Book Reviews

Edited by **Manu Bazzano**, Book Reviews Editor

On Becoming Carl Rogers

Carl Rogers: The China Diary

By: Jeffrey H.D. Cornelius-White (editor)
PCCS Books, Ross-on-Wye, 2012, 230pp
ISBN: 978-1906254506
Reviewed by: Jo Hilton, counsellor, supervisor and trainer, University of Edinburgh

This is a fascinating, time-capsule of a book, offering the opportunity to accompany a twenty year-old Carl Rogers, of the University of Wisconsin, one of only ten students selected to attend the 1922 World Student Christian Federation conference in Peking (Beijing). The diary offers the reader an opportunity to witness the first-hand experiences of the young Carl as traveller, writer, friend to his fellow travellers, and theologically informed thinker.

It feels important to admit to myself, and to those who read this review, that I am in awe of the Carl Rogers whom the writer of this diary was to become: a person now known through his work in the fields of counselling, psychology, education and research; a young man who would go on, with colleagues, to make available a whole new way of working with others, especially those in distress. So I opened the early pages with a sense of unease. I was concerned about being catapulted into the position of voyeur, not knowing if I was going to meet the heart-breaking, compelling narrative that I have encountered in the diary of the young Anne Frank, or the gauche honesty of Sue Townsend's pimply fictional character, Adrian Mole. I found myself identifying with the young person who was writing about his travel to and in a new continent at a time when first-hand experience of life in East Asia was not available to many white boys, and still less, one who grew up on a farm in the Midwest of the USA.

A diary, as a contemporaneous account, can provide a platform for a later memoir, allowing the writer to expose, or gloss over, aspects of their personality which do not fit their later selves. In this case, no such glossing has taken place. Carl Rogers' daughter, Natalie Rogers, herself an accomplished therapist and theorist, tells us in the book's Foreword that she finds in these pages a father whom she had heard about, but also a father who was not entirely known to her, especially in the way that the young Carl Rogers writes about his relationship with a church and a God that had been such a large part in his early life. Natalie tells us that she grew up in a house where there was no Bible and no reference to God. The involvement of Natalie Rogers, along with the careful and thoughtful introduction by the editor, Jeff Cornelius-White, put me at ease, as between them, they created a quiet sense of holding.

The pages of the diary, typed on the twenty five pound typewriter that was the young Carl's constant companion on the trip, contain many stories. One is the story of a young man leaving home, a train journey through North America, a long sea voyage to East Asia via Honolulu, and travels in Japan, Korea, China, Hong Kong and the Philippines. Another is the story of a group of Christians of different ages, ethnicities and life experiences, travelling to debate with Christians

from all over the world in a place where Christianity is a minority religion. I note the active presence of a number of academics, including his room-mate Professor Willis J. King, the black students' representative at a time that they were 'hammering out our faith in the forge of discussions'. Here, the writer is able to write reflexively, noting some (but perhaps not all) of his changing perspectives on life, faith and relationships with other people. Another story is an outsider's experience of China at a time when students were engaging in public protest and leading change, when China was emerging from a time of feudalism and of war, when the values of Confucianism, a new engagement with Buddhism and the potential for the rise of Communism were all foregrounded.

Yet another story, and one that offers much to a young Carl, a long way from home, is that of changing landscapes. Here we come across a writer who allows himself the freedom to utilise his acute observational abilities, noting what he sees for the first time and offering evocative descriptions, whether it be a sunrise over Mount Fuji or his thoughts on the way a field is being ploughed.

There are tensions too. We see a boy who is sometimes 'as happy as a box of monkeys' yet barely mentions the life that he has left behind. Remembering my own travels at a similar age leads me to imagine much that is left between the lines, unsaid to those whom he imagines will read his diary. I was pleased to read a carefully written reference late in the diary to 'a decision that he has made'. It marks the emergence of one who is shedding the skin of the boy who arrived on the journey, and the beginning of the man whom he will become.

