembling the Tao and representing a condensation of the whole message.

Here are some sample chapter headings: the greatness of the human person consists in this: that we are capable of the universe; joy is the human's noblest act; religion is supreme thankfulness or gratitude; the first and primary meaning of salvation is this: to preserve things in the good; every being is a name for God – and no being is the name for God; the proper objects of the heart are truth and justice; compassion is the fire that Jesus came to set on the earth; and finally one especially for our time – conscience is more to be obeyed than authority imposed from the outside. These are striking and direct, with a central emphasis on truth, justice, wisdom, virtue and compassion. Centrally, Matthew brings out how Aquinas combines the outer prophetic function of interference with the inner mystical focus on love and a silent heart expressed as magnanimity. However, he also writes that 'a trustworthy person is angry at the right people, for the right reasons, expresses it in the appropriate manner and for an appropriate length of time.' This can be moral outrage at injustice, bringing within the energy for social change and, as we are currently seeing with the riots in the US. I would recommend readers to sign up for Matthew's daily meditations.

■ The God Formula

Lars Muhl

Gilalai Soulbooks 2020, 189 pp., €25, h/b

I have reviewed a number of Lars's previous books including his magisterial *O Manuscript* and subsequent shorter works on the laws of light. For those unfamiliar with his work, he has studied Aramaic and ancient Hebrew scriptures alongside his initiatory journey with his teacher Calle de Montsegur recounted in his first book. This latest book is short and profound both in theory and practice. It takes the form of a letter to the reader redefining the nature and role of Yeshua, moving from atonement to at-onement in a process of transformation and transfiguration. We learn that the Kingdom of Heaven reflects our Original State of Being. The God Formula of the title is explained as a union of masculine and feminine principles represented by air, fire and water. Lars explains the roots of the two Aramaic words *Malkoot* (Kingdom) and *D'Shmeya* (Heaven) coming together in the symbol of the circle (feminine) with a point (masculine) in the centre. This passage requires deep absorption

and meditation in order to plumb its depths and enable them to come alive within oneself.

These insights lead on to a number of practices involving the breath and unfolding our divine qualities. We discover that we ourselves are both the abyss and the bridge, so we need to begin with responsibility for our thoughts, feelings and actions. Our activity can then stem from a place of stillness where we breathe in the Holy Spirit – *Rookha D'Koodsha* – and breathe out the Kingdom of Heaven – *Malkoot D'Shmeya*. There are further beautiful practices involving the bridal chamber, the mirror of the soul and sacred oils; then a section on healing, various invocations, prayers and blessings. This special book is a precious gift to serious and committed seekers wishing to deepen their understanding of esoteric Christianity by means of embodied sacred practices.

■ Small Guide, Big Journey

Beata Bishop (SMN)

Peter Owen 2020, 94 pp., £3.99, p/b.

Synchronistically, the number of pages in the small book corresponds to the age of the author, who has worked for decades in transpersonal psychology and psychotherapy. Here she beautifully distils the wisdom of her experience on relationships and phases of human maturation, commenting that 'the main aim of our journey is learning to live consciously.' She begins with the wounded inner child and how to manage its demands, moving on to balancing the positive and negative in the archetypes of mother and father, also drawing on relevant myths. Every reader will recognise slightly different aspects here, also in the chapter devoted to relationships involving the acceptance of the other's otherness, especially in conflict situations. Most readers of this journal will have been through the process of midlife as crisis and renewal and discovered that energy follows thought. Beata tells the story of the friend declaring on her 80th birthday that she did not have much of a future, 'but I do enjoy the present' – maybe the reason she lived to be 101. At this stage it is important to 'live at the intersection of time and timelessness and ask what the truly important things are in life.' If we do this, then we can experience 'a second flowering of body and soul' based on positive expectations. In this respect, Beata also gives some good advice on achieving simplicity and uncluttering – and when we let go of the body, we can look forward to the next phase of our journey.

■ On Being Me

J. David Velleman

Princeton 2020, 89 pp., £10.99, h/b.

The author is professor of philosophy and bioethics at New York University. In this personal book, he gives an account of what it means to him to be human and engage with the deepest questions of life and identity. The chapter titles are suggestive, leading into corresponding musings such as being glad I was born, wanting to go on, fearing the end, regretting what might have been, making things happen and wanting to be loved. His is a reflective 'examined life' using sophisticated language and largely concerned with what Jeffery Martin would call the narrative self, a unique, persisting perspective articulated in language. He sees time as an illusion, explaining that he is the same being at different moments. He has an interesting discussion of the relationship between deciding and describing in terms of making plans for the future. One limitation is evident in his assertion that there can be no experience of mental images from previous lives – the author is clearly unfamiliar with the work done at the University of Virginia. He might also have benefited from some insights from systems theory with its self-referential loops and some treatment of the relationship between the tacit and the explicit as explained by Sir Michael Polanyi. Each reader will find a different mapping onto their own experience, but it is a stimulating journey.

■ Quiet Courage of the Inner Light

Philip Pegler (SMN)

Christian Alternative (John Hunt) 2019, 151 pp., £10.99, p/b.

In this moving and profound series of reflections, Philip distils the wisdom gleaned from his lifelong spiritual odyssey that took him to Ramana Maharshi's Arunachala as a young man. Subtitled 'finding faith and fortitude in an age of anxiety', he recalls many challenging experiences - however difficult at the time - that enabled him to grow into the person he has become. The four parts are entitled background to awakening, a transforming fire, summoned to serve, and making sense of the search. On the path, we find we need to be open and receptive, while also developing a courageous integrity and inner strength, dwelling in the still centre or ground of our being. This does not mean neglecting the outer aspect, but informing our actions as expressions of the one universal life force inherent in us all. In the process we are 'fashioning anew the substance

of our personal consciousness' while 'being lived by the indwelling life that sustains us' (p. 50) and achieving a certain 'steadiness of being.'

This attitude is inherently simple if not easy - remaining alert, present and open in the here and now. Philip shares many formative personal experiences, including a boxing match, an incident of succumbing to adolescent peer pressure, and the untimely death of his mother. Psychedelic drugs along with his spiritual quest put a considerable strain on his sensitive nervous system and his time as a psychiatric nurse undergoes a transformation of perspective by becoming a patient himself. Ultimately, this is all part of an alchemical process that transforms darkness into light and lead into gold. Suffering is capable of arousing compassion and eliciting kindness, deepening our sense of oneness and wholeness. Philip aptly defines the true purpose of authentic spiritual practice: 'to live with love, conscious of oneness and deeply aware of beauty.' (p. 124) The value of this illuminating book lies in its simplicity and directness in speaking to the condition and common human experience of the reader, shedding light on their own journey.

■ Calling Philosophers Names

Christopher Moore

Princeton 2020, 411 pp., £38, h/b.

