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**December 2019**

*We Review the  
Best of the Latest  
Books*

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# December 2019 Issue #248

## Table of Contents

[Archaeology / Prehistoric / Central Europe](#)

[Habitus?: The Social Dimension of Technology and Transformation edited by  
Stawomir Kadrow & Johannes Müller \(Scales of Transformation in Prehistoric and  
Archaic Societies Series, Book 3: Sidestone Press\)](#)

[Archaeology / Viking](#)

[Viking Worlds: Things, Spaces and Movement edited by Marianne Hem Eriksen, Unn  
Pedersen, Bernt Rundberget, Irmelin Axelsen, & Heidi Lund Berg \(Oxbow Books\)](#)

[Arts & Photography](#)

[New England Ruins: Photographs of the Abandoned Northeast by Rob Dobi \(Globe  
Perquot\)](#)

[Arts & Photography](#)

[A Sketchbook of Edinburgh, new edition by Iain Fraser & Anne Fraser, with a  
foreword by Alexander McCall Smith \(Birlinn, Casemate IPM\)](#)

[Arts & Photography / Home & Garden / Gardening](#)

[Sustainable, Sun-Grown Cannabis: A Visual Guide to Environmentally Friendly  
Marijuana by Justin Cannabis \(Amherst Media, Inc.\)](#)

[Business & Management / Design / Guides](#)

[Green Up!: Sustainable Design Solutions for Healthier Work and Living Environments,  
1st edition by Stevie Famulari \(Productivity Press\)](#)

[Education & Learning / Elementary](#)

[Room to Learn: Elementary Classrooms Designed for Interactive Explorations by  
Pam Evanshen & Janet Faulk \(Gryphon House\)](#)

[Environment / Biographies & Memoirs / Western](#)

[Cowboy is a Verb: Notes from a Modern-day Rancher by Richard Collins \(University of Nevada Press\)](#)

[Home & Garden / Crafts & Hobbies / Gardening / Guides](#)

[DIY Autoflowering Cannabis: An Easy Way to Grow Your Own \(Homegrown City Life\) by Jeff Lowenfels \(New Society Publishers\)](#)

[Philosophy](#)

[How to Read Descartes's Meditations by Zbigniew Janowski \(St Augustine's Press\)](#)

[Philosophy](#)

[Nature's Virtue, 1st edition by James F. Pontuso \(St. Augustine's Press\)](#)

[Philosophy / History](#)

[Socrates' Children: The 100 Greatest Philosophers: four volumes by Peter Kreeft \(St. Augustine's Press\)](#)

[Volume I: Ancient Philosophers is the first of a four-volume history of philosophy ... on ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy.](#)

[Volume II: Medieval Philosophers is the second of a four-volume history of philosophy ... on ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy.](#)

[Volume III: Modern Philosophers is the third of a four-volume history of philosophy ... on ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy.](#)

[Volume IV: Contemporary Philosophers is the fourth of a four-volume history of philosophy ... on ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy.](#)

[Philosophy / Popular Culture](#)

[RuPaul's Drag Race and Philosophy: Sissy That Thought edited by Hendrik Kempt & Megan Volpert, with a foreword by Kate Bornstein \(Popular Culture and Philosophy Series, Book 129: Open Court\)](#)

[Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Evangelical / Politics](#)

[Against: What Does the White Evangelical Want? by Tad DeLay, with a foreword by Clayton Crockett \(Cascade Books\)](#)

[Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Evangelical / Education](#)

[A Christian America Restored: The Rise of the Evangelical Christian School Movement in America, 1920–1952 by Robert Glenn Slater \(Pickwick Publications\)](#)

[Religion & Spirituality / Christianity](#)

[When the Disciple Comes of Age: Christian Identity in the 21st Century by Diarmuid O'Murchu \(Orbis Books\)](#)

[Bibliography](#)

**Habitus?: The Social Dimension of Technology and Transformation** edited by Sławomir Kadrow & Johannes Müller (**Scales of Transformation in Prehistoric and Archaic Societies Series, Book 3**: Sidestone Press)

By presenting the latest studies on the social dimension of technology and transformation, **Habitus?: The Social Dimension of Technology and Transformation** contributes to a better understanding of a system of embodied dispositions hidden within Pierre Bourdieu's concept of '*Habitus*.'

Editors are Sławomir Kadrow and Johannes Müller. Kadrow's main research interests lie in prehistoric Central Europe. Currently he leads the project *Great culture transformation in microregional perspective* in Danubian farmers in SE Poland. Previously he worked at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin and the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków. Müller is at the Institute of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Archaeology, Kiel University. The book has 13 contributors.

The studies in **Habitus?** mainly cover European areas, from Scandinavia to Italy, the Balkans to the British Isles, and Ukraine to the Northern Caucasus. In addition, ethno-archaeological field studies from distant Indonesia are used to interpret the Hallstatt Culture in Europe. The papers span a chronological dimension from the Neolithic to the beginning of the Iron Age and include a diachronic perspective.

**Habitus?** is addressed to international academia, presenting an important set of information and interpretations for archaeologists and readers interested in European prehistory. It comprises contributions to the CRC 1266 International Workshop '*Habitus? The Social Dimension of Technology and Transformation*,' held in 2018 at Kiel University.

The issue of the social dimension of technology and transformation, seen from the perspective of '*Habitus*', has repeatedly been discussed in the scientific discourse exploring prehistoric and archaic communities. However, the complexity of related phenomena constantly provokes new approaches in different archaeological contexts, which leads to interesting findings.

Attention at the workshop was focused on the importance of technology in transformation processes, especially in its social aspects. To cope with new challenges, past peoples actively used various technologies. However, in many cases new technologies were introduced almost unconsciously and subsequently affected the direction of transformation in a slow and evolutionary way. In other cases, some technologies, regardless of whether they were adopted consciously or not, reinforced and accelerated certain tendencies in social development.

Among the topics discussed in [Habitus?](#) are rock art, Trypillian megasites, stone axes and adzes, metallurgy, wagons, archery items, pottery produced on a fast wheel, mechanisms of cultural genesis, dualistic social systems, and comments on Bourdieu's theory of practice, including the concept of *habitus*.

*Habitus* is the central concept because it allows researchers to explain and understand the multiple conditions surrounding every manufacture. It is a system of permanent dispositions, functioning as structuring structures, that is to say, as principles generating and organizing practices and ideas that can be objectively adapted to goals, without requiring conscious goal orientation and deliberate mastery of the activities necessary to achieve this goal. *Habitus* is the internalization of external structures (norms, moral orders) and generates strategies that allow a person to deal with different situations in a consistent and systematic way. *Habitus* leaves some space for improvisation, which is also important.

Vesa Arponen, in his contribution to [Habitus?](#), presents a condensed philosophical review of the *habitus* and related concepts. The goal was to synthesize agency and structure. Arponen notes that the concentration of some post-processual archaeologists on agency threatens the loss of the synthesizing character of the theory of practice.

Marko Porcic describes the various cultural and social aspects of changes in the Neolithic and Early Copper Age of the Balkans, including changes in the technology of copper metallurgy and pottery manufacturing. He notices that technology can be both a cause and/or a consequence of sociocultural processes. Porcic states that the *habitus* of Neolithic people was greatly influenced and shaped by technological changes, but the available evidence does not confirm that these changes were of crucial importance for the social process.

Jan Kolar discusses the relationship between landscapes, technologies and societies. The concept of landscape technology is particularly useful in this context. Axes and adzes had special importance for the Neolithic way of life consisting of, among other things, deforestation and managing woodlands, constructing houses, preparing firewood or gathering winter fodder for domestic animals. These artifacts were very important innovations in Neolithic human history. Their possession and use makes it possible to change landscapes.

Bisserka Gaydarska analyzes the amazing length and immutability of the *habitus* of the population of the vast Cucuteni-Trypillia cultural complex, which is manifest in the practicing of various technologies. This is particularly visible in housebuilding, house sizes, arrangement of houses on the settlements, low level of agriculture, and continuity in faunal exploitation. The author explores the phenomenon of this disjunction on the level of figurine consumption and settlement architecture using visual graph analysis. In order

to get deeper into the process of social change, Gaydarska introduces the concept of Big Other, borrowed from Jacques Lacan. This concept is of key importance for understanding the disappearance of Cucuteni-Trypillia megasites. According to Gaydarska, the *habitus*, as a concept, does not have an explanatory potential of change.

Aleksandr Diachenko examines the relationship between social fields, population size, carrying capacity, migratory behavior, social organization of the Cucuteni-Trypillia cultural complex (CTCC). It was found on the one hand that demographic increase followed technological and economic innovations. On the other hand, migrations and territorial expansion of CTCC populations have a strong correlation with some environmental shifts. An unbounded possibility for territorial expansion provoked inertia in its development.

Sabine Reinhold looks for an answer to the question to what degree the appropriation of particular technologies has the potential to trigger social change in the West Eurasian Early Bronze Age context. Reinhold wonders whether the elite of the Bronze Age in the form of the *habitus* of aristocratic warriors is not a product of the introduction of a number of new technologies, mainly in the form of metallurgy. She also wonders whether the steppe *habitus* (in the oldest phase of the Yamnaya Culture) was not the result of the introduction of wheeled wagons.

Clement Nicholas in [Habitus?](#) describes and characterizes flint arrowheads and stone bracers from the Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age in Europe. In the Bell Beaker Culture, each warrior was able to shape his own archery-related items. In some regions during the Early Bronze Age, all these items were manufactured by craftsmen for the elite. They resulted from the use of various technologies and constituted socially valuable items. During the Bell Beaker Culture, there is evidence of regular contacts between distant regions. Later, in the Early Bronze Age, material culture was more regionalized and expressed strong, local identities.