Access to this diary will offer a rich seam for students, teachers and researchers as well as those who, like me, are fascinated by contemporaneous accounts. The editor has added maps and photographs that help bring the pages alive, as well as a thoughtful thematic analysis, relating the content of the diary to the later work of Carl Rogers. This isn't just a book for academics; I imagine that many people with an interest in counselling or psychotherapy would enjoy reading it. ❺

Relational Heart

Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy: A Relational Approach

By: Ariana Faris and Els van Ooijen
Sage, London, 2012, 192pp
ISBN: 978-0857021274
Reviewed by: Rose Whiteley, Psychotherapist; Trainer in Humanistic-Integrative Counselling at CPPD Counselling School, London

As a trainer in the Integrative approach, I had high hopes for this book. I did find a helpful explanation of integration; a useful explanation of concepts such as the difference between modernism and postmodernism, that I may often have read about, but not always fully understood; some good descriptions of basic therapy skills; and a lot of information about incorporating mindfulness into therapeutic practice. Yet I found the book's premise, that the authors have introduced a new 'Relational Integrative Model' of therapy, on the whole slightly mystifying. I found myself repeatedly questioning how what was being written was any different from an overview of therapeutic principles, skills and techniques: useful, but not ground-breaking. To be fair, since I already work in an integrative and relational way, what may feel like stating the obvious to me could be much less so to someone from a different background.

The 'Relational Integrative Model' is offered as a framework that sets out to integrate psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioural and humanistic thinking and practice by identifying concepts they hold in common, and synthesising them while working at relational depth. The point is well made that integrating is a dynamic and not a one-time process. Therapist and client are encouraged to work together collaboratively to 'forge a common understanding of "what this is all about"' (p. ix).

The first of six chapters concerns itself with 'Models of Integration'. I enjoyed the links made between models of integrating theory with a client's need to integrate split-off and fragmented parts of herself. The content I found most helpful was about how we train practitioners to be integrative, e.g. helping

trainees to engage critically with 'a number of different ideas simultaneously holding all as contextually true' (p. 18). I liked the importance given to personal therapy and other personal development, and how these help students to 'become interested in their own process and their own internal world and to develop a stance of curiosity' (p. 20), essential to good clinical practice.

Chapters 2–4 describe the Relational Integrative Model in more detail and are organised according to a framework by Burnham called 'approach, method and technique'. This way of organising the material didn't work for me, and from here on I found the structure of the book quite difficult to follow. I felt as if the authors had tried very hard to divide chapters into meaningful headings and sub-headings to help the reader, but without much success. I also found the heavy use of references, acronyms and abbreviations throughout the book often interrupted the reading flow.

In Part 1 of Chapter 2, I enjoyed the section explaining modernism vs postmodernism, and how this relates to mental health and therapy – for example, the idea of 'normal' behaviour and the development of the DSM. I found it less easy to engage with other sections of the chapter, such as that on social constructionism. Part 2 looks at the importance of early relational experience, including insights offered by neuroscience. It goes on to articulate in turn the seven core concepts or 'relational heart' of the Relational Integrative approach – namely, authenticity, meaning, spirituality, attachment and loss, ambivalence, context and relationship. A number of clinical examples are given in grey boxes, and I found these very helpful and illustrative. I was glad to be reminded in the 'Ambivalence' section of the reasons why it is not unusual for clients to terminate therapy just as a breakthrough appears to have occurred (p. 50), since I was feeling rather disappointed at a client's abrupt departure earlier that week. I also appreciated the reminder in 'Attachment and Loss' that therapy is often a process of making space rather than actively striving (p. 51). The sections on 'Authenticity' and 'Meaning' are particularly rich; for example, how young children develop the unconscious belief that 'I am as I am treated' (p. 54, and Hollis 2005) and develop defences against unmet needs. The description of how and why we develop a false self which we fear being revealed brought to mind John Rowan's model of the self in his 1983/1998 book *The Reality Game*.

Chapter 3 uses the 'Temporal Framework of Insight, Meaning-making and Experience' to describe the Method of the Relational Integrative Model. By this stage I was feeling very grumpy about the number of frameworks and acronyms I was being asked to remember, and perhaps for that reason I found very little to interest or engage me in the chapter. Underneath the jargon, however, there were some useful explanations of counselling skills which students might find helpful.

