

January, 2009

Volume 9, No. 1

BOOK REVIEWS

Nicholson Baker, *Human Smoke: The Beginnings of World War II, the End of Civilization*

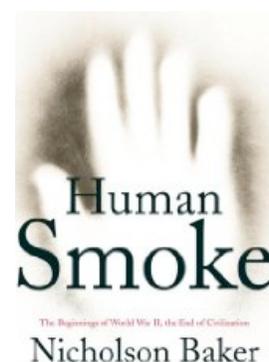
New York: Simon & Schuster 2008 536 pp \$30.00

Peace is not a relationship of nations. It is a condition of mind brought about by a serenity of soul.

Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is also a state of mind.

Lasting peace can come only to peaceful people.

– Jawaharlal Nehru



At some point, peace has got to become our firm and stated commitment, not the semblance of peace but a true peace in heart, mind and soul, and yes, in our actions and behaviors as well. We look to the heroes of our past to find some of our answers, and then we simply have to step past them, to dream the world anew. As Nathaniel Hawthorne put it, “Let us thank God for having given us such ancestors. And let each successive generation thank Him not less fervently for being one step further from them in the march of ages.”

I just finished the book, *Human Smoke: The Beginnings of World War II, the End of Civilization* by Nicholson Baker, about the events during the 1930’s and 1940’s that drove us to a Second World War. What a fascinating book! I found this quote by Jawaharlal Nehru specifically so that I could talk about this, as there were very few leaders during that time who had peace on their minds or in their hearts.

Sometimes the best way to get to the light of our lives is through taking a good look into the shadows of our humanity. As long as these stay in the dark, they have the power to influence our thoughts and behaviors in ways we would never consider acceptable in the light of day, and that is what this particular musing is all about.

For instance, I learned that there was a lot of violence and discounting of humanity during the 1920’s and 1930’s, even after enduring a first World War that should have taught them some lessons about peace and compassion, about the futility of brutality. Before WWII, England was particularly cruel in the Middle East, where they didn’t view Muslims as equal in their humanity and would kill farmers and peasants from planes. Churchill certainly thought of Mahatma Gandhi as less than human and wouldn’t even deign to meet with him when he traveled to England. It was assumed that those from

the Middle East and India did not have equal rights under the law, and they were treated as unwelcome guests in their own land.

The peace treaty with Germany after the first World War was more of a punishment than a true peace treaty. It created great poverty, restrictions, and desperation in Germany, resulting in their following a madman that promised them a return of their dignity and sense of control.

I found out that only Costa Rica and Australia would accept, in any meaningful numbers, Jews who were fleeing the Nazis. Even Palestine was turning people away (Palestine was an English protectorate), to the point of shooting at their boats when they tried to land. The United States government, and FDR in particular, definitely ignored their plight. They blamed it on the necessity of honoring the U.S. quota system (only 1200 people from that part of the world a year), leaving the others to fend for themselves. Though Eleanor Roosevelt advocated for opening up the quota during this emergency, FDR was noticeably silent on the matter and his silence spoke volumes. In fact, there were a number of times in Roosevelt's life when he talked about there being too many Jews around.

All the horror stories fell on deaf ears. England even arrested and incarcerated those who were able to escape Germany under the guise that there might be some terrorists in the bunch (sound familiar?). Did you know that Hitler wanted to send the Jews away but when no country would accept them, he came up with the Final Solution? Germany did not own the patent on anti-Semitism, not by a long shot.

Those who advocated for peace were considered naive at first, and then traitors and subversives, and in some cases arrested for treason. That sounds really familiar!

At the beginning of WWII, England fiercely bombed German cities for many months before Germany finally turned around and retaliated on England. The accuracy of these English bombing missions for hitting their military targets was only 1%. The way they decided to get around that was to bomb the middle of the populated areas so that at least they were killing more Germans. The concept of innocent civilians, women and children was a moot and undiscussed point. You might be surprised to find out that Hitler wanted to end the fighting on several occasions and England (particularly Churchill, the consummate warrior) repeatedly refused.