This fascinating scholarly book is a breakthrough study about the origins of the term philosopher in Ancient Greece. The title reflects the fact that it was originally a name-calling and norm-policing verbal slight rather than an indication of the love of wisdom. In its original form, the category of *sophoi* denoted a political advice-giving sage and it seems to have been first more systematically used by the Pythagoreans. Interestingly, sophistry is still pejorative as it was in Plato's dialogues. The three parts trace the evolutionary trajectory of the term, starting with the critique of Heraclitus, considering its various meanings, then looking at Pythagoras in more detail. A central chapter considers Socrates's prosecution as *philosophos*, asking if he did in fact, like Anaxagoras, exemplify the category in his time. Plato is cautious in his attribution of the term, given its continuing pejorative associations, while Socrates himself considers his prosecution to reflect the subversive role of the *philosophos* in calling fundamentals into question.

The next chapter discusses the contribution of Isocrates to the development of the term as it moved in the direction of argument, (self-)

examination and improvement, and criticism. Then there is a more detailed discussion of the use of *philosophos* in Plato's dialogues, which embed 'a practice of concentrated and semiformal conversations about matters conducing to virtue and flourishing... philosophy as a beneficial conversational-educational activity.' The chapter on Aristotle demonstrates his absolutely central role in forming the discipline through a historical consideration of his predecessors (who became the pre-Socratics), not to mention his contributions to formal logic. Hence 'the discipline of philosophy depends on its own history; its evidence is the history of its historiography.... as a web of diachronic conversations.' The author shows that there is still continuing ambivalence about the term in the fourth century after Aristotle. Finally, the epilogue connects contemporary philosophy with the history of the discipline, which amounts to more than what is taught and published in universities. He captures its enduring value in its 'attention to detail, validity, and truth, with personal responsibility, and with the hope of a better life.' We need this more than ever in our own era.

■ A Treasury of Mystic Terms, Volumes 7-10

John Davidson

Science of the Soul Research Centre
2016, 2,368 pp., \$75. www.scienceoft-hesoul.org

Although originally from a scientific background and the author of a number of books on biology and consciousness during the 1990s, John Davidson has dedicated the last few decades to spiritual practice and research. These four volumes out of a set of sixteen represent the second part, where first part is dedicated to the principles of mysticism and the last to spiritual experience and practice. The series represents a monumental achievement of intellectual and spiritual energy in terms of the range and depth of coverage. It is similar in scope and ambition to *The Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics* edited by James Hastings over 100 years ago. The primary objective of these volumes is elucidating the meaning of the essential terms used by many different spiritual and religious traditions of the world throughout history within the framework of a universal understanding of spirituality, as explained in the preface. As such, it speaks to our times. It is arranged alphabetically and will be an invaluable source to scholars and libraries in the decades to come.

Readers will find that many of the terms are new to them, and each begins with the definition, also drawing on appropriate texts and poetry with bibliographical references. Among the entries in 7.1 are anointing, Brahman, Buddha (25 pp.), eagle, fisher, sanniyasin, saint, sage, rishi, Messiah, sadguru, shepherd, shamanism as well as historical references, for instance, to the Gnostics, Bogomils and Cathars. Many entries are cross-referenced. 7.2 is devoted to the inner guide and the inner beloved, with entries also arranged alphabetically, including sessions on the bridal chamber, Image of Christ and many themes from Sufism and Hinduism. 7.3 covers powers, attributes and characteristics where, in mystical perception, 'the physical realm is actually a level of consciousness.' These other powers may impinge on the physical through what we call miracles as a result of siddhis that are associated with advanced sages from all traditions, including in the 20th century Sri Yukteswar, St Padre Pio and Beinsa Douno (Peter Deunov). One of the great features on these volumes is that they are not simply theological, but are rather informed by a unitive and mystical understanding that is the result of many years of inner research and practice. I urge readers to draw the attention of their libraries and universities to these volumes, and arrange for them to be ordered at what amounts to cost price.

■ Christianity Expanding – into Universal Spirituality

Don MacGregor

Christian Alternative (John Hunt) 2020,
99 pp., £7.99, p/b.

Don MacGregor's vision of an expanded framework of wisdom Christianity consonant with modern scientific insights is a fitting articulation for our times with its emphasis on inner transformation rather than sacrificial belief. In many respects, it follows on from the work of Bede Griffiths, who bridged mystical Christianity and Hinduism, living the last 40 years of his life in India. He had just such a universal vision. The book is succinct and informed by wide reading, with the author moving from atheist to evangelical towards his current position. He argues cogently for the need for Christianity to evolve, basing his view on the oneness of God, consciousness and life. He explains the evolving scientific worldview in relation to consciousness and biology, and has an informative chapter on ecological imperatives. His Jesus is the wisdom teacher of the Gnostics rather than the sacrificial lamb, and

his concept of God is correspondingly broad and deep. Helpfully, Don gives questions for reflection as well as practices, references and organisations. The book encourages us to live life in its fullness of love and compassion and provides a blueprint for an engaged and ecological spirituality in our journey towards wholeness and integration. This is in fact the first of a number of volumes and can be highly recommended as a significant view on contemporary spirituality.

■ Awakening to a New Reality

Janice Dolley (SMN) with Ursula Burton

Sleepy Lion Publishing 2020, 526 pp., £10, p/b – www.sleepylionpublishing.com

I have known and worked with Janice for over 30 years and this book, subtitled ‘conscious conversations across the horizon of death’ describes communications over many years with her late friend Lady Ursula Burton, who ‘died’ in 1993. We have both been influenced by the vision and work of Sir George Trevelyan, whose work we continued with the Wrekin Trust that he founded after his retirement. The three parts correspond to Janice’s own vision in terms of understanding death in a new way, our individual shift towards the new reality, and our collective awakening to the universal. She has dedicated her long life to this cause, and the book illuminates a wider and deeper understanding of reality in which death is a transition into a New World that represents an extension of our capacity to co-create: the end is in fact a new beginning, another phase of transformation. The circumstances of the last few months make the book’s message of a transcendent realm all the more valuable – the difference is one of vibrational frequency. This also provides the medium through which communication can pass between the worlds, which are all interconnected, also through our subtle bodies. At this time, there is a key link between individual and collective evolution of consciousness – Janice very much shares the vision of Don MacGregor’s for the expansion of Christianity and a deeper understanding of universal laws at different levels. The book is a long one and is best read in a contemplative spirit as it is sure to resonate with a deeper spiritual opening.

■ Myth, Meaning and Antifragile Individualism

Marc Champagne

Imprint Academic 2020, 203 pp., £14.95, p/b.

This book is a critical exposition and evaluation of the ideas of Jordan Peterson, who has become very well-known over the last few years; his lectures and dialogues on YouTube attract tens of thousands of viewers. In this respect, one of his dialogues with Iain McGilchrist is likely to be of special interest to readers. I was not that familiar with Peterson’s ideas, and this book does a very good job in terms of a critical introduction. Themes explored include knowledge, ignorance and the unknown, meaning, the roots of morality in personality types and early social interactions, the transformative power of speech and individual action, the role of ideals, and the nature of hierarchies. It is interesting to note Peterson’s position of acting as if God exists. For him, it is not so much the metaphysics of religion that is important but the moral and ethical ideals in a realm of both order and chaos. He notes that we still largely inhabit a world of traditional values at psychological and social levels, though I personally believe that the metaphysics of scientific materialism is not unrelated to our current mental health crisis.