Chapter 4 is titled "'Technique: The RIM in Practice'. It comprises a collection of subjects which therapists regularly deal with, and it put me in mind of the period during a counselling training where students are asked to produce a presentation on a therapy-related topic, and make links with what they have been learning on the course. Although I struggled to understand how this chapter (and the next) were supposed to relate to 'doing RIM' rather than simply 'doing therapy', both chapters have a lot to recommend them. Chapter 4 contains useful notions for the therapist's toolbox. I liked the explanation of how to use the concept of a safe place/person in the 'Stress and Trauma' section, and the updating of thinking on working with Loss. Chapter 5 looks at professional issues to which therapists need to attend, such as Ethics, Supervision, Self-Care, Evaluation, Personal Development and Research. I enjoyed the exploration of the 'tension between being and doing, between neutrality to outcome and a medical approach to therapy that aims to "cure"'. Chapter 6 is a very brief summary of some of the themes covered in the book.

In summary, while I was not convinced that a new model was being presented, the book is a helpful addition to the literature on counselling skills and integration, and there is much in the book which readers could find useful. I will be adding it to the recommended reading list for our students.

Alive and Divine

Gardening as a Sacred Art

By: Jeremy Naydler
Floris, Edinburgh, 2011, 128pp
ISBN: 978-0863158346
Reviewed by: Derek Cunningham, gardener

Plants speak to us deeply. The curiously eloquent white marks on the foliage of the humble lungwort held me spellbound one awful November day as it was fading back into the earth. Water lilies lay out their leaves in spring to receive the sky's energy, and very soon there are lotus flowers sitting between the leaves in their enchanting perfection. Everywhere, we have our trees, which open leaves and flowers and bear their fruits; and then are shorn of flowers and fruits and leaves till they stand in winter, elemental and as regal as ever.

Nature brings us back to our soul self, for each plant resonates particularly with us in that moment of meeting. They resonate with God, you might say. Naydler's small treatise connects us to far distant epochs when the experience that plants resonated with God was venerated and celebrated. In our gardens, now small and personal, plants are gathered to embellish a task: a place to dry the clothes, let the children loose, lose yourself, maybe even a place where we can find stillness, peace and our essential qualities. Deepening our understanding of the qualities a garden provides is one of the gifts of this book.

Gardening as a Sacred Art is a history of spirit as manifested in gardens from ancient Mesopotamia to modern Europe. Like the history of art, it mirrors the life of the communities in which they were created. Jeremy Naydler takes us back firstly to when gardens were not experienced simply as places of leisure but were integral to religious practice. To this end, the temple precinct contained a lake in which grew lotuses, and beside which grew papyrus, sycamore fig and vine, each redolent of a symbolic significance and the mythic reality of the community. From there he takes us on a journey.

Gardens, in the ancient worlds of Greece and Rome, became less a home of the gods as a place to accommodate learned discussions and meetings, and gymnastics. This reflected the retreat of spirit before the growing advance of rational consciousness. The late Romans valued good panoramas, but not of natural vegetation, unless it had been thoroughly ordered. Topiary was their contribution, and they liked embellishments like nymphaeum, grotto and pergola, but gone were the spirits who had inhabited them.

In the Middle Ages, groves and springs once again became the home of nature spirits. Enclosed gardens (the *hortus conclusus*) had a strong religious function, expressing the presence of the divine feminine, the rose of the world, the Goddess. The white lily, the red rose, cherries, violets and lily-of-the-valley all lent their particular spirit here.

Gardens from the Renaissance to the 18th century reflected a spirit of dominating and possessing nature, and were used by those advanced in the arts of domination and possession to proclaim their might. This trend reached its apogee in the gardens of Versailles constructed in a massive military operation by Louis XIV, the 'sun king'. Naydler sketches the ebb and flow of this long period, involving also English landscape gardening, but it is not until the late 18th century, when rational consciousness became variously qualified, that a profound respect for the nature of the plant returns.