Roosevelt sent both pilots and planes to China so that they could fight the Japanese more effectively many months before Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Now, I know that Japan was also being brutal in their fight with China, and so I'm not defending them. I'm just pointing out the lack of a clear good guy/bad guy scenario, as we were aggressive toward them before they were aggressive toward us.

I don't think anyone would defend the actions of Hitler during that time, but I was very disappointed that I couldn't defend the actions of Churchill or Roosevelt either. I don't know how they could have dealt differently with such a madman as Hitler, and clearly, Hitler was the main aggressor in this conflagration. What I do know, though, is that all of them share some level of responsibility for both the build-up toward aggression and the carnage that ensued. Both prejudice and indifference were at least a part of all of their make-ups.

If we can see these people for whom they really were - good, bad and indifferent - then that will help all of us to understand ourselves better. I want to know the reality, not the myth of a person. I want to know their light and their shadow, because it is only in seeing the whole picture of a purported hero that we can find our way to the light of our own heroism. Even more, it will help us to more accurately define what we mean by the word hero and what we mean by peace.

After World War I, we had a World War II and then a Korean War, and then a Vietnam War...the list goes on and on up to and including the Iraqi War...precisely because we have not yet found the peaceful state of mind that Nehru talked about. We haven't even made it a priority. Just one look at our recent fractious election process will highlight that statement. And what strange twists of self-harming consciousness have to be performed to make war seem patriotic and peace seem unpatriotic?

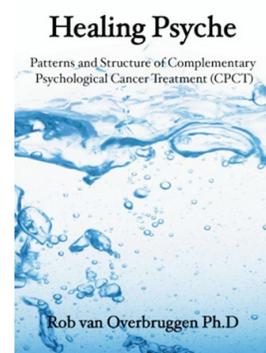
We seem to keep searching for the next great second-class citizen. In our history, Jews, gays, African-Americans and others of African heritage, Chinese, Japanese and others of Asian heritage, Muslims and those of Middle Eastern heritage, Irish, Italians, Germans, French, Russians, Polish, Catholics, Mexicans and those of Latin American heritage, Native Americans, heavy people, disabled people, old people, women, children, atheists, socialists, communists, immigrants, poor people, Democrats, Republicans, Libertarians, the Green Party, and those without education have all held this perceived low spot for segments of our society who cling to the wish to be at the top of that hierarchy. I'm sure you can think of others to add to this list, and you are probably a member of at least one of these groups yourself. At the very least, we all remember the indignities of childhood and would like avoid the similar indignities of old age! The moment we start seeing someone different from us as "less than," as less worthy of the equal human rights we so dearly guard for ourselves, when we stop assuming others' good intentions simply because of the color of their skin, their gender, their ancestry, their religion, their sexual preference, or their life circumstances, then we are adding to the violence in our world.

Lasting peace can come only to peaceful people
- Molly Roberts

Review by Molly Roberts, MD

LightHearted-Drs.BruceAndMollyRoberts@postmaster.goldbar.net
<http://www.lightheartedmedicine.com>

Rob van Overbruggen, PhD. *Healing Psyche: Patterns and Structure of Complementary Psychological Cancer Treatment (CPCT)*, Booksurge LLC (Amazon.com) 2006 \$45 402 pp. Refs 67 pp
www.booksurge.com/Healing-Psyche-Patterns-and-Structure-of/A/1419647377.htm



Rob van Overbruggen brings us the best review and discussion of theories and research in mind-body influences and interactions with cancer. This book is written clearly, well organized, rich in quotations from the numerous authors cited, replete with case examples, and an excellent resource for anyone interested wholistic healing of cancer.

There are many facets of psychological health and disharmony that may contribute to the development of serious illnesses. Some are well known, other are less familiar. Here are but a few of the numerous aspects of this important aspect of understanding and dealing with cancer that van Overbruggen clarifies.