Rune Iversen investigates non-figurative rock art during the Neolithic and the Bronze Age in Scandinavia. He asks if its appearance, disappearance and reappearance could be linked with crucial social transformations observed there. The oldest motive of rock art (cup-marks) is dated back to the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC at the latest. Thus it is not excluded that this kind of rock art could have been part of the neolithization process. Rock art became a medium through which people could engage with their forebears.

Lieve Donnellan, in her study, analyzes the innovations in pottery production techniques which took place in the Bay of Naples in Italy in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. Painted fine wares, produced on a fast wheel, were introduced alongside other forms. Donnellan shows how small numbers of newcomers introduced new practices (technology and customs)

into native communities. They radically transformed society and the landscape without engaging in large-scale migrations. *Habitus* is best manifested through technologies that help us to understand how relations between people are mediated.

Christian Jeunesse shows the results of his own ethnoarchaeological research conducted on the Indonesian island of Sumba. The dualistic system generates deep differences in the life of all communities and individuals. The author then refers to the Hallstatt-Early La Tene cultural complex, in which a similar dualistic system could prevail. However, most researchers believe that this case deals with nothing more than two different ways to display wealth and prestige within the same sociocultural system.

Finally, Valentine Pankovski critically discusses two different concepts of cultural genesis in the eastern European Bronze Age (popular and vividly discussed among archaeologists of the Russian language area) that, in the intention of their creators, were to have a holistic character. In both theories centers are defined as vibrant wellsprings of technological and social innovations. The author is convinced that an innovation-oriented conception of cultural genesis would have gained additional support in assessing its integrity and consistency by means of the *habitus* concept applied to a large spatial and temporal scale.

The volume [Habitus?](#) presents a variety of approaches to the role of technology in social transformation in the context of the *habitus* concept. The authors of some articles refer to more theoretical issues; others focus only on showing social change through the analysis of specific cases from different periods of the prehistory of Europe. All works contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between technology and social change or social persistence. <>

Archaeology / Viking

**[Viking Worlds: Things, Spaces and Movement](#)** edited by Marianne Hem Eriksen, Unn Pedersen, Bernt Rundberget, Irmelin Axelsen, & Heidi Lund Berg (Oxbow Books)

In [Viking Worlds](#), fourteen papers explore a variety of interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the Viking past, both in Scandinavia and in the Viking diaspora.

The book has 5 editors. Marianne Hem Eriksen primarily researches cognitive aspects of houses and households in Late Iron Age Scandinavia. Unn Pedersen is an archaeologist with specialization in Viking-age non-ferrous metalworking, technology and crafts. Bernt Rundberget specializes in Iron Age and Medieval Period iron production. Irmelin Axelsen is an archaeologist with focus on late Iron Age and Medieval research discourse. Heidi Lund Berg is an archaeologist with focus on Iron Age Skandinavia. The book has 20 contributors.

Contributions employ both traditional inter- or multi-disciplinarian perspectives such as using historical sources, Icelandic sagas and Eddic poetry and also specialized methodologies and/or empirical studies, place-name research, the history of religion and technological advancements, such as isotope analysis. Together these generate new insights into the technology, social organization and mentality of the worlds of the Vikings.

Geographically, contributions range from Iceland through Scandinavia to the Continent. Scandinavian, British and Continental Viking scholars come together to challenge established truths, present new definitions and discuss old themes from new angles. Topics discussed include personal and communal identity; gender relations between people, artifacts, and places/spaces; rules and regulations within different social arenas; processes of production, trade and exchange, and transmission of knowledge within both past Viking-age societies and present-day research.

[Viking Worlds](#) explores a plurality of approaches to the Viking past, both in Scandinavia and in the Viking diaspora. It is based on papers presented at the international conference 'Viking Worlds', held at the University of Oslo in March 2013. The conference was particularly focused towards postgraduates and early career researchers, in the realization that there are few open and international forums for a new generation of Viking scholars.

[Viking Worlds](#) is organized around three main topics.

As an introduction, Neil Price shares some of his thoughts on the development of Viking archaeology in later years, e.g. examining the notion of women with weapons, or Vikings who manipulated their appearance by filing their teeth, or the unnerving 'otherness' of the Vikings that we are just beginning to grasp. As he points out, the Vikings we study today are very different than the Vikings studied a few decades ago.

Subsequently, Part I, Real and ideal spaces focuses on architecture, settlements and landscapes of the Viking era. Three of the articles in this section deal with aristocratic architecture from different perspectives, while the remaining two focus on judicial arenas and artifacts of the Viking Age.

Part II, Gendered things, gendered spaces provides thought-provoking and critical papers on gender through three cases: the burial and social biography of a particular individual from Birka (Hedenstierna-Jonson); the tradition of regulating shielings as gendered spaces in Iceland (Kupiec and Milek); and a reassessment of keys as gendered objects in Viking-Age Norway (Berg).

The third and last section of [Viking Worlds](#) is titled Production, exchange, and movement. This section consists of studies examining craft and production (Cartwright,

Pedersen), trade and exchange (Gaut, Merkel), and mobility and movement through a critical perspective on Vikings in Poland (Gardela).

The edited volume, [Viking Worlds](#), constitutes a mix of new and established voices in the worlds of Viking research, asking new and different questions and using innovative methods and theories. Together, the articles present studies that emphasize the plurality of the Viking past; shedding light on parts of the Viking worlds that have largely been left undiscovered or undebated, while also putting forth new perspectives on established views.

Displaying thematic breadth as well as geographic and academic diversity, the articles may foreshadow up-and-coming themes for Viking Age research. Rooted in different traditions, using diverse methods and exploring eclectic material, [Viking Worlds](#) provides readers with a sense of current and forthcoming issues, debates and topics in Viking studies, and gives insight into a new generation of ideas and approaches. <>

Arts & Photography

**[New England Ruins: Photographs of the Abandoned Northeast](#)** by Rob Dobi (Globe Perquot)

[New England Ruins](#) is the collective body of work by photographer Rob Dobi and his homage to abandoned buildings across the Northeast. The result of twenty years of exploration and documentation, this book features a rare look at structures that no longer serve their original purpose and have been otherwise forgotten.

Dobi's work is an ongoing quest to study neglected structures and the stories people left behind. Approaching subjects of industry, education, institutions, and everything in between, the collection of interior photographs evokes feelings of loss and nostalgia, but also rouses the imagination about the past.

Illustrator/photographer Dobi has been photographing the abandoned buildings of the Northeast for the past twenty years. His love of exploration started at an early age and he never quite listened when told to stay away from places he shouldn't go. When he isn't climbing the remains of rusty ruins, Dobi spends his days creating bold editorial images for publications around the world.

According to Dobi in [New England Ruins](#), there really isn't one specific type of building or space that inspires him more than another, mainly because the rush of stepping into a place where one doesn't know what to expect never gets old.

Dobi's photographs include those of iconic places, asylums school house, churches, factories, and abandoned homes in the middle of nowhere. When he finds a new location that is particular inspiring he says he tends to go back every weekend until he feel safe in often unsafe structures and until he is confident he has captured the

essence of the subject. He tries to document as much of a place as he can, with a good amount of wide shots that define the space as well as seeking out things one might not normally encounter. Sometimes, he says, the most interesting finds are the things others might overlook, like a doodle on a sheet of paper, or some hidden patient scrawl on a brick.

The collection of photographs in [New England Ruins](#) – accompanied by introductory essays in each section – evokes feelings of loss and nostalgia, but also rouses the imagination about those New England days now long in the past. <>

Arts & Photography

[A Sketchbook of Edinburgh](#), **new edition** by Iain Fraser & Anne Fraser, with a foreword by Alexander McCall Smith (Birlinn, Casemate IPM)

In [A Sketchbook of Edinburgh](#) Iain and Anne Fraser take readers, both visitors and residents, on a personal journey through the center of one of the world's most unforgettable cities. Working with four talented local artists, they reflect the character and cultural history of Edinburgh through 80 pages and 150 beautiful and original illustrations.

After twenty years working in the shipping industry in Asia and America, Iain Fraser returned home to Edinburgh in 1994 to establish The Elephant House, a café-restaurant in the Old Town famed for its connection with a certain fictional boy wizard. Anne Fraser is Awards Manager at The Royal Society of Edinburgh, Scotland's National Academy of Science and the Arts. Her role includes supporting young entrepreneurs aspiring to turn hi-tech ideas into successful businesses. [A Sketchbook of Edinburgh](#) includes illustrations by Irian Cucu, Cat Outram, Catherine Stevenson and Keli Clark.

The Frasers' narrative describes the split personality of Scotland's capital city, from the subdued sophistication of a 'dreich' February day to the flouncy and frivolous fun of the summer festival season. The dramatic character of Edinburgh and its history are world renowned. The authors highlight their favorite parts of the city center and include a series of quirky stories discovered during their research in some of the many books written about the city.

This **revised edition** features new sections on the Royal Mile and the Water of Leith.

According to [A Sketchbook of Edinburgh](#), Edinburgh is a city that is used to tributes, many of them glowing and most of them accurate. It is a city of heart-stopping sights; it is a city where at virtually every corner there is a reminder of a stirring history; it is a city that is capable of mounting the most spectacular arts festival in the world. Edinburgh is all of that – it is an inspiring and exciting city that draws visitors from all corners of the globe – but there is something about Edinburgh that such fulsome praise fails to

capture, and that is its gentle and lingering beauty – a beauty as evident in its secret small places as it is in its big public buildings.

According to Alexander McCall Smith in the foreword to [A Sketchbook of Edinburgh](#), Edinburgh is a delicate place: it is not a loud and bustling city. Its beauty is not to be found in scale and confidence (New York), in gestures of elegance (Paris), or in sheer antiquity (Rome); Edinburgh's beauty lies in the way in which it makes a gentle statement of order, reason and harmony that stays with the visitor. Edinburgh is the Scottish Enlightenment in stone.

