

A Note from the Book Review Editor

In his deep, light-hearted and wonderfully meandering essays Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) tells of the answer the philosopher Heraclides of Pontus gave Prince Leon who had asked him which art or science he professed. ‘I know none of them – he replied – I am a philosopher’. This is only one of the many instances Montaigne uses to disparage the ‘moonshine’ of bookish learning and praise instead the heartiness of lived experience.

Likewise the humanistic ‘tradition’ has emphasised lived life and practice over excessive reliance on academia. The paradox here is that when a book is written with that attitude in mind, the pages reflect urgency, clarity and inspiration. Which is a roundabout way of saying that we need books, that we need to read and discuss, argue and verify, praise and demolish – charting in the process the wayward and unpredictable route of our shared thought and practice, of experimentation and reflection.

All of the above is a rather grand way of stating my intention: to facilitate a discussion of books which help and provoke our practice and our learning. Books reviewed in these pages will mainly be psychology and psychotherapy books. But also, tangentially, books on meditation and religion, books of poetry, philosophy, art, fiction and cinema.

One of the advantages of not being bound by the bio-medical matrix is that culture in its wider sense (intertwined with ‘nature’) provides the window to the emergence of the new. Not the new for newness’ sake, but the new in the sense of *event* – the emergence of the genuinely innovative and progressive, alongside a consistent critique of the ‘non-event’ – of what relies instead on a reductive, undignified and constricted view of human beings.

This is a statement as much as an invitation to our readers and contributors to come up with suggestions and comments about recent books (as well as milestones in the field). Your input would be gratefully received.

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