For him, myths are descriptions of our biological predicament in narrative terms, also informed by archetypes. His emphasis is on individual autonomy and responsibility, and hence on free speech, which has landed him in a few controversies with respect to university platforms – hence the incorporation of ‘anti-fragile’ in the title. This involves reconciling the ethics of autonomy, community and divinity. Peterson suggests that the great myths and religious stories of the past are fundamentally moral in their intent rather than descriptive, seeing human life as an unfolding drama. The resolution of disagreements remains central and critical. The author is surely right in highlighting the importance of viable theories of values, consciousness, meaning, aesthetic experience and ritual, all of which entail the reconciliation of individual and collective interests, self and other, the part and the whole. My own contribution lies in the formulation of an ethic of interconnectedness that can be understood at a number of different levels and corresponds to insights in physics, biology, psychology, ecology, systems theory and mystical experience. Although I come from a distinctive metaphysical view based on the depths of human experience,

the structure of this ethic in terms of symbiosis, synergy and the golden rule can be understood at any level.

■ What was in the Buddha’s Left Hand?

Ira Rechtshaffer

Changemakers Books (John Hunt) 2020, 164 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Subtitled ‘Tantric teachings to transform neurosis into sanity’, this book draws on four decades of Buddhist study and practice along with the author’s clinical experience to provide a comprehensive guide to the five interdependent mandala elements or wisdom energies of this teaching: space, water, earth, fire and the wind. The process involves deep psychospiritual work involving many layers, aspects and dimensions over the self. Each part characterises the key qualities of the element and how these can be distorted as well as transmuted into its enlightened form. A final part suggests what the Buddha might recommend on experiential terms as a reflection over the life of the senses ‘through which we experience our body and the body of the natural world as sacred and worthy of veneration’, reaching an expanded sense of personhood beyond what the author calls pathological individualism and self-preserving egolessness whereby we can become fully present in the world.

■ Conversations with the Buddha

Joan Duncan Oliver

Watkins 2019, 116 pp., £9.99, h/b.

This book forms part of an accessible introductory series that provides a short biography and thematic conversations around key teachings. The biography relates his various encounters with Mara as his adversary while the individual chapters draw on Buddhist writings to provide clear explanations and indeed reminders of the central teachings in terms of suffering, impermanence, no self, karma, morality, mindfulness, compassion and the way of the bodhisattva. I found the format simple and direct so that the book can serve as a lucid introduction as well as a repetition of core spiritual truths that we cannot hear too often.

■ The Once and Future John

Colum Hayward

Polair Publishing 2019, 104 pp., £11.99, p/b.

I reviewed an earlier series of articles on St John published in the White Eagle magazine *Stella Polaris*, and this new collection contains a series of inspiring reflections on the central

role that John plays in this teaching, including the author's connection to the Cathars, about which he has written separately. My own perspective in relation to John has been modified by my reading of the Gospel of the Beloved Companion and my detailed comparative textual commentary between these two gospels. Nevertheless, there is considerable common ground in terms of the centrality of love and light, the importance of the feminine principle and the special role that John plays in relation to Jesus, including material taken from the Acts of John. John also plays a role in the Lodge as an intermediary figure towards imitation of Christ—again this brings us back to love and light as the essence of spiritual presence.

PSYCHOLOGY- CONSCIOUSNESS STUDIES

■ Consciousness as Feeling

Steve Minett (SMN)

Edwin Mellen Press 2019, 634 pp., \$299, p/b. (can be downloaded for personal purposes from <https://consciousvm.wordpress.com/my-book-on-consciousness-theory/>)

This is a brilliant and significant contribution to debates on the philosophy of consciousness, drawing on a wide range of literature and proposing a new and more adequate ontology as part of an explanation of its role and function. It is aimed at informed readers already familiar with the main issues, and its arguments are correspondingly detailed. Steve shows how the 'hard problem' arises from developments in science and the history of philosophy notably the Western 'ethno-psychology' originating in Descartes and ultimately leading to the denial and dismissal of the self, free will and qualia to be found in contemporary philosophy and best exemplified in Daniel Dennett. He calls this the "Car-Ton" view (Ton from Newton) and discusses how 'folk psychology' has been dismantled and consciousness – characterised for him by sentience, qualia and the self - is reduced to information-processing. He critically and informatively covers all the main schools of thought, highlighting their neglect of emotions and affect as well as of metaphysics under the influence of behaviourism, logical positivism and what he calls 'ideological empiricism'.

Drawing on many authoritative sources, Steve argues that mainstream philosophers of quantum mechanics suffered an ontological failure of

nerve in not developing an updated ontology corresponding to the findings of quantum theory (though personally, I believe that David Bohm was working in this direction). They have remained within the realist Car-Ton worldview, which has also perpetuated the hard problem. The second part of the book develops a new ontology that he calls 'Whit-Tum', an abbreviation of Whitehead and Quantum. Whitehead developed a philosophy based on process rather than substance and his successors have built on his views to formulate 'pan-experientialism' (to be distinguished from panpsychism) whereby sentience and experience are ontologically fundamental. Among the thinkers drawn on here are Henry Stapp, Bernard d'Espagnat and late judge-philosopher and SMN Member David Hodgson (*The Mind Matters*). Steve crucially notes that 'within this Whit-Tum world the 'hard problem' of sentience does not arise since experience not only permeates the entire universe, but is the substance out of which it is fabricated' (p. 608).

A further consequence of this view is an emphasis on embodied rather than disembodied spirituality based on the mind-matter split and a focus on transcendence. Although the thesis of the book is to restore sentience and feeling to centre stage, Steve does not cover the thought of women such as Mary Midgley, Evelyn Fox Keller or Riane Eisler. The work on self-reflexive consciousness by Max Velmans would also have been a useful addition to the discussion, as would the views of Chris Clarke, not only in relation to philosophical implications of quantum theory, but also embodied spirituality. Steve refers the significance of Gilbert Ryle, but could have reinforced his argument for the centrality of metaphysics by citing the work of R.G. Collingwood, Ryle's predecessor in the same chair at Oxford. Nonetheless, as I said at the beginning, the book is a significant contribution to the current debate and deserves a wide readership in the consciousness studies community. We certainly need the kind of ontology he proposes here.

■ The Dynamics of Gender and Life

Stephen John Pirie

(www.stephenjohnpirie.com)

Procreative Pty Ltd, 2019, 160 pp., p/b, no price given.

Stephen is an independent thinker, and his book is subtitled 'timeless principles of quantum, fractal and natural phenomena, and human social dynamics' representing as such the distillation of a worldview based on complementarity. The

central concept is the universe as a self-organising system (SOS) where everything in it is 'engaged in an ongoing, dynamic, cyclical, interactive conversation' forming a dance between unity and individuality masculine and feminine, boson and fermion, particle and wave, separateness and togetherness, Yang and Yin, possibility and actuality. The elaboration of these polarities is extraordinarily fruitful as the book unfolds into considerations relating to types of creativity, identity politics, personality structure, the relationship between belief systems (central command centres) and habit. Stephen develops two original new terms – the right hemisphere 'Wego', contrasting with the left hemisphere 'Igo'. Life consists of possibilities represented by waves becoming actualities as particles, corresponding to the implicate manifesting into the explicate. We also try to balance an active masculine focus with a feminine receptivity and openness. All this is embodied at the end of the book in a series of Tables of One and All (TOA) providing an amazing visual summary. Readers will find this an expansive and insightful journey that is sure to enhance their philosophy of life.

