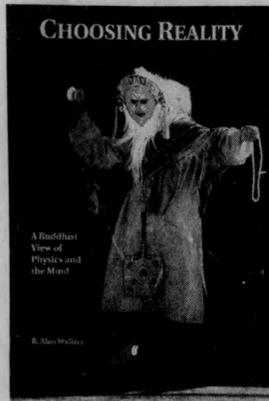


BOOKS

Physics as an object for Bhuddist reflection subject of book Author questions adequacy of conventional scientific theory



Choosing Reality (A Bhuddist View of Physics and the Mind)
by B. Allan Wallace
Snow Lion Publications

MARC BRAGDON
THE BRUNSWICKAN

The interest in far eastern religions that has grown in the West over the past few decades is a curious development when juxtaposed with the relentless inroads science has made and continues to make in our everyday lives. From the way we conduct research and do business to the meals we plan, the outfits we coordinate,

and the breakdowns we suffer, our most esteemed experts promise rational understanding and well-reasoned solutions to every dilemma if we will only stop, listen and believe.

All creeds, of course, have their apostates. Accordingly, preoccupations with alternative cultures and philosophies, not unlike bird watching, are often regarded by those in the "know" as escapist pursuits of no ultimate value. At best they are tolerated, if they relieve some of the pressures that manifest themselves in modern life—as if disillusionment were simply a waste product of the otherwise impeccable machine we call the universe.

Fortunately, intelligent, well-researched works that go against the common grain in order to effectively come to terms with it are readily available to those who care to look. But what about those who don't care, for whom scientific truth has been a shepherd and who dedicate their very lives to both its revelation and inevitable grasp of the entire universe?

As counter-cultural exploration, B. Allan Wallace's *Choosing Reality (A Bhuddist View of Physics and the Mind)* addresses itself equally well to both groups. Exploring scientific realism, often using its own terminology, Wallace is able to produce a book that contains as much insight into the development of Western science as it does its eastern counterpart. In the process he has created a book that challenges assumptions without entirely dismissing them.

Physics as an object for Bhuddist reflection, though unusual on the surface, is a natural choice for Wallace. Having spent over 15 years emersed in Tibetan Bhuddism, sometimes as a translator for the Dalai Lama, he subsequently studied physics, the history of science and Sanskrit at Amherst College. After graduating he began working on his doctorate in Religious Studies at Stanford University, a major player in the competitive world of High Energy Physics. His

own experience led him to seek out some alternative to the pigeonholing we practice in making sense of the world—mistaking how we perceive for what we perceive, and cutting away what doesn't fit. The strength of his argument lies in his hard-headed refusal to give in to some relativist or even nihilist stance, seeking instead to broaden rather than deny the scope of human understanding.

Beginning with an informed, often technical account of the major developments upon which present day physics and its fundamental assumptions rest, Wallace stresses the importance perspective has played in determining the theories we have constructed in explaining experience. This in itself is hardly revelatory. But when he compares the medieval churchman and his scriptures to the modern scientist and their own particular big book of wisdom, things get pretty interesting.

All scientists would agree that one should be more than a little familiar with the nature and function of the devices with which they analyse data. Yet Wallace points out that practically nothing in the education of a scientist deals with the most central indispensable tool: the mind.

Early on he warns that "a disinterest in metaphysics results not in abstention from such concerns but in unconscious, unintelligent adoption of a particular brand of metaphysics." And so, while science soared to unimaginable heights, we never really abandoned our medieval disregard for self appraisal, ever confident that the world would bend to our understanding of it. The author points out that for all their efforts to erect a Grand Unified Theory, achievements in quantum mechanics and relativity have left us with more plurality and uncertainty than ever before.

Wallace's subsequent exploration of the fundamental ways in which we interact with our environment reads a little like Kant if Kant

were a better writer and if he had been born a late twentieth century Bhuddist. His assertion that all things including ourselves are empty of the intrinsic natures we assign them (ie experience proceeds awareness) is well argued. But only when he writes that "it is because things are empty that they are able to interact with one another" does the reader fully appreciate how elegantly Bhuddist and rationalist fit together.