Of course, there is more to it than that. Edinburgh is fortunate in that much of its history has survived humanity's lamentable ability to erase the past. A walk across central Edinburgh from south to north takes visitors past buildings and structures that date back over four centuries. They walk through the bloody history of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scotland, through the intellectual and scientific glories of the eighteenth century, and into the grandeur and excitement of the Victorian era. Here and there are the twentieth and even the twenty-first centuries, muscling in on the already crowded streets. Edinburgh, in a sense, is a living history lesson.

How does one capture such a layered and intriguing – even sometimes rather eccentric – beauty? Poets have tried with varying degrees of success, and novelists too. But ultimately it is to the artist readers must turn, because this is a visual story. Iain and Anne Fraser decided that they would create a record of this city by commissioning four artists to sketch the city, and they would then add their words in explanation. The decision was a bold one: six sets of eyes will see things very differently from a single set, and the result might be a city as seen by a committee. Fortunately, that has not happened.

The choice of medium for [A Sketchbook of Edinburgh](#) – pen and watercolor sketches – has proved to be exactly right for Edinburgh. This is a fragile city: it would not do to paint it in large slabs of color; rather it should be approached delicately, with discreet lines and attenuated washes of color. Because that is what Edinburgh looks like. That is how it feels.

The Frasers are just the guides readers need for this tour. Their love for this city and their knowledge of its moods shine through the passages that accompany the sketches. Readers can let them take the Frasers by the hand and lead them to the places that they think embody the city's character. It is a delightful journey – a journey of heart and eye that captures what it is that makes people fall in love and appreciate this town.

*Sketches have been made whatever the weather, giving a lovely mix of bright and sunny summer imagery, atmospheric days with an air of menace in the rainy clouds and even the downright drench days when any Edinburger with an ounce of sense will stay firmly indoors ... the artists*

*have truly done a credit to the city ... From the inside cover images featuring a variety of front doors from around the city, you can't help being hooked by this beautifully produced book. It's the perfect gift for anyone missing the architecture and landscape of Scotland's capital city.*  
– Scottish Field

Evocative, beautiful and original, [A Sketchbook of Edinburgh](#) is a charming and engaging portrait of the city that captures the gentle nature of Edinburgh's beauty. <>

Arts & Photography / Home & Garden / Gardening

**[Sustainable, Sun-Grown Cannabis: A Visual Guide to Environmentally Friendly Marijuana](#)**  
by Justin Cannabis (Amherst Media, Inc.)

Justin Cannabis (yes, that's his name) is well-known in the cannabis community as a prolific contributor of images to *High Times* magazine and several bestselling books on marijuana. In [Sustainable, Sun-Grown Cannabis](#) Cannabis shares his sun-filled photographs to provide a behind-the-scenes look at Humboldt's Finest Farms, a collection of growers in Northern California devoted to producing sustainable, sun-grown cannabis crops.

Cannabis has been a *High Times* featured photographer since 1998 and has over 50 magazine covers and countless centerfold photographs to his credit. With one of the largest cannabis photography archives on the planet, he has contributed to over a dozen bestselling books on the subject. Cannabis's work has appeared in several notable mainstream media outlets, including *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the ultimate photography and design showcase, *Communication Arts*.

From [Sustainable, Sun-Grown Cannabis](#), readers learn the importance of conservation and a host of best practices for a sustainable future for cannabis. Every page is filled with tips ranging from land and soil preparations, irrigation, plant selection, planting methods for optimal results, ideal lighting (sun and solar powered), polyculture and permaculture, training and trellising, and natural pest/animal control. With over 150 images that depict soil preparations, growth stages, conservation, harvesting, drying and curing processes, and notes on preserving freshness, lovers of home-grown and commercial cannabis fans will find much to celebrate in [Sustainable, Sun-Grown Cannabis](#).

This visual feast of images celebrates Humboldt's Finest cannabis growers and their dedication to Mother Earth. Environmentally friendly cannabis production is a way of life for these farmers, who are literally living off the land.

Sun-grown cannabis thrives in rich, organic soil on farms in Humboldt County, California. Natural sunlight generates sustainable electricity off the grid. These stewards of the land

use local amendments to build sustainable organic soil that becomes more fertile with each crop. Working in harmony with nature, growers harness abundant subterranean water and rainwater to irrigate organic crops that are nestled in this ideal climate. These farming practices yield fragrant, sweet-tasting cannabis, while generating a negative carbon footprint. Cannabis shares organic earth with carefully selected flowers, fruits, and vegetables. This polyculture technique benefits soil life, as well as the mind and soul. In short, permaculture rules at Humboldt's Finest.

[Sustainable, Sun-Grown Cannabis](#) provides a vivid look into Humboldt's Finest Farms gardens and insight into important practices critical to the future of sustainable outdoor cannabis production. <>

Business & Management / Design / Guides

**[Green Up!](#): Sustainable Design Solutions for Healthier Work and Living Environments, 1<sup>st</sup> edition** by Stevie Famulari (Productivity Press)

There are unique greening solutions and practices that help create a lifestyle shift, improving the health of living and working spaces for their occupants from a personal, business, environmental, and profitable perspective.

[Green Up!](#) addresses a myriad of greening practices that can be applied to structures in our urban, suburban, and rural cultures. From the loft to the neighborhood, the office spaces to the public spaces, and the schools to the communities, this book outlines how business owners and residents can integrate scale-appropriate green solutions into their lifestyles.

Author Stevie Famulari teaches and designs public art, phytoremediation, storm water management, landscape architecture, itstory, and specialty green courses. Famulari has been a Professor of Landscape Architecture for a decade, as well as a director, a green artist, an author, and a researcher. She is currently a professor at Farmingdale State College, SUNY, in the Department of Urban Horticulture and Design. She has also worked as a Professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture at North Dakota State University.

[Green Up!](#) includes illustrations and photographs to help readers understand design opportunities for their space. Famulari provides unique insights and inspires business owners, residents, and planners to develop their own green understanding and design solutions.

The detailed illustrations and photographs of applied greening included throughout [Green Up!](#) help inspire readers' own goals and design, and then transform them to reality. The author breaks down the misconceptions of the complexity of sustainability and green practices.

With a myriad of options to choose from, the best solution is the one that works for readers and all the users of the space, for both short- and long-term growth. A change to a healthy green lifestyle can be part of any design and may grow and expand as one's desire for green practices expands.

[\*\*Green Up!\*\*](#) breaks down the misconceptions of the complexity of sustainability and green practices. This book provides size-appropriate green solutions readers can incorporate into their living spaces.

Designing green is about creating a site as a space for inspiration, safety, health, love, and growth. Greening is a lifestyle change, and as a step-by-step instruction guide, [\*\*Green Up!\*\*](#) lets readers know how easy it is to transition to the green side. <>

Education & Learning / Elementary

[\*\*Room to Learn: Elementary Classrooms Designed for Interactive Explorations\*\*](#) by Pam Evanshen & Janet Faulk (Gryphon House)

Readers may know classroom environments are a complex interaction of physical elements, including sensory components, design and organization, aesthetics, nurturing attributes, and pedagogical resources. However they may not know these elements are proven to work together to improve early learning, self-efficacy and higher-order thinking skills, and ultimately to achieve better child outcomes.

[\*\*Room to Learn\*\*](#) presents the Assessing the Pillars of the Physical Environment for Academic Learning (APPEAL) environmental rating scale, a valid and reliable tool developed by Pamela Evanshen and Janet Faulk to show readers how to get the most out of their classroom environment.

Evanshen is currently chair of the Department of Early Childhood Education at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN, where she teaches at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels. Faulk has taught at the preschool, elementary and middle-school levels; she is a retired associate professor from Milligan College in Elizabethton, TN.

Readers of [\*\*Room to Learn\*\*](#) can use this practical guide to:

- Create student-centered, welcoming, and developmentally appropriate learning opportunities.
- Encourage positive learning interactions through room arrangement.
- Facilitate discovery and active engagement through learning centers.
- Help children take ownership of their learning and work together in collaborative, project-based learning and problem solving.

Readers learn to transform learning spaces from teacher-centered classrooms where creativity and collaboration are stifled to student-centered, developmentally

appropriate learning communities where children thrive.

The APPEAL rating scale is a valid and reliable assessment that quantifies six environmental domains:

- **Meaningful Learning** occurs in a healthy, welcoming, and inviting classroom.
- **Social Learning** encourages positive learning interactions through room arrangement and seating choices.
- **Purposeful Learning** facilitates discover and active engagement through learning centers and stations, personal spaces for children, and teacher space.
- **Responsible Learning** encourages children to take ownership of their learning, be accountable for their effort, and work together to accomplish learning goals.
- **Continuous Learning** showcases children's understanding of core content knowledge.
- **Inquiry-Based Learning**: project-based learning and collaborative problem solving supported by rich resources.