■ The Multidimensional Human

Kurt Leland

White Crow Books 2020, 302 pp., £14.99, p/b.

Kurt Leland is a composer and intuitive consultant who is the author of a number of previous books including *Otherwhere*, which I remember reviewing quite a few years ago. Although the book's subtitle refers to practices for psychic development and astral projection, this is very much within the overall context of spiritual development and builds upon the pioneering work of Annie Besant, Charles Leadbeater and, more recently, Robert Monroe, Seth through Jane Roberts (though not, surprisingly, Rudolf Steiner). The three parts involve discovering your multidimensionality, exploring your inner senses and reaching the higher planes. The approach is intuitive, holistic and experiential enabling us to awaken in different dimensions of reality as adventures in consciousness. The author shows how different planes correspond to energy bodies as corresponding vehicles of consciousness and how the overall process must be informed by a master intention: 'let everything be done in service, for the greater good of all, as an expression of life purpose, and getting close to the Source.' Epistemologically, the author's approach is based on the number of provisional beliefs and the following

thesis: 'when we achieve a certain level of consciousness (state), we have access to a set of abilities that would otherwise be imperceptible (senses) that can function like a separate self (energy body), uniquely attuned to an environment (plane) that would otherwise be imperceptible.'

Overall, the book is a remarkable exposition of evolving the inner senses, introducing new classifications and subcategories based on four types of senses: existential, environmental, kinaesthetic and relational. The author explains detailed practices relating to each of these, providing a roadmap and framework in the process. Development of the senses provides the basis for reaching the higher planes and becoming an invisible helper. This involves techniques for dealing with negative entities, finding trustworthy guides and teachers, and developing a mission in Otherwhere. An important practice when working in invisible realms is to awaken fully refreshed. Concluding the chapter on the multidimensional training programme, the author highlights the qualities required at various levels, including patience, perseverance, faith and finally love as the basis of the master intention. This is a landmark contribution to the field and should be widely read by spiritual seekers.

■ Spirits, Gods and Magic

Jack Hunter

August Night Press (White Crow) 2020, 125 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Jack Hunter is a leading figure in the anthropology of the paranormal and supernatural, and he provides here an accessible introduction to the field. The discipline of anthropology goes back to the late 19th century with the notable figures of Sir James Fraser, Sir Edward Tylor, Andrew Lang and Bronislaw Malinowski. The first three were armchair theorists, taking for granted the absolute validity of the Western rational viewpoint within an overall evolutionary framework. All of this has been questioned since that time, and the author describes the transformation of fieldwork methodology towards an 'ontological turn' that takes different worlds seriously rather than treating them as cultures and beliefs. The term supernatural also has a western origin and has become pejorative within our scientific culture.

I found the overall treatment even-handed and highly informative, with some illuminating theoretical approaches, including Stephen Braude's experimental, semi-experimental and anecdotal categorisation of evidence.

The semi-experimental category is extremely useful in insisting that widespread patterns of experience should inform serious theorising. Other chapters describe psychological and cognitive theories, sociological theories, and phenomenological theories relating to various forms of experience. Terminology and types of experience are carefully defined, and the importance of cultural context is also highlighted. There is a good chapter on shamanism and spirit possession, which notes the difference between monophasic and polyphasic cultures with respect to states of consciousness – modern academia is solidly monophasic and defends a reductionist perspective, often without examining the evidence. As mentioned above, immersive ethnographic fieldwork is an important development towards participation and beyond pseudo-objectivity. The sooner we share the author's view that psi is an intrinsic feature of consciousness, the more we can open up the field into the mainstream.

■ The Secret of the Alchemist

Colm Holland

(www.colmholland.com)

O Books 2020, 171 pp., £9.99, p/b.

Many readers will have read *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, and in fact it is a gap in my own reading probably because I never reviewed it when it came out... Colm was part of the sales and marketing team for HarperCollins in Australia and one of the first to spot the book's potential – after reading it, he rang his colleague in the US with a pre-order of 20,000 copies and a backup of a further 30,000. Thereby hangs a tale, as well as this book, which also recounts his original meeting with the author at which he promised him that Love would fulfil his dreams but he would have to decide what he wanted. This book offers the same powerfully transformative alchemical process to the reader, but how many of us actually formulate this during our lives and undertake the necessary inner journey towards true empowerment? In a sentence, the ultimate secret of the original and this book is the power of using the alchemical process: 'listen to your dreams, follow the omens, commit to transformation, face your greatest fears, invoke the power of Love in all things and make it finally happen.' (p. 162)

The book takes the reader through the unfolding stages of the hero's journey as depicted in the original book. This requires and develops focus, concentration, commitment, faith, perseverance, courage and integrity on the path to discovering

the treasure, the centre, the gold, the philosopher's stone. It is much easier and more comfortable to conform rather than undertake the transformational work and achieve in the process true fulfilment and empowerment in the service of the common good. However, this is the deep calling and desire of our souls, our inner core; and the path taken by, among others, Paracelsus and Jung. We are alchemists in our own world, so it is our choice to walk this path – or not. The temptation is always to move onto the next book rather than apply the key insights to our own lives. This book is different in conveying an essential practical message and for its invitation to a full engagement underpinned by Love.

■ The Hidden Life of Dreams

Melinda Powell

Bonnier Books 2020, 267 pp., £12.99, p/b.

Melinda Powell is a psychotherapist and co-founder of the Dream Research Institute UK, so she is very well-placed to explain the world of dreams and how we can best creatively engage with our own hidden depths. The book is informed by the current science on sleep and dreams, but also by the author's own extensive experience with many significant dreams quoted and explained within the text. For her, dreams have played an important role at key moments of decision and crisis, and it is evident that we also need dreams for their imaginative possibilities at this time. Melinda takes things further by introducing the context of the Imaginal Mind that can often represent the creative wisdom of the spirit within. Symbols are the language of dreams, and these include the sea and trees with their roots in the earth. In this book, Melinda contextualises dreams within the natural world and in relation to our daily lives where dreams represent another aspect of the reality of the dreamer – here readers are invited to interact themselves with dreams related in the book.

Dreams introduce us to a larger realm of meaning that can impart guidance at critical moments, as the author herself recounts. This alone should encourage readers to follow suit. Chapters are arranged thematically, decoding the language of rocks, stones and minerals as well as that of light, the colour blue, and the geometry of dreams in relation to dimensions of consciousness. Later chapters address the power of healing presence in dreams and the journey from fear to freedom potentially represented by nightmares. Then there is an interesting discussion of

lucid dreaming, of which Melinda has extensive experience, and where she introduces her notion of Lucid Surrender involving a radical form of trust that opens up a deepening process so that we can 'become more at ease with the unknown and mystery of life', realising that we are embedded in a deeper reality. The book ends with a poignant story of a widow being swept along in a storm and being told to take hold of a rope (representing reconnection) and to hold it 'firmly but easily' – a beautiful metaphor for trusting life to unfold for our creative development. This is a wise and well-informed book to help you awaken consciousness and the heart.