Gertrude Jekyll, William Robinson and Claude Monet, all contemporaries, realised gardens that could be 'not only fair in form and lovely in colour', but also alive and divine. These great gardeners brought us to consider that a garden was not the end product of some conceived ideal, but that it evolved when a gardener was able to hear what the spirit of the place would have him understand, and he could allow Nature herself to engage his sensitivity in creating a garden. In the garden Monet created at Giverny, we have a cathedral where the sacred is once again acknowledged and celebrated, though in the manner of our times. He painted many times the essential spirit of that garden so that we are all communicants in its sacredness.

Gardeners will love this book. Occasionally you look down the garden you have worked all day (or maybe it was Nature that worked you!), and you have that peace, that sense of the numinous that cannot be understood except by somehow knowing that it is vital. Our author has been so kind as to declare it for us: *gardening is a sacred art*.

...Being Fully Alive in the Present

Not a Tame Lion: Writings on Therapy in its Social and Political Context

By: Nick Totton
PCCS Books, Ross-on-Wye, 2012, 180pp
ISBN: 978-1906254483
Reviewed by: Jocelyn Chaplin. Feminist Psychotherapist in Private Practice; author of *Deep Equality and Feminist Counselling in Action*

In this collection of thoughtful and challenging articles Nick Totton explores some of the most important issues of our day. 'That our social organisation and political projects are indeed constrained by what is usually known as "human nature" is one of the key lessons of the twentieth century.' He looks at how therapy can both help us understand these constraints, and at how they can also often be changed. There is a healthy mixture of optimism and despair in Nick's work. There is mourning at what he sees as the failed revolution/idealism of the 1960s and 1970s. But there is also the hope for 'psychotherapy as a means for psychological liberation, freeing up our energy for individual and collective creativity'. While this may seem a more limited goal than the earlier desire for a complete transformation of society, he does link it with anti hierarchical, non-controlling political ideals.

Again and again, Nick reminds us that we are not isolated individuals but exist in social and political contexts. Both the therapist and the client bring these to the work we do together, both consciously and unconsciously. Often there are unacknowledged power differences that are not only due to the particular role of the therapist. These may be around class, gender, race, age or sexual orientation, all of which are addressed these days in diversity awareness on good training courses. But Nick brings our attention to the actual power dynamics in the room and how we acknowledge it or don't, how we think about it as therapists, and our own experiences and beliefs. He sees life as 'inherently political', whether we like it or not. Nick sees politics as being about power and control. He believes that we cannot understand individual suffering without looking at the context of power.

Underlying this political awareness of power differences is the deep structure of hierarchy in which people see each other as superior or inferior and then control or are controlled, are powerful or powerless, dominating or dominated. The changing of our thinking as well as action is a vital part of changing society. But what are we hoping to change it to? On the one hand therapists are encouraged to follow the client, listen to and respect them, and on the other, many of us do have a broad non-party political agenda. We hope that people will feel and act more equally, as this increases self-esteem and all the other 'goals' our clients have. In that sense it is left leaning rather than right. Nick is more explicit about this than many others. An important example for Nick is the difference between local and expert knowledge. Experts often assume a superior position and try and control local events in society. But in the same way, a therapist assuming an expert role becomes 'above' and more powerful than the 'local' client. He relates this to contact between two languages, where in the expert scenario the 'lower' group simply takes on the language of the dominant one. In a more equal situation they gradually combine the languages, for example, first in Pidgin and then in Creole, which is a language in its own right. Unfortunately it is still common for the client to take on the language of the therapist. This is something we all need to watch, and learn to develop our own shared 'Creole' with the existing language of the client.

He shows how deep changes in the human psyche are needed for the kind of more equal, free and fulfilling society many of us want. In his ideas around wild therapy he stresses how we need to learn to let go of our determination to control everything. He writes of trusting our bodies more and of embodied relating. He even says that we need to abandon structures of domination and hierarchy internally as well as externally. Control is indeed a hierarchical construct, whether it is over one's own body or over another being.