[Room to Learn](#) offers primary grades teachers a way to bridge between active learning and proactive environments that enliven learning experiences. There are many practical applications woven into each chapter, including a rating scale to help teachers see into their own learning design patterns. I particularly found the final chapters intriguing, as they provide a guide for school leadership and offer a collaborative approach to rating and improving classroom and school environments. – Dr. Will Parnell, Portland State University Department Chair and Professor, Curriculum and Instruction

The book [Room to Learn: Elementary Classrooms Designed for Interactive Explorations](#) provides an incredibly useful framework for creating classroom environments to support development and purposeful learning by emphasizing safety, social learning, and active engagement. By providing user-friendly pictures and tips for application, the authors seamlessly blend elements of theory related to child development with practical recommendations for physical room arrangement. – Dr. Angela Hilton-Prillhart, Ph.D., NCSP, Licensed Psychologist

In this beautifully illustrated and highly practical volume, Evanshen & Faulk provide teachers and administrators with a cutting-edge new tool to evaluate and greatly enhance the quality of elementary school classroom environments. This very useful book demonstrates how key elements of the classroom environment can be improved to support children's interaction, exploration, and active engagement. Classroom environments that score high on APPEAL promote meaningful, purposeful, social, responsible, continuous, and in-depth learning. Advocates for Developmentally Appropriate Practices in elementary schools will find this

book an invaluable resource and instrument for change. – Dr. Sue Bredekamp

[Room to Learn](#) is truly a practitioner's guide on creating and evaluating effective classroom environments. As a former elementary teacher and principal, I recognize the need to view the environment as a teaching tool. In my current role as an elementary supervisor, I see the usefulness of [Room to Learn](#) in guiding others to understand the importance of environmental factors in learning. The text, graphics, photos, and rating scales are extremely beneficial and informative. – Dwain Arnold, EdD, Chief Academic Officer: Elementary

[Room to Learn](#) will help elementary educators reinvent their spaces to achieve the best child outcomes. <>

Environment / Biographies & Memoirs / Western

[Cowboy is a Verb](#): **Notes from a Modern-day Rancher** by Richard Collins (University of Nevada Press)

From the big picture to the smallest detail, Richard Collins fashions a rousing memoir about the modern-day lives of cowboys and ranchers. However, [Cowboy is a Verb](#) is much more than wild horse rides and cattle chases. While Collins recounts stories of quirky ranch horses, cranky cow critters, cow dogs, and the people who use and care for them, he also paints a rural West struggling to survive the onslaught of relentless suburbanization.

Collins is an award-winning author, rancher, horseman, conservationist, and scholar who has owned and operated farms and ranches on the borderlands of Southern Arizona since 1983.

A born storyteller with a flair for words, Collins in [Cowboy is a Verb](#) breathes life into the geology, history, and interdependency of land, water, and native and introduced plants and animals. He conjures indelible portraits of the hardworking, dedicated people he comes to know. With both humor and humility, he recounts the day-to-day challenges of ranch life such as how to build a productive herd, distribute one's cattle evenly across a rough and rocky landscape, and establish a grazing system that allows pastures enough time to recover. He also intimately recounts a battle over the endangered *Gila topminnow* and how he and his neighbors worked with university range scientists, forest service conservationists, and funding agencies to improve their ranches as well as the ecological health of the Redrock Canyon watershed. According to Collins, ranchers who want to stay in the game don't dominate the landscape; instead, they have to continually study the land and the animals it supports. Collins is a keen observer of both. He demonstrates that patience, resilience, and a common-sense approach to conservation and range management are what counts,

combined with an enduring affection for nature, its animals, and the land. [Cowboy is a Verb](#) is not a romanticized story of cowboy life on the range; rather it is a complex story of the complicated work involved with being a rancher in the twenty-first-century West.

According to George B. Ruyle in the foreword, in 1990, after much searching, Collins found his sense of place in southern Arizona's Santa Cruz County. Wading into the quagmire of public land uses, Collins put together two hardscrabble United States Forest Service grazing allotments, applied a strong and well-developed land ethic to his management practices, and twenty-five years later left them better than when he got them. [Cowboy is a Verb](#) describes the complicated, demanding, and yet satisfying process he applied to the landscape, searching for some combination of ecological sensitivity and economic reality in the never-ending cycle of cattle production on semi-arid rangelands.

While he is a credentialed scholar, Collins was never completely persuaded by science coming out of text books; he combined what he learned from the land and the animals every day, year after year. Ranching is a system of agricultural production that favors ecological rather than agronomic knowledge. Much of this knowledge can only come from experience and time on the land.

[Cowboy is a Verb](#) describes ranching sustainability as a journey of continuous improvement rather than a destination. To be sustainable requires respect for dynamic ecological, economic, social, and cultural values, practices supported by the community and institutions that contribute to viable rural communities while recognizing a place for urban values. This is especially true on public land (in this case on the Coronado National Forest) where over-zealous bureaucrats and urban-based environmental litigation groups have often influenced the decision process relative to livestock grazing. [Cowboy is a Verb](#) calls them out on ideology-based rather than evidence-based land management decisions and, in the end, the evidence perseveres.

*Collins is not only a fine storyteller, but there is generosity and exuberance in his writing and thinking that I hope will spread like wildfire to renew the many landscapes and cultures of the American West. – Gary Paul Nabhan, author of Food from the Radical Center: Healing Our Lands and Communities*

*As a lifelong rancher and cowboy, I was mesmerized by Richard Collins' beautifully crafted stories. What I particularly relished was Collins' deep love of the land. His passion for conserving and improving grasslands, water, wildlife – the very environment that sustains us – shines through his articulate and moving prose. He is a down-to-earth rancher and cowboy who finds great joy in his daily tasks while never losing sight of his role as*

*steward of the land.* – H. Alan Day, author of *The Horse Lover and Cowboy Up!*

*Collins seamlessly weaves a memoir about how he learned to ranch in southeastern Arizona with astute commentaries about the challenges of doing so in a land where most of his neighbors were exurbanites and a small endangered minnow caused more problems than the drug runners trekking through his mountain pastures.* – Tom Sheridan, Professor of Anthropology, University of Arizona and author of *Stitching the West Back Together*

*The best description of ranching in southeast Arizona that I have yet run across.* – Bill McDonald, Co-founder of the Radical Center and Past President of the Malpai Borderlands Group and fifth generation rancher

*There is something special about being able to live and work in a landscape over many years. Each year offers a greater understanding of place and your place in it. Richard Collins shines when he is describing his beloved high desert grasslands and the people and creatures who occupy it.* – Ross Humphreys, San Rafael Ranch

**Cowboy is a Verb** should be read by every rancher, agency member, or any folks that just love open spaces. Using local examples to illustrate his points, Richard shows the need to add a powerful; fourth “C” to the three Cs of successful ranching. Cowboys, Cattle, and Cow Dogs – make room for Cooperation. Anyone with feelings about the west will find things they like and things they wish Richard hadn’t brought up in this book. That is the surest way to know he has written the truth about a subject that he knows and cares deeply about. – Jim Koweek, author, *Grassland Plant ID for Everyone: Except Folks that That Take Boring Technical Stuff Too Seriously*

*One of the few books available that gives a well-rounded description of modern-day ranching in the southwest... A very balanced picture of the challenges facing ranchers today. Thanks for writing such an enlightening book and giving me the opportunity to read it.* – Walter Lane, Co-Owner Headquarters West, Ltd. and fourth generation rancher

*Richard Collins was a leader in the vitally important task of building a radical center among ranchers, conservationists, and federal agencies in southern Arizona. Today, as the West and the nation continues to harden into opposing factions we need the work of radical centrists more than ever. In this thoughtful, humorous, and heartfelt memoir, Collins captures the spirit of those heady years, sharing lessons learned for all of us along*

*the way.* – Courtney White, author of *Grass, Soil, Hope* and co-founder of the Quivira Coalition

*I do think this book may become a classic and sit alongside other memorable books on ranching culture.* – Richard L. Knight, retired professor of wildlife conservation, Colorado State University

**[Cowboy is a Verb](#)** does not romanticize cowboys but honors the complex and undervalued skills that it takes to husband livestock on rangelands. Throughout the book, Collins describes how he learned to read the landscape, both in a technical sense, using ecological monitoring protocols, but also through keen observation from the back of a horse. It's a personal story clearly expressing a love of the land, the people, the livestock and always, the horses. <>

Home & Garden / Crafts & Hobbies / Gardening / Guides

**[DIY Autoflowering Cannabis: An Easy Way to Grow Your Own \(Homegrown City Life\)](#)** by Jeff Lowenfels (New Society Publishers)

According to Jeff Lowenfels in **[DIY Autoflowering Cannabis](#)**, cannabis prohibition is ending around the world, and there's a new bud in town – auto-flowering cannabis. As easy to grow as tomatoes, auto-flowering cannabis is the perfect new plant for the home gardener who has limited time and space.

Gardening authority Lowenfels is the author of three bestselling books, including: *Teaming with Microbes*, which have become bibles for organic growers worldwide. He lives in Anchorage, where Cannabis has been legal since 1975.

Unlike commercially grown cannabis, auto-flowering cannabis plants are small, container-grown, day-neutral, require no special lights or equipment, and grow incredibly fast – from seed to harvest in as little as seven weeks.

**[DIY Autoflowering Cannabis](#)** is a full-color, illustrated guide for everyone wanting to grow their own. It covers:

- The history and benefits of auto-flowering cannabis.
- Its origins, chemistry, and growing habits.
- Step-by-step growing methods, including tips, tricks, supplies, and seed sourcing.
- How to harvest, process, and breed new plants.

If readers are home gardeners or already grow cannabis, they can learn how to grow this new plant with ease, all while reaping its many benefits, such as harvesting it for medical use, recreational use, or simply as a decorative, sweet-smelling flower to enjoy.