■ The Forever Angels

P.M.H Atwater

Bear and Co., 2020, 232 pp., \$18, p/b.

This ground-breaking book by a veteran NDE researcher develops her earlier work based on 277 childhood near death experiences with a new study of 120 subjects, pulling together the common patterns where, unlike NDEs in adults, there is no before and after. Everything is effectively after this formative experience at a very early age - all the cases reported happened under the age of five. This gives the subjects a spiritual nostalgia for what they regard as 'Home' and makes it more challenging to adapt to our somewhat harsh world. Some of these memories come from the time in the womb, which would normally be regarded as prior to any possible cognition. As the author points out, the implications are that we need to 'redefine consciousness and the workings of life itself.' The reader gains an immediate sense of the reality of the experiences through extensive quotations and also an understanding of the Love informing the universe and the purpose of life in terms of growth and service. Experiencers tend to mature more rapidly, have unusual psychic and intuitive capacities, higher intelligence and greater empathy (84%). This can make it difficult for them to fit in. Hence also the higher prevalence of suicidal depression.

The experience can in fact take decades to integrate, and often brings accompanying health challenges. The author examines patterns in education (gifted children) and relationships as well as careers, where they are frequently unusually successful. Interestingly, the children of experiencers seem to develop some of the same qualities. Some PTSD is associated with childhood NDEs, but this is often reinforced by other traumatic experiences, as dramatically recounted by a person whose family was involved in Satanic rituals

(pp. 152 ff.). There is an intriguing chapter on historical cases, asking if there are good examples of child experiencers who have made a significant contribution to society. Although this is not strictly provable, it does provide a new angle, and the list includes Lincoln, Edward DeVere, Black Elk and Walter Russell. The author identifies a considerable number of significant markers (p. 191), and draws the fundamental conclusion that the narrative is really about the life continuum rather than life after death: *'the true subject has always been continuous life'* - which gives us a radically different picture when compared with the philosophy of scientific materialism. This is a highly significant and original contribution to the NDE research field.

■ Shine On

David Ditchfield and J.S. Jones PhD

O Books (John Hunt) 2020, 260 pp., £13.95, p/b.

As Raymond Moody writes in the foreword, 'this is indeed one of the most gripping accounts of near-death experience that I have read' – I couldn't agree more. The journey is an extraordinary one by any account from a nearly bankrupt alcoholic manual labourer with virtually no qualifications to artist and composer via a near-death experience resulting from being dragged under a moving train after seeing a friend off. The author's psychological and emotional state prior to the NDE is pretty desperate, also in view of his problematic love life and lack of self-esteem. In the experience itself, like many others, the author experiences the light of pure unconditional love. He describes the agony of his physical state and gradual rehabilitation, as a result of which he puts a new life together and has the urge to begin painting, something he has never done before, in order to depict his experience. In coming to terms with the meaning of his experience, he gained some insights and receives healing at a spiritualist church, as well as having a counsellor to help him move forward psychologically – especially in overcoming his fear of love, a widespread condition. At a certain point, he begins to hear phrases of music in his head, and solicits the help of his brother in transposing these onto a full score via a computer programme. He had played the guitar, but had no knowledge of classical music, nor could he read a score. Cutting a long story short, his symphony in three movements is premiered by the local orchestra in St Ives to great acclaim. This is a quite astonishing development, considering where are the story began, the extent of his

injuries and his lack of artistic and musical education. You can listen to this (and see his paintings) on his website – www.shineonthestory.com – and I found it hauntingly beautiful and evocative, and surely a strong indication of genuine transcendence.

■ Till Death Don't Us Part

Karen Frances McCarthy

White Crow Books 2020, 205 pp., £14.99, p/b.

This well-written book by a former sceptical and atheistic journalist is the story of awakening after the author lost her fiancé and found that she could develop psychic sensitivity and continue her relationship beyond death. As she writes in the preface, the end turned out to be the beginning of 'an excruciating but ultimately enlightening journey to come to terms with the overwhelming evidence that my beloved not only survived but was communicating from the hereafter.' The book is written in narrative form that recreates the drama of the story, which includes contacting afterlife researchers such as Louis LaGrand and developing her own psychic skills in the process. There are moving descriptions of her communication with Johann, including many seemingly orchestrated synchronicities involving butterflies.

The author carries out research at the Edgar Cayce Centre and begins to have confirming experiences of her own – including some precognitions. One of the most interesting is when Johann gives her the number 496 on a yellow and red background that then corresponded to a vision that she had of his death involving a cab with that exact number. On another occasion, she is led to a piece of music by the German composer Heinrich Schutz, with whom she is completely unfamiliar, and the title turns out to be Blessed are the Dead. Johann also gives her crucial information about finding a new and affordable flat, and she herself has a significantly timed experience involving the death of her aunt. The cumulative effect is a growing list of incidents that can best be explained by survival. It is a book that will provide great comfort and reassurance to the bereaved.

■ Arthur and Me

Ann Treherne

(www.anntreherne.com)

Self-published 2020, 264 pp., £8.99, p/b.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a prominent advocate of spiritualism during his lifetime, so it is fitting that he is reported here to have communicated from beyond the grave. This book is a remarkable

psycho-spiritual odyssey describing some striking physical phenomena involving a table moving around the room of its own accord and even levitating into the air. More evidential still of the active role of Spirit in our lives are the instances of the author's premonitions and clairvoyance, including the Dunblane massacre. The reader accompanies Ann on her transformation from corporate executive to spiritual adventurer in the course of which she and her group are guided by none other than Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, himself with extensive connections to Edinburgh, where her centre now operates - the existence of the centre is the direct outcome of the whole intriguing process described. As Prof Lance Butler notes in his editorial comment and Prof Chris Roe emphasises in his foreword, all Ann's claims are carefully documented and she applies a rigorous approach to our own experiences. However, as Sherlock Holmes himself stated: 'when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever left, however improbable, must be the truth.' And we should remember Larry LeShan's truism that there are no impossible facts and should open our minds accordingly when assessing extraordinary claims, which in this book are matched by extraordinary evidence.

■ I Did It to Myself Again

Joanne DiMaggio

Balboa Press 2020, 310 pp., \$21.99, p/b.

Some readers will be familiar with the work of Edgar Cayce and perhaps that of Michael Newton, Joel Whitton and Joe Fisher on life between life. This book is based on a regression study of 25 individuals, where the first part analyses common features relating to death, the afterlife, the council of elders, the soul's mission and in the process of reincarnation. The second gives more detail of individual subjects, each with an indicative strapline relating to the nature of that individual experience. The goal is to enhance insight into the authentic self, and hence reinforce the sense of purpose within the divine order. The 'council of elders' seems to play a supportive advisory role also with respect to the structure of the future life as an opportunity for further growth. The deeper blueprint seems to inform multiple lives within an overall evolutionary process, seemingly including choice of parents and wider patterns within a soul family. The stories illustrate a sense-making process that readers can apply to the context of their own lives.