There are always arguments on both sides of the 'human nature' debate. What is hard wired and what can be changed? And can mere ideology make deep changes, or do we need paradigm shifts to the very structure of our thinking and being? Are there innate 'moral' responses evolved through our species' need to co-operate in order to survive? Or do these have to be learnt? While Nick doesn't answer any of these questions, he helps us think more clearly about them in relation to therapy. And most importantly he encourages us to take risks from the deepest core of ourselves and experience being fully alive in the present, both with our clients and in our own lives.

Alive, Alive

Infinitely Beloved: A Therapist Explores Divine Intimacy (2nd edition)

By: Brian Thorne
PCCS Books, Ross-on-Wye, 2012, 106pp
ISBN: 978-1906254520
Reviewed by: Richard House, University of Winchester; author of In, *Against and Beyond Therapy* and *Against and for CBT* (co-editor)

A breathtaking photograph of a Harlech, North Wales sky and a new endorsement from the Bishop of Norwich herald the second edition of Brian Thorne's fascinating new book, the first edition of which I read back in 2003, and which was published then by Darton, Longman and Todd, the religious publishers. As the new publisher's notice describes, the book emerged from lectures Brian delivered in Salisbury Cathedral and St Julian's church, Norwich. What is conveyed in this book is the passionate commitment of a master bridge-builder between the worlds of therapy and mystical theology. Readers who know Brian's many seminal writings on person-centred therapy will be fascinated to read about him in the roles of army officer, schoolmaster, counsellor, writer, university professor and life-long member of the Anglican church. There is also much of interest in the book on Carl Rogers, the medieval mystic Julian of Norwich, and the British therapist and educator George Lyward; more on that later.

A new introduction touches upon the considerable influence that the first edition had in religious circles, and also upon its impact on Constantinos Loizou and the history of the EOKA campaign in Cyprus. There is also an entirely new final chapter on Julian of Norwich (the Julian Lecture), in which Thorne explores Julian's challenge to humanity, with her concept of the unconditional love of God and her faith in the inherent glory of humanity.

Few would dispute that something is quite fundamentally wrong in modern culture, and yet few contemporary commentators possess the overarching vision accurately to take the pulse of this mounting malaise, plausibly to 'diagnose' its origins, and offer viable pathways that afford some hope of transcending our escalating ills. Brian Thorne is one such figure, and many of us greatly admire the courage he has shown since the 1990s in speaking out against the conventional 'wisdom' concerning therapy professionalisation and regulation. Here we are offered a highly readable, intimately personal, sometimes painfully self-revelatory insight into Brian Thorne's own particular journey as a therapist, and into his abiding compassion for the raw soul of our suffering world. The book is also a clarion-call to throw off complacency and hope-less despair, and to engage both personally and politically with all that is most pernicious and 'death-dealing' (Thorne's term) in hyper-modern materialistic culture. As one of his trainees – a courageous Rwandan survivor – so aptly put it, 'It is no use being alive... We must be alive, alive' (echoes here, too, of the admirable *Festschrift* collection recently written for Brian – *The Human Being Fully Alive*; see Leonardi, 2010).

I found it a delight to read this short, non-academic (yet eminently intelligent), passionately argued polemic-cum-conspectus from a therapist clearly set free from the constraints of institutional orthodoxy – writing (or, rather, *speaking* – for most of these lectures were delivered in Salisbury Cathedral in the Spring of 2002) at the height of his (personal) power and authority.

The chapters offer insight in abundance into fourteenth-century Christian mystic, Julian of Norwich, person-centred therapy pioneer Carl Rogers, and George Lyward (of Finchden Manor therapeutic community fame) – and not least, through Thorne's own intimately personal relationship with each of them. Here we movingly learn about these inspiring figures' view of the human being – where hope, courage of conviction and transformational love prevail over the negative ideological preoccupation with 'psychopathology', sin, guilt and The Fall.