*For the first time, short-blooming cannabis varieties are available in seed form that put easy cannabis growing within reach of gardeners anywhere*

in the United States. Jeff Lowenfels' [DIY Autoflowering Cannabis](#) provides everything you need to source seeds, grow, and harvest your first cannabis plants! – Shango Los, Shaping Fire Podcast

[DIY Autoflowering Cannabis](#) is an approachable and necessary guide for dedicated beginners and gardening ninjas alike. Lowenfels' book is the ultimate course load: history, biology, chemistry, Latin and home use (yes, there are recipes!). Readers are actually encouraged to skip class to experience things first hand. I learned an incredible amount about autoflowering cannabis – better yet, I was inspired. – Jules Torti editor-in-chief, Harrowsmith magazine, and author, *Free to a Good Home: With Room for Improvement*

[DIY Autoflowering Cannabis](#) is the book to read for anyone who wants to be at the forefront of cannabis cultivation. Jeff Lowenfels weaves together the science and hands-on cultivation of this new breed of cannabis into an informative, enjoyable, and often humorous, good read. – Lee Reich PhD, scientist, farmdener (more than a gardener, less than a farmer), and author, *The Ever Curious Gardener*

At last, something easier and faster, and gentler than habanero peppers to satisfy our lust for home-grown satisfaction. Always loved Jeff's plain-spoken enthusiasms, but this easy, beautiful book is a fantastic inspiration for enjoying this alluring breakthrough plant! – Felder Rushing, NPR host and founder, Slow Gardening

Jeff Lowenfels is the best go-to author for cannabis information that I know. At a time when the internet is filled with myths, rumors, or downright inaccurate information about this plant, Jeff provides accurate, useful, and accessible advice that all cannabis growers can use. – C.L. Fornari, author and co-host, Plantrama Podcast

It's an honor to have such a legendary author write an entire book on a plant so near and dear to our hearts! We commend you Jeff for bringing the attention of others to this amazing plant that we love so much! The use of plant history, growing information, and garden humor makes this book an enjoyable gateway to the autoflowering cannabis plant that can be enjoyed by anyone! – Mephisto Genetics

[DIY Autoflowering Cannabis](#), a do-it-yourself guide, makes it easy for home gardeners to learn to grow this new flowering crop. <>

Philosophy

[How to Read Descartes's Meditations](#) by Zbigniew Janowski (St Augustine's Press)

[How to Read Descartes's Meditations](#) consists of seven independent studies of Descartes's *Meditations*.

Author Zbigniew Janowski is the author of *Cartesian Theodicy: Descartes' Quest for Certitude* and (with Catherine O'Neil) *Agamemnon's Tomb: A Polish Oresteia*. He is also the editor of Leszek Kolakowski's essays: *The Two Eyes of Spinoza and Other Essays on Philosophers* and *My Correct Views on Everything*. He is a member of Centre d'Etudes Cartesienne, Universite de Paris-IV-Sorbonne.

Janowski's [How to Read Descartes's Meditations](#) proposes a series of original interpretations of the central issues in *Descartes's Meditations*. In his passionate reading of Descartes, Janowski still finds room for posing insightful questions: Is the Cartesian conception of the soul orthodox? He measures Descartes's orthodoxy in relation to Descartes's choice of the Medieval theological traditions, which is the core of the author's essay dealing with the theory of the mind-body in the Second and Sixth *Meditations*.

The discussion in each chapter is organized around one problem which either has never or very seldom been explored in Cartesian scholarship. For example, in the study of the Letter to the Sorbonne, Janowski centers his discussion around the decree of the Lateran Council, showing the unorthodox character of Descartes's conception of the soul. In his chapter devoted to the notoriously difficult proof for the existence of God in the Third Meditation, Janowski shows that to understand properly Descartes's explicitly Scholastic proof is to read it as a reformulation of Duns Scotus's own proof. And in the final chapter on the Sixth Meditation, the author shows that Modern (Cartesian) Man – the man whose soul is no longer the Scholastic anima but blood that animates his bones, veins, and muscles – germinated in the writings of Francis Bacon, a predecessor never properly acknowledged by Descartes.

Who are the readers of [How to Read Descartes's Meditations](#)? A naive beginner in philosophy or a philosopher who is well-aware of the conceptual revolutions made by Descartes in physics and metaphysics? Janowski argues that under the guise of the deceiving God hypothesis lies the Creator of Eternal Truths, Descartes's weapon against Free Thought and Atheism – the two-fold specter of Modernity. In his search for the sources of the 'Stygian metaphor', Janowski links Descartes' conception of God to the rules of Truth.

In other essays the author proposes the reading of *The Meditations* against the theological tradition of Scotus and the 'Christianized' reading of Aristotle by Saint Thomas. Finally, the question concerning the relationship between the Augustinian tradition and the Fourth Meditation revisits an important aspect of his work, which the author has also addressed in his important Augustinian-Cartesian Index.

[How to Read Descartes's Meditations](#) is neither a systematic exposition of the Meditations nor is it a collection of studies of each Meditation. Rather, it is a collection of 'insights' into Descartes's *Meditations*. Each chapter deals with a fairly narrow point of Descartes's philosophy that has not been given an elaborate account in Cartesian scholarship nor has been sufficiently explored.

*Janowski's book offers a stimulating key to the reading of The Meditations and confirms the idea that a great philosophical text is a work that is bound to inspire and provoke an ever-new reading among each generation of scholars and readers. – Emanuela Scribano, The University Ca' Foscari, Venice*

[How to Read Descartes's Meditations](#) is the first collection of essays on the *Meditations* that makes a conscious effort to read Descartes's philosophy as a reaction against or an acknowledgment of Scholastic, Renaissance, and the Reformation sources. It will become a standard book for students of modern philosophy. <>

Philosophy

[Nature's Virtue](#), 1<sup>st</sup> edition by James F. Pontuso (St. Augustine's Press)

As told in [Nature's Virtue](#), virtue is not what it used to be.

Author James F. Pontuso is Charles Patterson Professor of Government & Foreign Affairs. He has authored or edited seven books and published more than ninety articles, reviews, and essays and has taught or lectured in a dozen countries.

According to Pontuso in [Nature's Virtue](#), virtue has lost its good name. If virtue were a television show, it would garner low ratings and promptly be cancelled. If virtue were running for president, it would fare poorly in the Iowa caucuses and would drop out of the race after a weak showing in the New Hampshire primary. Virtue has a bad name, both because people no longer use the term and because it is associated with repression of desires. Today, it is not considered healthy to keep inner urges at bay for very long. Virtue comes off looking like a relic of a quaint, narrow-minded, uptight age. Virtue does not support self-esteem since it is difficult to master the passions.

Yet, according to [Nature's Virtue](#), virtue seems to be a part of everyday life. What accounts for the kindly relationships between people? Why are most people peaceful, law abiding, and decent? If, as some insist, there is no foundation for virtue, or people act only out of self-interest, how can we explain why so many people are good to each other?

Prestigious scholars, such as Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, James Q. Wilson, *The Moral Sense*, Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, and Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness*, have attempted to answer this question, says Pontuso. While these authors make great strides in explaining the character of goodness, their works do not face the

problem raised by 'anti-foundationalist.' Anti-foundationalist such as Richard Rorty, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and the libertarian school of economics maintain that humans lack a capacity for comprehending what is good or bad. For anti-foundationalists there are no higher metaphysical principles that guide behavior. Prescriptive judgments are little more than long-held cultural prejudices fortified by habit so as to seem natural. Therefore, philosophic claims about virtue are little more than guesses about proper conduct.

[Nature's Virtue](#) squarely faces the challenge of anti-foundationalists. The book points out the defects of these ideas. It does so by presenting a contemporary restatement of the case for grounding virtue in Platonic forms or ideas.

Pontuso's method is not to undertake a close examination of one or two texts from the Platonic corpus, but to give a general account and defense of Plato's position. He says he has tried to make the ideas accessible. Gains in clarity may have resulted in a loss of profundity, but he hopes have not descended to level of banality. <>

Philosophy / History

**Socrates' Children: The 100 Greatest Philosophers: four volumes** by Peter Kreeft (St. Augustine's Press)

**Volume I: [Ancient Philosophers](#)** is the first of a four-volume history of philosophy ... on ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy.

**Volume II: [Medieval Philosophers](#)** is the second of a four-volume history of philosophy ... on ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy.

**Volume III: [Modern Philosophers](#)** is the third of a four-volume history of philosophy ... on ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy.

**Volume IV: [Contemporary Philosophers](#)** is the fourth of a four-volume history of philosophy ... on ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary philosophy.

Author Peter Kreeft teaches philosophy at Boston College and is the author of scores of books in philosophy and religion, among them: *An Ocean Full of Angels*, *Socratic Logic*, *The Philosophy of Jesus*, *Jesus-Shock*, *The Sea Within*, *I Surf Therefore I Am*, *If Einstein Had Been a Surfer*, and *Summa Philosophica*.

In **Socrates' Children: The 100 Greatest Philosophers, four volumes**, ([Ancient Philosophers](#), [Medieval Philosophers](#), [Modern Philosophers](#), [Contemporary Philosophers](#)) Kreeft focuses on the 'big ideas' that have influenced present people and present times, and includes relevant biographical data, proportionate to its importance for each thinker. The aim of the work is to stimulate philosophizing, controversy, and argument. It uses ordinary language and logic, not jargon and symbolic logic, and it is commonsensical (like Aristotle) and existential in the sense that it sees philosophy as

something to be lived and experienced in life. Philosophy, after all, is not about philosophy but reality ... about wisdom, life and death, good and evil, and God.

Kreeft seeks to be simple and direct and clear. But this work is not dumbed down and patronizing. It stretches readers, but **Socrates' Children ([Ancient Philosophers](#), [Medieval Philosophers](#), [Modern Philosophers](#), [Contemporary Philosophers](#))** is meant for beginners, not just scholars. It can be used for college classes or do-it-yourselfers. It emphasizes surprises: 'philosophy begins in wonder.' And it includes visual aids: charts, cartoons, line drawings, and drawings of each philosopher.

### **Why Is the History of Philosophy the Best Introduction to Philosophy?**

There are two ways to teach and learn philosophy: the usual way and the best way. The usual way is called 'analytic philosophy.' This means arguing about the questions philosophers ask, using modern symbolic logic, but it does not appeal to most people. It's abstract.

The best way to teach philosophy is by a story: the dramatic story of the history of philosophy, the narrative of 'the great conversation' which one finds in 'the great books.'

The sciences progress almost automatically; the humanities do not. Philosophy is one of the humanities, not one of the sciences.