■ You Die at the End

William Ferraiolo

O Books (John Hunt) 2020, 356 pp., £15.99, p/b.

The author of this book teaches philosophy and is a practising Stoic, a feature that comes out strongly in this (moral philosophy) book subtitled 'meditations on mortality and the human condition.' It is divided into the months of the year and structured with Biblical quotations followed by commentary. It comes from a courageous if somewhat bleak perspective of cosmic indifference in the face of suffering and death - 'you are a bag of self-conscious meat. This is not denigration but merely description.' As such, it is not surprising to find many passages from the Book of Job, a topic addressed in detail by the psychologist C.G. Jung. There is a strong sense of transience and even futility (Ecclesiastes), though with an emphasis on the development of virtue, character and even nobility in relation to conduct - living the best life of which we are capable. The tone is masculine, with little reference to love and nurturing - it is more of a bracing tonic for self-reliance.

ECOLOGY-POLITICS

■ Shut It Down

Lisa Fithian

Chelsea Green Publishing 2019, 332 pp., \$19.95, p/b.

I doubt that readers who are not already activists will have heard of Lisa Fithian who, as it says on the back of this powerful book 'has shut down the CIA, occupied Wall Street, disrupted the World Trade Organisation and stood her ground in Tahir Square. This must be the ultimate handbook for would-be activists, containing as it does vivid 'stories from a fierce, loving resistance' from over three decades of all campaigns, along with detailed instructions on strategy, planning, occupying space, creation of banners and even on how to prepare for arrest (Lisa views jails as places designed to break the spirit). Her overall aim is to dismantle structures and processes of oppression, while creating structures and processes of liberation. It is important to note the degree of structural violence and oppression already embedded in our systems and assumptions, which she details with respect to the US, especially as embodied in the current president and his attitudes - in the supremacy of whiteness, patriarchy, capitalism and Christianity, with cultural values supporting individualism, materialism, paternalism and violence (p. 143). The status quo is maintained

by cooperation and networks of fear, while resistance and refusal to cooperate opens up a space for change.

It is here that Lisa draws on insights from chaos and complexity theory in the context of building up networks of relationships between activists. She rightly believes that 'crisis is necessary to bring about fundamental or radical change' and that the edge of chaos 'is the moment for space that precedes deep shifts in power.' This generally involves intentionally creating a crisis, as she extensively illustrates from her own experience. There are also dangers arising from government infiltration where an *agent provocateur* can incite a group to violence which then gives the authorities an excuse for a crackdown. I found the classification of power derived from Starhawk extraordinary useful: Power over, Power within, Power with and Power under corresponding respectively to imposing your will on others, solidarity, inner power as in courage, and acceptance of institutionalised repression.

The courage and integrity of the author are quite remarkable and inspirational. One example from the penultimate chapter is her involvement in Standing Rock, a situation that embodied settler colonialism and the presumption of the superiority of capitalist values (p. 241). Here, the indigenous Lakota values were in evidence: prayer, respect, generosity, honesty, compassion, humility and wisdom - these are the transformative values we now need to embody in building relationships of trust based on real human needs for love and belonging. The current story gives precedence to power over with its reciprocal power under, while our pressing imperative is to imagine and create anew - stories that create patterns of power with, that go beyond protest to protection, defending the sacred and opening the heart. The author sums up her powerful message on the final page: 'We are so lucky to be alive. We are on this planet to evolve, to fulfil our potential, to love ourselves and one another, and to be of service to the greater good.' What more need one say?

■ The Economics of Belonging

Martin Sandbu

Princeton 2020, 282 pp., £20, h/b.

Martin Sandbu has been writing at the FT since 2009 and advances here 'a radical plan to win back the left behind and achieve prosperity for all.' His thesis and policies are now even more important and urgent since the coronavirus crisis and its economic fallout. I have reviewed a number of

books discussing the relationship between the financial crisis of 2008 to nationalism and globalisation. These developments have increased polarisation at a time when we need enhanced cooperation and collaboration. With other liberal authors, Sandbu shares the view that economics and our economic systems lie at the heart of increasing inequality, and must be addressed in the interests of social cohesion. Another key factor is technological change, and the new challenges of robotisation are now being added to the deindustrialisation that had far reaching effects on factory employment along with mass outsourcing to China. The three parts of the book address what went wrong, what is to be done, and the way forward.

There is no doubt that the economics of belonging have been eroded, as have in many places the ideals of liberal democracy centred on individual rights, equality before the law, independent institutions, a social market economy, and openness to the outside world. The author analyses the fundamental causes in terms of technological changes and domestic economic policy choices rather than globalisation *per se* - often used as a scapegoat. The key consequence is that 'the western social order no longer fulfils its promise of an economy that offers a (good) place for everyone' and underlies social cohesion, as successful Nordic economies have demonstrated. This breakdown provides the context for anti-system populism and its recommendation that we ditch the liberal social order. The answer has to be better and more inclusive policies at the macro-economic level, including universal basic income and taxes on capital and wealth - anathema to governments controlled by corporate oligarchy. The comprehensive package proposed - a 'new deal' based on a centrist economics of belonging - confers a greater role on the state, but more in terms of intelligent steering (*gouvernail* in French means rudder) rather than rigid control. The most important political point is that in the package must deliver on its promises if we are to escape from existing polarities. One first step would be to popularise the title of the book, which I hope will be widely read, especially by civil servants and policymakers.

■ **Do Morals Matter – Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump**

Joseph S. Nye Jr, FBA

Oxford 2020, 254 pp., £18.99, h/b.

The author is former Dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and has been recently ranked as the most influential scholar on American foreign policy. The book's subject could not be more topical to current world affairs both in reviewing past performance and formulating ethical criteria for future assessment. The introduction discusses the roots of American moralism, exceptionalism and the origins of the liberal international order after 1945 in Woodrow Wilson. The author questions the cynical outlook that good is to be equated with national interest and advances a three-dimensional review that good moral reasoning should weigh and balance 'the intentions, the means, and the consequences of presidents' decisions', which enables him to construct a comparative scorecard (p. 37) for the fourteen incumbents under consideration. He introduces further useful distinctions for instance between Weber's ethics of conviction and ethics of responsibility. He notes that 'the amount and type of lying makes a difference in terms of effects on credibility, trust, and institutions.' (!) He discusses the relative balance in relation to hard and soft power between realism, cosmopolitanism and liberalism, also with respect to interventions in other countries. Whatever the circumstances, the author highlights the importance of 'contextual intelligence' for the framing of an ethical foreign policy.