I was particularly struck and impressed by the author's transparent openness and honesty about his own experience, including, sometimes, his own 'baffling contradictions and inconsistencies'. I personally found Thorne's scarcely concealed anger towards, and contempt for, the ravages of crass materialism and the soulless 'surveillance & audit culture' (a 'perverse value system to which... we have all but succumbed') especially conducive. 'If we are to begin to live in a new world where there is... only change and process', he writes, 'we need to escape from the slavery of the materialistic god'. Amen to that.

Thorne never shirks from telling the truth as he sees it – whether about therapy or the Christian church, no matter how vulnerable this might render him to being labelled as a 'turbulent priest' or a rebellious trouble-maker. Rather than seeing him as someone with his 'finger

in the dyke', I prefer to see Thorne as the 'naïve' little boy, relatively unencumbered by modernity's 'regime of truth', who dares resoundingly to proclaim to all and sundry that the Emperor (Mammon, perhaps?) is absolutely stark naked and spiritually threadbare. In these pages, then, we find polemic at its very best – intelligent, measuredly passionate, committed, questing, truthful; and I found it altogether a gripping read.

For Thorne, the experiential knowledge and intimate relational experiences that derive from his therapeutic work, and from his ongoing encounter with Christian mysticism, provide intimations for a *re-visioning* of human nature and a *re-enchanting* of our world, both of which are, arguably, necessary preconditions for humankind's continued existence and spiritual flourishing in and beyond the death throes of late modernity. These are indeed grand themes – and any bold cultural critic must necessarily risk the accusation of overblown grandiosity. But very few contemporary writers could surely achieve the potent combination of intelligent insight, (com)passion and sheer courage that Brian Thorne unerringly brings to his theme; and for this reason alone, any seeker after truth and transcendence, whether of the therapeutic or Christian variety, can only gain and learn from reading this indisputably 'alive alive' offering.

Finally, while the first edition of this book was perhaps more relevant to theological readers, this new edition has much more content to engage the counsellor-therapist, and it looks destined to become yet another much-read and much-loved book from the indefatigable Honorary Editor of this journal, Brian Thorne. S

Reference

Leonardi, J. (ed.) (2010) *The Human Being Fully Alive: Writings in Celebration of Brian Thorne*, Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books

Low Cholesterol Sūtra

The Scientific Buddha: His Short and Happy Life

By: D.S. Lopez, Jr
Yale University Press, London, 2012, 168pp
ISBN: 978-0300159127
Reviewed by: Manu Bazzano

Every era has the Buddha it deserves. Or rather, every era has the Buddha it can understand. The contemporary Buddha is the 'Scientific Buddha', a fashionable offshoot of which is 'mindfulness meditation', a thoroughly anaesthetised form of Buddhism; sadly, the only one known to most therapists.

In this enlightening and provocative book, Lopez traces the origin of the Scientific Buddha to the early nineteenth century, to the birth of philology and the obliging response of Asian monastics to the missionaries' anodyne portrayal of the Buddha as a serene Victorian gentleman. This view was in tune with the misguided universalism of the era which, as the Empire demanded, was prone to assimilating and neutering Buddhist teachings, discarding both their existential edge and their religious component, diverting them towards the dispensation of the proverbial opium for the people.

When Burma came under British rule in 1885 and the king was overthrown, the monk chosen by the king to oversee the monastic community lost his post. 'This led to disorganization and a number of monks took on the task of preserving the dharma' (p. 99), through teaching the sūtras and the practice of meditation. Among these was U Nārada (1870–1955), who chose the Buddha's *Discourse on the Foundation of Mindfulness*, simplifying its instructions and choosing selected passages. In 1954 a monk from Sri Lanka, Nyanaponika Thera, learned what was by now known as 'the Burmese method', and wrote *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation* (1965), which marketed 'mindfulness' as a universal, de-contextualised practice, and a vital message for all who want to 'master the mind and wish to develop its latent faculties of greater strength and greater happiness'.