Kreeft says he has tried just about every possible way to introduce philosophy to beginners (and some impossible ways too), and by far the most effective one he has ever found is the 'great books,' beginning with the dialogs of Plato.

If Plato was the first great philosophical writer, Socrates, his teacher, was the first great philosopher. Plato was to Socrates what Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul were to Jesus. (Socrates, like Jesus and Buddha, wrote nothing. He was too busy doing it to publish it.) And Aristotle, Plato's prime pupil, is to the West what Confucius is to China: the archetype of common sense, the one whom subsequent thinkers either build on as a primary foundation or attack as a primary opponent.

So **Socrates' Children ([Ancient Philosophers](#), [Medieval Philosophers](#), [Modern Philosophers](#), [Contemporary Philosophers](#))** is the story of philosophy. It's the story of a long, long series of arguments in a very large and dysfunctional family, and since Socrates is its main patriarch, Kreeft called it "Socrates' Children."

Most philosophy textbooks aren't fully human because they deliberately cut out all emotions, such as enthusiasm and wonder – even though Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle all said that wonder was the origin of philosophy! Kreeft has the conviction that philosophy should be exciting – rather, that it is exciting, and therefore should be taught

that way. He is convinced that reason and passion, head and heart, are both valuable and ought to be allies, not enemies.

The purpose of an introduction to philosophy is to introduce philosophy, that is, to lead-into (the literal meaning of 'introduction') the-love-of-wisdom (the literal meaning of 'philosophy'). To-lead-into, not merely to-see-and-analyze-from-afar. To be a door, not a microscope. And to lead readers into the-love-of-wisdom, not the-cultivation-of-cleverness.

**Why This Book?** Thirty two features make **Socrates' Children** ([Ancient Philosophers](#), [Medieval Philosophers](#), [Modern Philosophers](#), [Contemporary Philosophers](#)) distinctive.

- (1) It is 'existential,' practical, personal. Philosophy is about human life and thought, so Kreeft concentrates on the ideas that make a difference to our experience, to our lives.
- (2) It is selective. It doesn't try to cover too much. It is for beginners. Little philosophers get only a page or two, great philosophers get only a dozen, medium sized philosophers get between 3 and 6.
- (3) It concentrates on 'the Big Ideas.' This involves minimizing or omitting many 'smaller' ideas. This work includes only what most students will find valuable. They will find valuable only what they remember years later. They will remember years later only those ideas that make a difference to their lives. And that's usually one Big Idea from each philosopher.
- (4) It covers 100 philosophers, chosen by two standards: (a) intrinsic excellence, wisdom, and importance, and (b) extrinsic historical influence and fame.
- (5) It gives much more space to the 'big nine': Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Descartes, Hume, Kant, and Hegel. These are the most influential philosophers of all time.
- (6) It presents the history of philosophy as a story, a 'great conversation.' A book about the history of philosophy is not about history but about philosophy; yet philosophers can be understood best historically: as partners in a dialog with other philosophers. The whole history of Western philosophy is a long and complex Socratic dialog. The dialog is exciting, for thought-revolutions are more important than political revolutions, and battles between ideas are more intriguing than battles between armies.
- (7) On the other hand, its point of view is not historical relativism. Kreeft does not try to explain away any philosophers by reducing them to creatures of their times, as Marxists and Hegelians do. Though humans are rooted in humus (earth) like

trees, yet like trees we also reach into the sky. Historians read the *Times* but philosophers try to read the eternities.

- (8) It is for beginners, not scholars. It is not 'scholarly' in style. It does not break new ground in content. It does not push any new philosophical theory.
- (9) It is not 'dumbed down' even though it is for beginners, for it is for intelligent beginners, not dumb beginners. (It is also appropriate for intelligent high school seniors and for graduate students in other departments than philosophy.)
- (10) It is for college courses in the history of philosophy. But it is also a 'do-it-yourself' book which does not require a teacher to interpret it.
- (11) Its point of view is traditional rather than fashionable. It neither assumes nor tries to prove any one particular philosophical position. Though Kreeft tries to be fair to all philosophers and get 'into the heads' of each, he confesses at the outset a sympathy for common sense.
- (12) It tries to be both clear and profound, both logical and existential. Kreeft tries to bridge this gap by going back to Socrates, who demanded both clarity and profundity.
- (13) Like Socrates, it takes logic seriously. Therefore it summarizes not just conclusions but arguments, and evaluates them logically. But it uses ordinary-language logic, common-sense logic, Socratic logic, rather than the artificial language of modern mathematical, symbolic logic.
- (14) It uses three kinds of logic, as Socrates did:
- It uses inductive logic by grounding and testing its abstract and general ideas in concrete and particular instances.
  - It uses deductive logic in tracing practices back to their principles and principles back to their premises, and in following premises, principles, and practices out to their logical conclusions.
  - And it uses seductive logic as a woman would seduce a man by her beauty. For philosophy can be very beautiful.
- (15) Many of the questions philosophers ask are also questions religion claims to answer, though the methods of these two enterprises are fundamentally different: philosophy uses human reason alone while religion relies on faith in something that is more than human. Therefore **Socrates' Children ([Ancient Philosophers](#), [Medieval Philosophers](#), [Modern Philosophers](#), [Contemporary](#)**

**Philosophers**) naturally interfaces with religion in its questions, but not in its methods. Neither religious belief nor unbelief is either presupposed or aimed at.

(16) It is so unfashionable as to seek truth, of all things! Much of contemporary philosophy looks like intellectual masturbation. But real philosophy ('the love of wisdom') seeks the fruit of truth, not just fun, play, or display of cleverness. It is not mentally contraceptive.

(17) It emphasizes the classical philosophers, for two reasons.

- We don't yet know which contemporary philosophers will be acknowledged as great and which will be forgotten. It takes time for history, like a sieve, to sort out the big and little stones.
- The questions contemporary philosophers typically ask are not the questions real people ask. They are questions like whether we can prove that we're not just brains in vats being hypnotized into seeing a world that isn't there.

(18) It is full of surprises. It emphasizes things readers probably do not already know, understand, or believe. It does not patronizingly pass off clichés as profundities. It emphasizes wonder, since 'philosophy begins in wonder.'

(19) It dares to be funny. It includes humor whenever relevant, because reality does.

(20) It includes visual aids because we both learn and remember more effectively with our eyes than with our ears.

The treatment of each of the 100 philosophers contains 12 parts, as follows:

(21) A photo, statue, or portrait of the philosopher.

(22) A brief bio, including the seven W's:

- (a) 'Who': his complete name.
- (b) 'Where': his place of birth and nationality.
- (c) 'When': his birth and death.
- (d) 'What': his job or career.
- (e) 'Whimsy': unusual, dramatic or humorous facts or legends about him.
- (f) 'Which' was his most famous book.
- (g) 'Why' he asked the questions he did, which is point (23) below:

- (23) His historical situation and problem, his dialog with previous philosophers.
  - (24) His Big Idea or central insight or most important teaching.
  - (25) His most famous quotation(s).
  - (26) A diagram or sketch whenever possible, translating the abstract idea into a visual image.
  - (27) The practical difference the idea makes
    - (a) To life – to readers' lives.
    - (b) To thought (the idea's logical implications).
    - (c) To history (to subsequent thinkers).
  - (28) The essential argument(s) for this idea.
  - (29) The essential argument(s) against it.
  - (30) Satellite ideas, if any.
  - (31) Short recommended bibliography, both primary and secondary sources, but only when readable and helpful.
  - (32) Probable reading experience; hints to make him come clear and alive.
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Philosophy / Popular Culture

**[RuPaul's Drag Race and Philosophy: Sissy That Thought](#)** edited by Hendrik Kempt & Megan Volpert, with a foreword by Kate Bornstein (**Popular Culture and Philosophy Series, Book 129**: Open Court)

As RuPaul has said, this is the Golden Age of Drag – and that's chiefly the achievement of RuPaul's *Drag Race*, which in its eleventh year is more popular than ever, and has now become fully mainstream in its appeal. The show has an irresistible allure for folks of all persuasions and proclivities. Yet serious or philosophical discussion of its exponential success has been rare.

Now at last there is **[RuPaul's Drag Race and Philosophy](#)**, shining the light on all dimensions of this amazing phenomenon: theories of gender construction and identity, interpretations of RuPaul's famous quotes and phrases, the paradoxes of reality shows, the phenomenology of the drag queen, and how the fake becomes the truly authentic. The book includes a Foreword by the original 'Gender Outlaw' Kate Bornstein.

The volume is edited by Hendrik Kempt and Megan Volpert. Kempt is a Research Associate, FoKoS, University Siegen in Germany. Volpert is the author of many books on communication and popular culture, including two Lambda Literary Award finalists. She has been teaching high school English in Atlanta for over a decade and was 2014 Teacher of the Year.