The coverage is historical, classifying presidents under the headings of founders, the Vietnam era, post-Vietnam retrenchment, the end of the Cold War, the unipolar moment, and 21st-century power shifts. While the challenges facing presidents evolve with history, the possibility of ethical foreign policy is always present, sometimes undermined by the tension between official policy and covert intervention. The role of influential bodies such as the Trilateral Commission and the Bilderberg Group is not mentioned, nor is the centrality of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) in the late 1990s, although the circumstances surrounding the 2003 Iraq invasion are thoroughly covered. The chapter on Trump highlights both continuities and discontinuities with the past, and his report card is mainly mixed or poor. Going forward, the author sees a horizontal shift with the rise of Asia, especially China,

and a complex vertical shift driven by technology - and many of our key challenges will require cooperation, a combination of strong national identity with global concern - power with as well as power over. It will be a delicate balancing act, and this highly informed book will be a key reference point for the formulation of ethical foreign policy in the future.

■ **And They Knew Each Other – the End of Sexual Violence**

Dieter Duhm and Sabine Lichtenfels

Verlag Meida 2019, 223 pp., €19.80, p/b.

The authors of this hugely important book are co-founders of the Tamera Community in the Portugal, and have been partners for over 40 years. Spending time in this community is to enter a palpable field of love and trust at its entrance - this field has been built up over many years and is seen by community members as an ongoing research project. It also has a fundamental ecological and peace mission, most recently embodied in the series of conferences Defend the Sacred, organised with indigenous leaders. Despite the liberation of the 1960s, our culture still embodies extensive structures and patterns of repression around sexuality and its relationship to the shadow, violence and war - psychologically in terms of shame and guilt - and manifest in its most extreme form in widespread rape associated with military campaigns. The book is written in two parts, the first by Dieter and the second a complementary feminine view by Sabine. Their own relationship has provided the crucible for their lifelong research project around a joint commitment to love, freedom and transformative social action. The secrecy and guilt arising from sexual affairs stems from our inherited social structures and expectations with accompanying feelings of betrayal, jealousy and anger. The authors and the community show that another way is possible, and that free love - paradoxically at first sight - opens up a space for the development of real trust and openness. They argue on the basis of experience that free sexuality and partnership are in fact quite compatible, freedom and faithfulness belong together.

Another key point is that our emotional patterns are reflections of collective processes and that we are all striving for the same sense of love, trust and belonging that a mature community can potentially support. We need to affirm our sexual nature, while reconciling the forces of the Eros and Agape within us. Sabine places special emphasis

on this, reminding readers of the link between women, sexuality, the body and nature. The fight against the body has entailed the repression of the feminine and sexuality, the splitting off of mind from body despite our longing for union. She illustrates these themes with key personal experiences, highlighting the intrinsic connection between sexuality and the sacred, which is almost absent from our culture – imagine the revolutionary effects if this became part of the syllabus for sex education. To engage with this powerful book is to enter into the Sacred Matrix of Life and Love itself, essential nourishment at every level of our being. The genuine renewal of our culture and a future of peace depends upon fulfilling our deepest needs in intimate relationships and transcending the destructive patterns inherited from the violence of our history. Essential and transformative reading for global healing.

■ An Antidote to Violence

Barry Spivack and Patricia Saunders

Changemaker Books (John Hunt) 2020, 338 pp., £15.99, p/b.

Many readers will be familiar with the ‘Maharishi Effect’ whereby it seems that a small focussed group of meditators can have an intentional beneficial effect on the course of world events. Few will know that this claim is so extensively documented in peer-reviewed articles, as recounted in this book. Fascinatingly, the main endorsements are from surprised retired military personnel, who have changed their minds after reviewing the evidence. A series of 28 chapters document the research and many specific case histories that reinforce the argument and demonstrate the potent effect of inner intent on outer events in terms of influencing the collective consciousness in positive ways by plugging into the level of transcendental cosmic consciousness that we all share: ‘the mind in that state is no longer limited; it expands within an unlimited field of unity and peace.’ (p. 73) A separate chapter is devoted to developing a unified field explanation consistent with the insights of many distinguish 20th-century physicists as well as mystical traditions.

A key concept is that of brainwave coherence that occurs during meditation practice. The authors examine the question of chance or causal connections and devote a chapter to eliminating alternative explanations before bringing in further corroborative evidence. There is a fascinating section on peer-review reactions and a cogent analysis of why there is resistance

to such research arising from preconceived ideas - including fear of what colleagues might say if they gave a favourable review. One reviewer put his finger on the button: ‘This paper poses an epistemological conundrum for me. What we have is a logically and methodologically coherent effort to test a set of hypotheses that, to be blunt, I regard as absurd... I do not accept metaphysical premises of the study.’ (p. 177) Then there is the further challenge of seriously proposing the Maharishi Effect as a viable policy option. However, one can intuitively appreciate that the expansion of awareness is a good basis for tolerance and love, a crucial factor in Maharishi’s view. For him, this process is in accordance with natural law and it begins on the inside – ‘unified field-based defence’ - which less familiar territory in our modern extraverted and fear-based culture. We will be arranging a webinar with the authors and researchers early next year. In the meantime, this would be an interesting in addition to the reading list of international relations courses at university.

■ Unintended Consequences

Clive Wills

iff Books (John Hunt) 2020, 205 pp., £14.99, p/b.

One of the first people to analyse systematically the notion of unintended consequences was Sir Karl Popper in his early book *The Open Society and its Enemies*. This was written well before the advent of general systems and complexity theory, and formed part of his argument for an open society in terms of flexibility. Since that time, we have also developed the distinction between tame and wicked problems, where the latter are not susceptible to simple and linear solutions. In this highly readable, engaging and entertaining book, the author discusses many examples of unintended and almost by definition unforeseen consequences, many of which relate to government policy. Then there is also the important factor that any restrictive measure will engage human ingenuity in trying to get around it – a classic example discussed in some detail is the US prohibition on alcohol, and later on drugs. Another is the effects of the introduction of alien species such as rabbits and mongoose on local ecosystems. Then there are paradoxes of personal performance where conscious effort may in fact sabotage our results, as golfers know to their cost when it comes to putting. Sometimes, nudging can be the best policy when it comes to health interventions. On a practical

personal level, it is good advice to consider the long-term repercussions of decisions and the assumptions that underlie them. There are many instructive cautionary tales here to give readers pause for thought.

GENERAL

■ Lost in Thought – The Hidden Pleasures of an Intellectual Life

Zena Hitz

Princeton 2020, 226 pp., \$22.95, h/b.

In ‘an overloaded, superficial, technological world, in which almost everything and everybody is judged by its usefulness, where can we turn for an escape, lasting pleasure, contemplation, or connection to others?’ The author answers her own question in this important book in which she reminds us that the humanities are about humanity, and essentially about cultivating an inner life; in the universities, this should be about learning for its own sake, and transmitting the corresponding questing habits of mind and heart that broaden and deepen our humanity and understanding. This requires leisure and time for contemplation to create an inward space for refinement of thinking and perception. The danger is that these values are submerged by ambition and instrumentality where the intrinsic is forgotten. I was struck by the author’s observations about leisure, where we ‘stop counting the minutes towards the goal, because the goal is precisely what we are doing’ – for instance walking in nature.