> Since the publication of this book in 1965, there has been a steady increase in the occurrence of the word 'mindfulness' … a word that rarely appeared prior to 1950, with an unbroken ascent since the early 1980s. From Burma, mindfulness meditation spread to other countries in Southeast Asia and to Sri Lanka and then to India, where youthful seekers from Europe and America enrolled in meditation retreats.... The 'mindfulness' that is now taught in hospitals and studied in neurology laboratories is … a direct result of the British overthrow of the Burmese king. (pp. 98–9)

It would be a mistake to presume that mindfulness as we know it (mainly MBSR, or 'Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction'), is all there is to the Buddhist practice of mindfulness. The original meaning of the Sanskrit term *smṛti*, translated as 'mindfulness', is memory. Memory of what? There are 40 objects worth remembering, the Buddha says, and two are the most crucial: (a) death is certain; (b) the time of death is uncertain. The whole enterprise encourages a spirited refusal of our complacency: we are urged to strive as if our hair is on fire; we are told that all is burning and that we are trapped in a house on fire. The historical Buddha promoted stress induction; he did not preach the *Low Cholesterol Sūtra*, but pointed out that life entails suffering: birth, aging, sickness and death; losing friends, gaining enemies, not finding what you want; finding what you don't want – all stress-inducing stuff. Remembering all this may bring about wisdom and a compassionate attitude for others travelling on the same boat.

It could be that the Scientific Buddha is one of the many 'emanation bodies' of the Buddha 'who have appeared in the world, making use of skillful methods... to teach a provisional dharma to those temporarily incapable of understanding the true teaching' (p. 121). He teaches a diluted Dharma, something to mollify our anxiety. He teaches this thing called 'mindfulness', and even then, a wishy-washy version. He teaches something no other Buddha had taught before: how to function in a dysfunctional world; how to, according to a poster in a hospital, 'manage high blood pressure, sleep disorders, life-style changes' (p. 97).

If *this* is what Buddhist mindfulness is, then Freud was right in equating Buddhism with the 'nirvana principle', in turn related to the death instinct. Moreover, rather than presenting a philosophy and a practice which is truly *other*, and as such potentially useful to Western culture and to the psychological therapies in particular, the Scientific Buddha is in agreement with Darwin. In fact, since the Victorian era he even *sounds* like Darwin, simplistically equating the law of karma with the theory of evolution. He is also a neuroscientist, a validation now *de rigueur*, and one that endorses the view that the brain is the seat of the mind. He unleashes hundreds of 'Joy Detectives' experiments, showing on fMRI scans what neurons are fired in the brain of shaven-headed monks when they think 'compassionate' or 'wise' thoughts or, being Buddhist, 'non-thoughts'. After all, a monk's shaven head had always been a phrenologist's dream, even in the heyday of that pseudo-science, Phrenology, which claimed to determine a person's moral fibre and acumen by the shape of his skull.

Since the nineteenth century, the Buddha has been urged to play the part of an alternative saviour, and Buddhism that of an alternative religion, one that does not raise significant objections to the prevalent scientific theories of the time. Darwin's Bulldog himself, Thomas Huxley, wrote of reincarnation as wholly compatible with the theory of evolution. Here we find the weakest section of the book, with the author presenting his own idealist views as Buddhist doctrine *tout court*. For example, anxious of a 'materialist' view presenting mind as an epiphenomenon of matter, he wholeheartedly endorses 'the dichotomy between mind and matter' which he sees as 'central to Buddhist thought', adding: 'if mind does not precede matter nor persist beyond it, there could be no rebirth' (p. 77). This is a particular interpretation of Buddhist thought endorsed by some traditions, but not by others. A rebuttal of scientific Buddhism does not have to mean embracing a spiritualist Buddhism either. As Lopez himself wonderfully puts it: 'The Buddha does not need to be preserved in aspic, all of his wondrous aspects kept intact, frozen in time, the founder of a dead religion' (p. 126). At the same time, he adds, 'the Buddha does not need to be brought up to date, his teachings do not need to be reinterpreted into terms utterly foreign to what he taught … We might let what the tradition says about the Buddha be heard' (ibid.). We might, I would add, respond to the Buddha's invitation ehipaśyika, 'come and see', and test his transformative teachings through a commitment to sincere practice.