Among the thought-provoking issues examined in [RuPaul's Drag Race and Philosophy](#):

- What Should a Queen Do? Marta Sznajder looks at RuPaul's *Drag Race* from the perspective of rationality – where contestants have to eliminate each other – the prisoner's dilemma and other well-known situations emerge.
- Reading Is Fundamental! Lucy McAdams analyzes two different, important speech acts that regularly appear on *Drag Race* – reading and throwing shade.
- The Values of *Drag Race*. Guilel Treiber observes two competing sets of values being presented in *Drag Race*. The more openly advertised 'charisma, uniqueness, nerve, and talent,' advancing the skills of every single contender, are opposed by the fading set of 'acceptance, support, solidarity, and empowerment,' which has historically been the cornerstones of the LGBTI+ community.
- The Importance of Being Fabulous. Holly Onclin challenges the preconceived notion that drag queens are mainly about female impersonation and instead proposes to understand drag queens as impersonators of celebrity.
- RuPaul Is a Better Warhol. Volpert compares RuPaul and Andy Warhol in their shared pursuit of realness.
- Is Reading Someone to Filth Allowed? Rutger Birnie asks whether there are ethical restrictions on reading someone, since reads are ultimately insults and could cause harm.
- Serving Realness? Dawn Gilpin and Peter Nagy approach the concept of realness in *Drag Race*, to discuss the differences between realness, authenticity and the nature of being.
- Death Becomes Her. Kempt explores the topic of death both in philosophy and in *Drag Race*, starting from the claim that "Philosophy is training for death."
- We're All Born Naked. Oliver Norman follows up on Ru's mantra, "We are all born naked and the rest is drag."
- Fire Werk with Me. Carolina Are looks into the fan-subcultures of *Drag Race* and *Twin Peaks*, which have come together to form a unique sub-subculture, in which members of both fan-subcultures create memes and idiosyncrasies.
- Towards a Healthier Subjectivity? Ben Glaister looks at the way *Drag Race* contestants adopt their drag personae almost as second selves, without finding themselves violating their other self.
- RuPaul versus *Zarathustra*. Julie and Alice van der Wielen ask the question, Who would win an intellectual lip-sync battle – RuPaul or Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*?
- Playing with Glitter? Fernando Pagnoni and pals explore the game and play elements of *Drag Race*.
- The Origins of Self-Love. Anna Fennell expounds upon RuPaul's question, "If you can't love yourself, how in the hell you gonna love somebody else?"

- The Sublime. Sandra Ryan thinks about Kant's concept of the sublime and explores how we find its applications in *Drag Race*.
- You Want to Be Anonymous? You Better Work! Alice Fox watches *Drag Race* through the lens of criminal law and the problem of decreasing anonymity through ubiquitous data surveillance. *Drag Race* can teach readers how to create misleading patterns of online behavior and public presentation to render the blackbox persona useless.
- Drag and Vulnerability. Anneliese Cooper contrasts *Drag Race*'s demand for vulnerability and perceived authenticity with the inherent inauthenticity of creating a new persona.

*Listen up: the Library is open, and you should open [RuPaul's Drag Race and Philosophy](#) first because it is fierce. These smart, engaging, nuanced, and witty essays command the stage with eye-opening demonstrations of the relation of drag to philosophy. In lucid and compelling writing, the authors show how ideas such as simulacrum, speech-act theory, rationality, utility, game theory, authenticity and performance, being, the sublime; play, radical self-love, and just plain love, are key to the art of living and to the pleasures of drag. It's a kiki you don't want to miss. – Matthew Tinkcom, Georgetown University, author of *Working Like a Homosexual: Camp, Capital, Cinema**

*From Kempf and Volpert's outstanding introductory essay to the priceless and hilarious philosopher trading cards that close this collection (Hegel's drag name? Wine DeVine), the best of the contributions to this volume don't simply apply philosophy to RuPaul but understand drag performance as intellectual work. Mama Ru would be proud indeed. – Amy Villarejo, Cornell University, author of *Ethereal Queer: Television, Historicity, Desire**

The pathbreaking and innovative volume, [RuPaul's Drag Race and Philosophy](#), raises many thought-provoking issues, among them, about gender construction and identify.

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Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Evangelical / Politics

**[Against: What Does the White Evangelical Want?](#)** by Tad DeLay, with a foreword by Clayton Crockett (Cascade Books)

What does the white evangelical want? In this moment of crisis and rage, this question is everywhere. Scholars ask from where its desires emerged, pundits divine its political future, and the public asks how this country lapsed into social chaos. For their part, white evangelicals feel misunderstood while failing to see the direction of their ambitions. Analysts must interrogate their aims not only through its past or current trends but also through the various fantasies by which they reject and enliven reality.

The author of [Against](#), Tad DeLay, the author of *The Cynic & the Fool* and *God Is Unconscious*, teaches philosophy and religious studies in Denver.

[Against](#) traces five zones of opposition: future, knowledge, sexuality, reality, and society. If climate change is the greatest threat civilization has ever faced, then a faith aiding collapse must face analysis. If faith swims in assured forgiveness, it feels no shame for its sins against humanity. If it wants a king, it threatens democracy. If it veils xenophobia, it shall be ever more cruel. In a critical and accessible history of odd ideas, DeLay chronicles the past and sketches its troubling future. It might die, but what's certain is that a faith built on nostalgia and supremacy won't moderate. Readers live in dangerous times, so let readers consider its justifications, turmoil, appetite, and catastrophe.

According to Clayton Crockett in the foreword to [Against](#), DeLay is the most effective and accomplished theorist of the critical intersection of psychoanalysis and conservative Christian politics. He is able to synthesize complex ideas and apply them to important situations and explain them in clear and accessible ways. DeLay analyzes and lays bare the underlying structures of evangelical desire.

Crockett asks: what do white evangelicals want? The short answer is that they want to destroy people, anyone who is invested in human flourishing and sustainable life on this planet. This book hits hard at the underbelly of evangelical desire, with its themes of climate denial, white racism, anti-intellectualism, theocratic control of sexuality, and a populism that verges on fascism. The core argument DeLay makes in [Against](#) is that all of these desires are not incidental or marginal to what is happening in the world today, they are at the heart of everything that is occurring, shaping and distorting reality in profound ways to create an evangelical-resonance machine.

Desire does not work the way that reasonable people want to think that it does. Desire is much more complicated and ambivalent. White evangelical desire intends to generate turmoil in the world because it is the acting out of a profound fantasy of what it means to be the chosen people favored by God. This acting out targets and attempts to destroy the Other, by whatever means necessary, whether the Other is the atheist, the non-white, the liberal, the democrat, the Muslim, the socialist, the immigrant, or the poor person. Readers know that these efforts cannot succeed, because the Other lies at the heart of the self, but this turmoil is destroying the world, with the backing of American nationalism and corporate capitalism. DeLay, himself a convert from white evangelicalism, understands the uncomfortable truth – liberalism will not save the world either.

Readers need tools to analyze, diagnose, and understand what is happening. They need the resources to confront this evangelical desire at its own level, which is the level of fantasy and desire. This is a tumultuous task, but DeLay's urgency is evident. Here is

not the neutral mask of academicism or moral relativism, but an intervention into the heart of the dark fantasy itself. The world is running out of time because the turmoil is building upon itself in positive feedback loops across the globe. Militarism, corporatism, racism, environmental devastation, and proto-fascism converge and ramify each other. These exist under the sign of evangelical Christianity, especially in the United States, even if that is not the only form it takes.

White evangelical Christianity is just the tip of the iceberg, but it is not simply what it appears on the surface. It functions according to a powerful desire, and its appeal to desires animates it and makes it work. People want to intervene on the level of interpretation, but they need to shift their analysis and intervention to the level of desire as sketched out by Freud and Lacan. They need to know something about desire, not just their desires but everyone's, and how one feeds into and sustains the other. According to DeLay in [Against](#), white evangelical desire "is moralizing where it should be ethical, individual where it should be collective, hegemonic where it sees itself cornered, and demonic where it sees itself the savior." If readers simply oppose these desires with their own, then they become a mirror of and for this twisted desire, and nothing changes. To truly intervene into the field of desire is to distort the symbolic nature of desire itself. Readers must refuse to continue to affirm their own desires in their moralistic, individualist, hegemonic, and demonic forms.

*In this tour de force, Tad DeLay refuses to mince words as he exposes contemporary white evangelicalism for what it's become: faith in white supremacy, misogyny, and heteronormativity masquerading as faith in Christ. By pulling back this curtain, he shows us that what is commonly confused for white evangelical hypocrisy is actually perfectly consistent with the white evangelical desire for domination and destruction. This book is a must read for all those who wish to better understand the hidden motivations of contemporary white evangelicals, as well as those who recognize the urgent responsibility of resisting what white evangelicalism has become in this day and age. –Phil Snider, editor of *Preaching as Resistance and Justice Calls**

*Tad DeLay's remarkable [Against](#) represents a pathbreaking psychoanalysis of the evangelical movement. Each page has an arresting new insight into the structure of the evangelical appeal and the damage that it's doing. In lucid prose, DeLay lays out the case for why we need psychoanalysis to understand the recalcitrance of evangelicals when confronted with obvious facts. Rather than condescending to them or parroting the liberal line about the need for more education, DeLay's book articulates the immense enjoyment that derives from the evangelical denial of common sense – including, most importantly, the*

*burning up of the planet. It is an urgent plea for recognition of a problem that threatens everyone's survival and is simply a must-read for anyone concerned about where things are headed. –Todd McGowan, University of Vermont*

*People wonder why secularism has not yet domesticated American Evangelicals. They wonder why 'pro-life' people cannot see the climate crisis as life-negating. They wonder why godly people support Donald Trump. Such persons should read Tad DeLay's vital book, and temper their fantasies about reason. Today's threatening mode of reason is a powerful 'resonance machine' positing the perpetual absence of absolute self-sovereignty as an injunction to punish. We are, DeLay argues, being punished into apocalypse. – Paul Johnson, University of Pittsburgh*

DeLay gives readers tools to refashion desire, not only of the white evangelical, but their own. He synthesizes complex ideas and applies them to important situations and explains them in clear and accessible ways. He lays bare the underlying structures of evangelical desire. Readers should read [Against](#) with fear and trembling. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity / Evangelical / Education

**[A Christian America Restored: The Rise of the Evangelical Christian School Movement in America, 1920–1952](#)** by Robert Glenn Slater (Pickwick Publications)

Protestant evangelical Christian schools are the fastest-growing segment of American private school education. Despite their notable individual autonomy, these schools have retained a consistent belief system and mission over several decades. Private religious schools can be traced to the nation's earliest origins. Why is it that these unique educational institutions arose in twentieth-century America and have continued to thrive?