In the chapter on the intellectual life as a refuge from the world, the author illustrates her thesis with reference to people such as Augustine, Einstein, Goethe, William and Caroline Herschel, Simone Weil, Malcolm X, St John of the Cross and the ornithologist John Baker, who wrote that ‘the hardest thing of all is to see what is really there.’ These people all developed an excellence of perception that takes time and a certain ascetic discipline to mature as well as cultivation of what she calls the virtue of seriousness. The final main chapter discusses the uses of uselessness, beginning with a splendid quotation from Seneca and reminding readers that ‘the social use of intellectual life lies in its cultivation of broader and richer ways of being human’ (p. 188) rather than matters of money, social success and politics.

Of particular interest to Network readers is a section on ‘opinionised universities’ where the author writes that: ‘if intellectual life essentially involves a reaching out past the surface, questioning of appearances, a longing for more than is evident, then it has next to nothing to do with what is commonly called “knowledge”– the absorption of correct opinions. And yet correct opinions are what our contemporary intellectual institutions traffic in: correct opinions about literature, or history, or science, or mathematics.’ (p. 192) Later, she writes that ‘education seeks primarily social and political results rather than the cultivation of free, thoughtful human beings.’ She continues: ‘Opinions rarely change...opinions are fixed in place by a network of socially directed impulses of fear and ambition. We change our minds when we change our clique, our social circle. At the level of opinion, our reasoning powers operate backwards to justify predetermined choices. Our social world is our intellectual comfort zone.’ Such peer pressures are a fundamental challenge to an independent intellectual and spiritual life, but our very humanity depends on cultivating inwardness, inner space and freedom - which this book so eloquently upholds.

■ The Outsiders

Philipp Ther

Princeton 2019, 338 pp., £25, h/b.

Subtitled ‘refugees in Europe since 1492’, this is an eye-opening and comprehensive account of population movements over the last 500 years, beginning with Catholic rulers in Spain initiating the first mass flight and expulsion. All this puts the current refugee crisis into a long historical view and reveals the sheer scale of many forced migrations. One early example is the fact that 100,000 Huguenot refugees passed through Frankfurt between 1685 and 1705. The three main chapters highlight the roots of intolerance in religious conflicts, the two faces of nationalism in ethnic cleansing and national solidarity, and more modern political refugees in our era that has seen the rise of international humanitarianism since the Second World War. An interesting feature of the book is biographical sketches of famous refugees, including Hannah Arendt, Mazzini and Queen Rania of Jordan. Jewish and other migrations and displacements during the 1930s are covered in some detail, as is the fallout from Yugoslavia. This amounts to a total of 30 million people being forced to leave their homelands because of national

ethnicity. There are a couple of interesting geographical charts in this respect, with numbers and directions of migration. The author summarises four experiences of flight: existential, predetermined, proactive and political. He also discusses in the range of political attitudes towards migrants and refugees, arguing that right-wing nationalists are not in fact acting in the national interest, which he feels should include ‘decency, a sense of proportion, and a rational approach in dealing with mass flight, its causes, and its consequences.’ This will surely become the classic book in its field.

■ Temenos Academy Review 23

Edited by John Carey

Temenos Academy 2020, 343 pp., £10 plus £4 p & p UK – www.temenos-academy.org

As reported in the last issue, this year saw the passing of Professor Keith Critchlow, who worked closely with Kathleen Raine in finding and maintaining the Academy. It contains the usual feast of scholarly articles, poetry and book reviews. An unpublished essay by Kathleen Raine asks if there is a normal society, partly with reference to our understanding of time. Andrew Frisardi contributes an excellent piece on Kathleen’s prophetic vocation, tellingly quoting from her poetry, which articulates the emptying of the self in old age and maturity where the ‘I’ becomes an ‘eye’:

*Who am I, who
Speaks from the dust,
Who looks from the clay?*

*Who hears
For the mute stone,
For fragile water feels
With finger and bone?...*

*Who out of nothingness has gazed
On the beloved face?*

Other essays I enjoyed were Andrew Louth on Bulgakov and Russian Sophiology, Joseph Milne on Cosmic Harmony and the Sacred City, and Samuel Bendeck Sotillos with his very extensive treatment of Religion and Spirituality according to the Perennial Philosophy. The obituary of James Snowdon Barnett also contains some of his powerful poetry, and among the most interesting reviews is one of a new translation of the Enneads by Plotinus.

■ A Short Philosophy of Birds

Philippe J. Dubois and Elise Rousseau

W.H. Allen 2019, 157 pp., £9.99, h/b.

This charming and engaging book invites the reader to consider

what we can learn from the life of birds on common themes such as vulnerability, equality, following the rhythms of nature, family, love, freedom, fidelity, pleasure and beauty. Each chapter uses ornithological observations (with chapter heading etchings) to illustrate and reflect on patterns that link us together. We are all subject to life and death, growing up in families before striking out on our own paths. Some reflections are also allegorical, for instance the loss of our sense of direction and the reasons for travelling. We learn, for instance, that the Arctic tern travels an incredible 55,000 miles every year. All species have to balance individual survival and self-assertion with care for others. Beauty can mean that we can get caught up in appearances and ‘all too often, we humans mistake strength for courage, power for bravery.’ In reading this book, I was reminded of the chapter on birds from Viscount Grey’s *Falloon Papers* – there is much that we can learn from nature and its rhythms, and in this case from birds. I recommend that you read the book yourself, then place it in your guest bedroom.

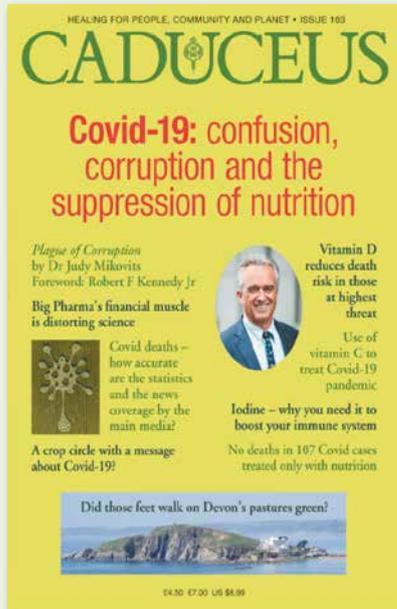
■ Pushing Back to OFSTED

Richard House (SMN)

InterActions 2020, 128 pp., £10, p/b.

In January, I received an urgent email from Richard about the impending closure by Ofsted of Wynstones Steiner School in Gloucestershire on the grounds of inadequate safeguarding of the children. In this robust and combative rebuttal of the Ofsted charges, the author highlights fundamental divergences in educational approaches and values where the authoritarian, box-ticking instrumental and compliance philosophy embedded in Ofsted is absolutely at odds with the Steiner developmental process that addresses emotional and spiritual as well as intellectual needs. Richard explains these key differences before going on to a detailed deconstruction of the Report itself, focusing on issues relating to safeguarding and leadership as well as incommensurate pedagogies. The value of the book lies in its rigorous discussion of competing educational philosophies that raise basic questions about the purpose of education. In addition, responses to a survey of parents reveal the extent of the distress and dislocation caused by this closure as their choice of a Steiner School is a very deliberate one arising from their own values – and moving jobs and house to find another Steiner School is no mean disruption.

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