The author marshals well-supported discussions on ways in which stress that is handled poorly can lead to serious illnesses. Stress is commonly assumed to occur with negative experiences, but van Overbruggen points out that positive ones such as marriage and relocation to a new residence or work situation may be equally stressful.

Similarly, residues of traumatic experiences that are not released may fester within people, eventually manifesting in physical disorders. Cancer is commonly found to occur following such experiences.

It is not the things themselves that confuse people, but their judgment of those things.
- Epictetus

A less well known factor is self-regulation.

Grossarth-Maticek et al. (1995) interviewed participants in 1973 to assess their level of "self-regulation." Self-regulation is defined as people's ability to notice the results of their behavior and correct it to achieve their goals. By definition, self-regulation can only take place when people have an internal locus of control. Fifteen years after the initial interview, they conducted a follow-up study to assess the participants' health status. Of those who scored in the lower section of the test, only 2% were still alive. Of the participants who initially scored in the higher regions, 81% were alive. (p. 87)

The author points out that imagery is commonly used as a tool for transformation as a part of many therapies. It is often included in cancer treatments. What is less known is that assessments of the elements in people's imagery can also have diagnostic value.

[Jean] Achterberg came to the following conclusion: "The total scores were found to predict with 100% certainty who would die or show evidence of significant deterioration during the two-month period, and with 93% certainty who would be in remission... (p. 168)

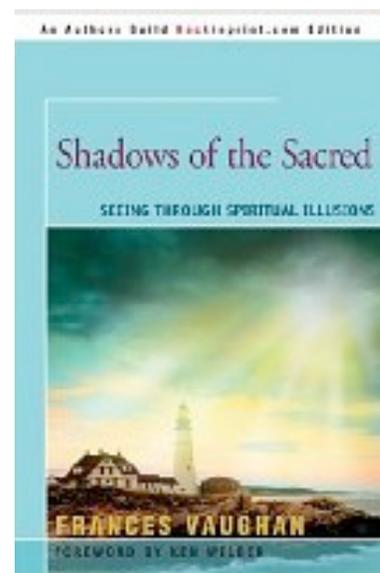
Generous counterpointing quotes and client reports of their experiences with the various therapies make this book an engaging read. The many pages of references are a blessing to anyone seriously interested to know more about the many and varied available treatments for cancer. This book is highly recommended to anyone interested in wholistic approaches to helping people who have cancer. It is also helpful in addressing end of life issues and facing death. "Death is not extinguishing the light; it is putting out the lamp because dawn has come." (p. 200)

Frances Vaughan. *Shadows of the Sacred-Seeing Through Spiritual Illusions*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books – The Theosophical Publishing House 1995 318 pp \$21.95

This is a book worth tasting, a little morsel at a time, and chewing upon thoughtfully. Frances Vaughan shares of her own wisdom and, through profound quotes, from observations of others across space and time.

The soul that is attached to anything, however much good there may be in it, will not arrive at the liberty of divine union. For whether it be a strong wire rope or a slender and delicate thread that holds the bird, it matters not, if it really holds it fast; for, until the cord be broken, the bird cannot fly.

- St. John of the Cross



Though her book is more than a dozen years in print, it is timely in the context of the needs of humanity to waken to our connection with the All if we hope to survive the planetary crises facing us today. Vaughan notes, "The seeds of grassroots spirituality seem to be springing up everywhere through the cracks in the old order." (p. 3)

An essential aspect of reconnecting with the needs of our planet is the clearing of many issues within us that are driving us to destroy the environment, to suicide as a species through global heating, and to kill most, if not all other life on the planet at the same time. The accumulated personal and collective angers, fears and hurts within us are, to a large extent, outside our conscious awareness. These dark aspects of ourselves have been called the *shadow* in Jungian terms.