[A Christian America Restored](#) seeks to delve into the beginnings of private Christian schools and discovers that while they are relatively new on the educational landscape of America, their roots are actually quite deep, connecting with the ongoing dreams of the nation's conservative evangelicals.

Author Robert Glenn Slater has served in Christian schools in Texas and Tennessee. In addition, he has worked extensively in various teaching capacities at private and public universities.

In 1946, the National Association of Evangelicals held its fourth annual convention in Minneapolis. In the aftermath of World War II, this association of conservative Protestants met to discuss issues facing their Christian faith and the nation. The President of the Association, Bishop Leslie R. Marston, opened the convention with a message entitled, "Evangelical Christianity in a Pagan Age." At a time when many Americans felt

a sense of relief and jubilation with the end of the war, Bishop Marston bemoaned the sad state of American society, claiming it had surrendered to paganism. He noted several areas of concern, including education. Specifically, Marston decried "modern education which made the child and his immediate desires the center of the universe." Marston concluded his bleak feelings about education by stating, "These instances, admittedly extreme, nevertheless indicate the direction of powerful currents in modern education which seek to swerve youth from the charted channel of Christian virtues into the whirlpool of paganism."

A year later, in April 1947, Mark Fakkema arrived at the next meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals to suggest sponsorship of a national organization that would consolidate the many Christian schools that already existed. This proposal, entitled, "The Christian Day School, Its Place in Our Christian Program," not only sought to define Christian Day schools, but also made an urgent plea to the evangelical leaders present for their support of these institutions. The general assembly of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) enthusiastically approved this proposal establishing the National Association of Christian Schools (NACS). At that time, approximately 11.5 percent of all American students attended non-public schools. Government statistics in the 1947-48 school year note that of that 11.5 percent, 81 percent of these nonpublic schools possessed a religious affiliation dominated almost exclusively by Roman Catholic institutions.

According to [A Christian America Restored](#), despite this very inauspicious beginning, today's Protestant Christian school have bloomed into a worldwide movement and the fastest growing element of America's private educational institutions. While the U. S. educational establishment has struggled for most of the twentieth century with such issues as funding, test scores, competing in a global market, school shootings, teacher retention, and religious issues such as school prayer, a multitude of private Christian schools have quietly popped up all over the landscape. This segment of private education has grown very fast, with thousands of these schools being established since the 1960s. In the 1980s, Christian school advocates claimed that the establishment of these schools stood at a rate of two per day. In 2015, Catholic schools remained the largest private school segment in America at 38.8 percent, but that number has dropped from 54.5 percent in 1989. At the same time, Christian schools have gone from 10.9 percent of the private school population in 1989 to 13.5 percent in 2015. Clearly, America's Christian school movement is no longer just a small contingent of tiny classrooms working out of church basements.

Despite their diversity, Protestant schools retain a common philosophy of Christian education. All of these institutions maintain a strict profession of the centrality of Jesus Christ and the Bible in their educational program. Although they often compare themselves academically, they are educational institutions operating on separate

philosophical tracks. Simply put, Christian education attempts to organize all instruction in ways that support the beliefs of the Christian faith, aiming to instill in all its students a Christian based worldview.

The origin of this largely unnoticed educational and religious movement is the topic of [A Christian America Restored](#). Uncovering the beginnings of these schools is analyzed from two angles. First, this study pinpoints the origins of this movement in a particular era in the twentieth century. Second, it examines the reasons and impulses behind the rise of these religious organizations. Focusing on the interrelationship between time frame and causes provides a vivid snapshot of the foundation of this movement that claims to be not only an integral part of twenty-first century American education, but also an overlooked, critical component of the contemporary religious right in the United States.

The second component of [A Christian America Restored](#) involves the more complex question as to the reasons why these institutions emerged. On the surface, many today might see these schools as being based upon reactionary fears of religious extremists. Much evidence does indeed point to many events over several decades in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that pushed conservative Protestant Christians to abandon their support for public education and to start their own schools. [A Christian America Restored](#) focuses on the first half of the twentieth century; in particular the three decades from 1920 to 1950. Taking into account all of the long range history of Christianity and education in America, the point is made that a series of forces and events during these thirty years converged in 1947 with the founding of the nation's first non-sectarian Protestant Christian school organization, the National Association of Christian Schools. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and the secularization of American education in the 1960s and '70s no doubt led to an explosion of Christian schools. However, it is argued that the actual beginning of the Christian school movement predates these years reflecting the deeper historical impulse of American Protestantism toward establishing a Christian nation going back to the Puritan ideal of establishing a 'City on a Hill.' In addition, this movement also illustrates the reaction of conservative Christian leaders to changes in the United States brought about by immigration, liberal theology, expanding governmental power, and secular philosophies which all threatened their power and their dreams for a nation based upon Christian values. <>

Religion & Spirituality / Christianity

[When the Disciple Comes of Age: Christian Identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#) by Diarmuid O'Murchu (Orbis Books)

With his trademark exploration of the meaning of 'adult faith' in an age marked by new understandings of cosmology, anthropology, quantum physics, and evolution, Diarmuid O'Murchu in [When the Disciple Comes of Age](#) also includes reflections on his own

spiritual journey. The book offers an understanding of the Christian message that retains its power by showing how it taps into deep archetypal and symbolic meaning.

O'Murchu, priest, missionary, and social psychologist, has worked with homeless people, refugees, and HIV/AIDS patients on three continents. His many books include *Quantum Theology*, *Evolutionary Faith*, *Ancestral Grace*, *Adult Faith*, *Incarnation*, and *Religious Life in the Twenty-First Century*.

**[When the Disciple Comes of Age](#)** seeks to illuminate the spiritual journey of a small but rapidly growing Christian movement of those who seek to transcend inherited religions because their enlarged sense of adult maturity requires them to do so. Embracing an adult perspective of faith requires readjustments to inherited wisdom. For some, it means discarding a great deal of what no longer feels credible or useful. For others, it means reworking the tradition to make it relevant for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. For all, it involves an evolutionary imperative calling forth new levels of engagement with the complex spiritual awakening of our time.

Indian spiritual wisdom, ancient and modern, highlights the role of the guru in the achievement of spiritual maturity. The guru (who tends to be male) is depicted as the adult teacher, and the disciple as the learning child – hence the frequently cited adage: ‘when the disciple is ready, the guru (or ‘master’) will appear.’

But what happens in the evolving culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century when we find growing numbers of people achieving spiritual maturity and transcending the traditional frame of teacher and pupil, or guru and disciple? A paradigm shift seems to be at work, a kind of reversal of roles that for many is strange and bewildering. The emerging axiom sounds quite different: when the disciple comes of age, the guru must disappear! In the contemporary world, the disappearance of the guru tends to be perceived in either the rejection (or transcendence) of religious authority, or the option to abandon religion entirely.

For **[When the Disciple Comes of Age](#)** O'Murchu adopts the title for an autobiographical analysis of his own faith journey as a Christian, and to provide a kind of launching pad for the evolving Christian wisdom unfolding throughout the opening decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The autobiographical material is likely to parallel that of many adult faith-seekers.

O'Murchu says in **[When the Disciple Comes of Age](#)** that as a social scientist he is heavily committed to the work of integration. He believes in reworking the tradition, not simply retrieving or revitalizing the past, but mobilizing the enduring wisdom of tradition so that it also empowers people for the evolving future. As an evolutionist he believes humans are enveloped in an empowering story that outstretches all human and academic constructs, including the binary opposites of past and future. As an organic earth

species humans are forever recycling the sources of wisdom, including their spiritual hopes and aspirations.

O'Murchu says he does believe and accept that Jesus of Nazareth is a historical person, and he is reasonably well acquainted with the research into his historical significance. Yet the older he gets, the more he is convinced that, for himself as a Christian, Jesus holds an archetypal significance that opens up other transhistorical dimensions of faith, eminently significant for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is immensely encouraging to see that several Christian scholars – and thousands (perhaps millions) of Christians – are reimagining their faith along these lines.

**When the Disciple Comes of Age** revisits the Christian story, embracing many of the empowering insights surfacing in contemporary research. O'Murchu's target audience is that of wise elders, a small but growing cohort, which, he suspects, will be critical catalysts in the evolving Christian faith of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. While the modern world tends to dismiss the elderly as unproductive and burdensome, he envisages a future elder culture with enormous evolutionary potential. The world is growing rapidly older, and he suspects the elderly will be in the vanguard for Christian prophetic witness as we move deeper into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

O'Murchu's strategy throughout **When the Disciple Comes of Age** is to combine personal narrative with the evolving intellectual wisdom of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He focuses on intellect as an endowment shared by all. While he cherishes the inherited wisdom of the learned, and invokes scholarly wisdom throughout the present work, he wants to build upon the wisdom of the human heart informed by the evolutionary momentum of the times.

*Here is a resource we need now. Its empowering central message: a ubiquitous Spirit – essence of the Divine at the heart of all that was, is, and ever will be – is available and accessible to all. – Miriam Therese Winter, MMS, author, Paradoxology: Spirituality in a Quantum Universe*

*In the midst of enormous paradigm shifts in religion and culture, we have no better guide than Diarmuid O'Murchu, who offers valuable insights born from a life of deep reflection. O'Murchu helps us navigate a new terrain of human becoming, as we engage a new understanding of God in the evolution of self and world. – Ilija Delio, OSF, author, Making All Things New: Catholicity, Cosmology, Consciousness*

**When the Disciple Comes of Age** is empowering. People are reimagining their faith, and O'Murchu calls this spiritual maturity, thus helping readers see their difficulties with traditional religions as logical and reasonable. By sharing his own experiences of growth and engagement of new horizons, O'Murchu is affirming and further encouraging those traversing this pilgrim journey in the evolutionary context of our time. <>

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