

Unfortunately, this does not make a philosophy of walking but rather a potpourri of thought-hurdles to be jumped, on the way to the essential nothingness of walking where all the convolutions of philosophy disappear – at least for this walker!

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Re: Wild

Feral: rewilding the land, sea and human life, by George Monbiot, London, Penguin, 2014, 336 pp., £6.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-0141975580

George Monbiot's *Feral* is an articulate, closely researched and passionate polemic championing a radical revision of our relationship to the land, the sea and other-than-human species on our shared planet. Over 15 chapters, Monbiot takes the reader on an impassioned journey of poetic personal reflection, journalistic research and closely documented, fiercely argued polemical passages against the dominance of agro-industrial culture, the economics of mono-cultural land usage, invariably for the profit of absent landlords or international businesses, and the seeming sleepwalking complicity of at least the British government in terms of UK mainland territories.

In Monbiot's book, we engage as readers with the small detailed accounts of his personal forays into the regional landscapes of his home in coastal west Wales, be that the 'desertified' hinterland or the seething, dynamic and (from his perspective) magical coastline. Throughout each chapter Monbiot builds an argument based on close personal observation and reflection, dialogue with colleagues and activists in the field of rewilding, and numerous cited references from various Europe-wide governments and non-governmental organisations' policy and research documents.

The fundamental argument in this book is for rewilding, that is to say the deliberate practice of sectioning-off and protecting large parcels of current agricultural land in order that they may be rewilded. Rewilding is the process of allowing land and flora to simply re-colonize and repopulate these areas without further human intervention, on the basis of nature's inherent capacity to regenerate itself. On many occasions he cites historical records of the now almost unimaginably bountiful nature of the land and seas around Britain from as recently as the nineteenth century. He writes with ardour and animation about the huge variety and sheer abundance of birds, land animals and fish species that were seasonally to be found throughout the British Isles and her seas, prior to the industrial-scale hunting, fishing and clearances of the countryside for the use of mono-cultural farming, hunting and industrial practices.

There are some very evocative and poetic passages that relate to the relationship between humans, place and the uniqueness of the flora and fauna that inhabit these environments. These passages describe how the finely balanced set of dynamic relationships that equate to a diverse expression of animate life has been almost irrevocably damaged by the human hunger for profit and the domination of all other

species. Monbiot makes a convincing, though sometimes ironically narrow, 'call to arms' for the serious exploration of the value of rewilding the land, our coastal seas and, by extension, human life. For the author there is real possibility, and he again cites concrete, empirically evidenced examples, primarily from continental Europe, where both land and sea have been able to recover their natural biodiversity, grandeur and beauty. These examples are not exactly innumerable, but where they exist, at least through Monbiot's lens, they are of fairly extensive bodies of land that are being deliberately and consistently identified, (un)cultivated and 'abandoned' by European national governments and their ministries. There are further ironies afoot, in that in several instances in relation to the UK he offers examples of remarkably confounding government complicity and double-speak in terms of the ways in which government environmental agencies not only ignore their own research findings and those of internationally recognized experts, but also contravene their own stated policies in the context of land use. The British government's record of 'cosying-up' to large agro-industrialist interests and those of absent landowners – particularly in Scotland, Wales and Ireland – for example, plainly illustrates the level of unthinking, self-serving short-termism that Monbiot is effectively railing against in this volume. It is probably fair to say that with this book, Monbiot has firmly joined the ranks of the likes of Richard Mabey, Rachel Carson, Jay Griffiths, Fritjof Capra, Joanna Macy, Bill McKibben and Robert Macfarlane – if you weren't already of the opinion that he walks with these other articulate, impassioned champions of the land and wild places.

Monbiot makes some fantastic and potentially eccentric claims for the reintroduction of some animal species to the UK that are either very much endangered in the continental European context, or actually extinct. He also introduces some interesting and evocative language such as paleo-ecology, trophic cascading and baseline-slippage syndrome. The former relates to a considerably much longer time-frame for the consideration of the genesis and evolutionary history of certain existent or only 'recently' extinct plant and animal species, i.e. up until c. 10,000 years ago. The latter terms refer to the intricate and delicately balanced dynamic web of life that exists in the natural world, ranging from the bacterial life forms in soil through to the prime predatory species of wolves and bears on the land and their 'cousins' in the seas. 'Baseline-slippage syndrome' refers to the well-intentioned but erroneous perspective of environmental conservationists who assume that the landscape of the last 300 years or so is an appropriate marker of how the land has looked and been used by successive earlier generations of human and animal habitation. From Monbiot's perspective, this is a short-sighted and readily contestable position that can be countered by numerous historical accounts, and through the increasingly sensitive and accurate bio-science forensic technologies.

Ultimately, Monbiot's book argues for a radical reappraisal of the human relationship to the land; to land use in terms of food production, material production and cultural engagement, to other-than-human species and the fragile ecological systems that are delicately balanced between recoverable degradation and terminal decline. The terminal decline trajectory leads inevitably to more dramatic climate change, and the consequent extreme weather events in both northern and southern hemisphere territories and their inequitably resourced populations, both human and animal.

The potential that rewilding offers is not only practical and implementable as a physical and economic process of land and sea species (un)management, but also a

call for a more poetic, humble and awe-filled appreciation of all life on earth that doesn't place human needs at the pinnacle of importance. This is a major challenge to our ego-driven, self-serving human civilization, but may in due course prove to be the 'get out' that we need to escape the increasingly dangerous and 'out-of-control-addictive' psychological and materialist juggernaut of growth and 'development', cast within the capitalist framework manifested through our current model of globalization.

At the heart of Monbiot's vision is the clarion call, 'The (rewilding) process is the outcome'. This viewpoint offers us a humbling and multiple-future-generation's perspective, both human and other-than-human, on the rewilding vision, and all it might yet come to encompass. A vision that is planet-centric and not human-centric.

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On integrative psychotherapy

Relational patterns, therapeutic presence: concepts and practice of integrative psychotherapy, by Richard G. Erskine, London, Karnac Books, 2015, 400 pp., £32.99 (paperback), ISBN 9781782201908

I should begin with a confession: I am already a fan of Richard Erskine's work as I find the integrative model fits my own philosophy of working with clients. So I was not surprised to be delighted by this, his latest book, which I found has the same clarity that encourages me to think in a different way about my work. Whenever I read theory I find my practice improves, and never more so than when I read anything that Richard Erskine has written.

Relational Patterns, Therapeutic Presence is a synthesis of over 40 years of writing and development of the integrative model of psychotherapy, and I found a real maturity in the way his writings have come together so that the whole is much greater than the sum of the parts.

This is the kind of book that I need to read a few pages of and then put down while I process what I have just read. Having worked as a therapist for the past 25 years, this book served as both a reminder and refresher of the theory, as there is always a different perspective to be gained, particularly through the use of case material, which helps me to review my working practices. This book will be equally useful for beginning counsellors and psychotherapists who want to work in a relational way. I have recommended this book to a number of my trainee supervisees, and they report that they are thoroughly enjoying it.

Richard writes with such compassion and respect about distress, a notion that in other modalities is often seen as pathological. For example, in my experience of working with clients who have been given a diagnosis of borderline personality disorder (BPD), they have often been given this label in a pejorative manner that has shamed them, and led them to the conclusion that they cannot be helped. Chapter