Whether we think of the shadow as the unacceptable “other” in the psyche or the voice of the soul that has been repressed, it makes itself known to us whenever we turn attention to the inner world in search of spiritual renewal. Authentic spirituality cannot ignore the shadow. Authentic spirituality implies awareness of who we are as whole human beings-including body, emotions, mind, soul and Spirit – existing in a web of interdependent relationships with the earth and the cosmos. Authentic spirituality contributes to a sense of freedom and inner peace, and to love, service and responsibility in the world. I believe authentic spirituality is a powerful force for healing and social change. (p. 5)

Another aspect of the Path is to connect with inner guidance. This guidance appears to connect us with the collective consciousness of humanity, of all aspects of the planet, and to higher, unseen sources of wisdom.

The wisest, like fools, are said to follow their own counsel. It seems that the further one goes along the way to spiritual maturity, the more one learns to trust inner guidance, and the more trustworthy the guidance becomes. (p. 25)

Vaughan (referencing Wierzbicka) notes that our language distances us from connecting with our soul.

In English *soul* has become impoverished and discredited in the rational scientific climate of Western culture. In psychology *mind*, which connotes rational, intellectual knowledge, devoid of emotional or moral overtones, has displaced *soul* in designating the invisible component of the person. Something is lost in translation when Teilhard de Chardin’s use of the French, *ame*, and Freud’s use of the German, *seele*, are rendered in English as *mind*. Shorn of spiritual connotations, mind is disconnected from values and emotions and does not fully convey what is meant by *ame*, *seele* or *soul*. (p. 108-9).

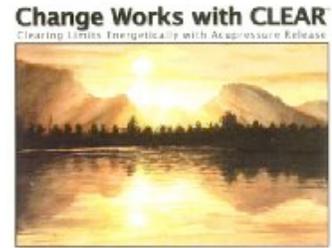
We relate to each other and to the world around us largely through our mind, a left-brain concept that by habit disassociates us from our feeling, intuitive, spiritual awarenesses. Living through the guidance of our mind, devoid of spiritual connections, we are more likely to seek our personal advantage over the good of the All; more easily led to attack 'others' upon whom we blame our own problems; and less likely to look inside ourselves to explore those shadow aspects of ourselves that drive us to aggress against others and ourselves.

Vaughan goes on to discuss Soul and Spirit and our relationships with the All. This is a book to be treasured and reread periodically as we deepen our understandings of ourselves and our world.

References

- H. Smith, *Essays on World Religions* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 123.
A. Wierzbicka, “Soul and Mind: Linguistic Evidence for Ethnopsychology and Cultural History,” *American Anthropologist* 9 (1989): 41-58.

Julie Roberts; PhD. *Change Works with CLEAR, Clearing Limits Energetically with Acupressure Release*, Toronto, ON:
Changeworks, www.changeworksinc.com



Julie Roberts, Ph.D.

Julie Roberts has put together a powerful combination of techniques into her CLEAR method, drawing upon Thought Field Therapy (TFT), Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), and Peter Levine's Somatic Experiencing.

To these she has added her accumulated experiences from several decades of working as a therapist and working on her own issues.

This is a helpful book to anyone who wishes to learn the basics of Roberts' techniques. It is clearly written, well organized, and provides many clinical examples, suggestions and details of the component parts of CLEAR.

Roberts has taken this method to parts of Africa, where it is finding much needed applications in releasing residues of severe traumas. See article by Roberts in this issue of IJHC.

Ellen C. Braun, *The Animal School* (video)

The animal school video by Ellen C. Braun is a wonderful rendition of this classic fable. On the one hand, it brings to sparkling life the benefits of individualizing educational programs to suit the needs of each and every student. On the other hand, it points out the soul-destroying erosion of individuality that can occur when all students are forced into standardized educational molds. This is a video that can enrich the lives of students and teachers at all levels of education.

Reviews are by Daniel J. Benor, MD, IJHC Editor, unless otherwise indicated

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P.O. Box 76, Bellmawr, NJ 08099

Phone (609) 714-1885 (519) 265-0746

Email: center@ijhc.org Website: <http://www.ijhc.org>

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