His exposition of the content and achievements of Bhuddist contemplative sciences is unfortunately much less complete and critical than his treatment of conventional science. This doesn't detract all that much from what he has to say however. It is the approach more than the details of Bhuddist practice that Wallace believes is relevant to us. While we may not be able to fully grasp the logic behind transmigration (reincarnation) or the energy fields that flow through the body, it is difficult to deny that given a different set of presuppositions, these assumptions may seem eminently logical.

To his credit, Wallace delivers wisdom that elevates understanding in its very transcendence. While readers may find his tone a tad preachy near the end, he nevertheless succeeds in awakening in us a sense of the possibilities inherent in freeing one's imagination from the limits of culture and self. Imagination and compassion, Wallace argues in the end, are the keys to saving human understanding from the tensions that threaten to be its own—and the world's—undoing.

B. Allan Wallace intended this book to be a springboard for further discussion. Hopefully his engaging style and firmness of intent will attract more than just the usual dharma-seeking revolutionaries. Both idealist and realist can benefit from such a hard-headed assault on their faith. How much confidence, after all, can one's faith inspire if never tested?

Canadian work captures the heart-stopping beauty of the Northwest in stories and photos

Wild Rivers Wild Lands
by Ken Madsen
Lost Moose Publishing

MARIA PAISLEY
THE BRUNSWICKAN

It's almost like being there. That is the best way to describe the breathtaking photos of the lands and rivers of the Yukon in the *Wild Rivers, Wild Lands* by Ken Madsen. Madsen takes the reader on an adventurous journey through the untamed wilderness of the Yukon, northern British Columbia and Alaska.

Madsen is not only an adventurer, he also captures the north with heart-stopping stories and dramatic color photos that makes you want to go to the north and see the beautiful landscape, not to mention experiencing these adventures yourself.

He tells of the changes that are happening in the north—the pollution of the land and rivers, mining, industrial development, and the disappearance of the wilderness and animals. Madsen speaks of what is happening now and to the future of the north particularly if the destruction of the wilderness continues. He also suggests how we can go about preventing the disappearance of the wilderness and its inhabitants. *Wild Rivers, Wild Lands* gives the reader a very good reason for supporting the preservation of the wilderness. The Yukon Wildlands Project receives a portion of the royalties from the sale of this book.

Madsen, who is an accomplished kayaker and canoeer, wrote *Wild Rivers, Wild Lands* as a journal of his travels through the wilderness. He is an award-winning writer, photographer and adventurer who lives in Whitehorse, Yukon. In addition he works to protect the North American wilderness from disappearing. Madsen worked on the campaign to establish the Tatshenshini-Alsek Wilderness Park, the Yukon Wildlands Project and is currently president of the Friends of Yukon Rivers.

His articles and photos have appeared in many magazines and books including *Canadian Geographic, Explore, Paddler, Beautiful B.C., Canoe, Up Here, Tatshenshini—Wild River and Protecting Canada's Endangered Spaces: An Owner's Manual*. He is the author of two other books, *Paddling in the Yukon* and *Tatshenshini Wilderness Quest*.

Wild Rivers, Wild Lands is a book for those who enjoy the great outdoors, wilderness, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, and those interested in the preservation of the wilderness.

Slang culture investigated

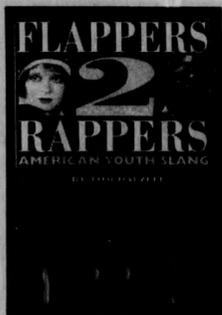
Flappers 2 Rappers
American Youth Slang
by Tom Dalzell
Merriam-Webster

JETHRO E. CABILETE
THE BRUNSWICKAN

Language, according to social scientists, is what differentiates humans from other animals. Language contains the symbolic meanings and shared consciousness of a society, whether it be the consciousness of class, ethnicity, geography or even age. Perhaps one of the most interesting facets of language is its mutability. Languages change from place to place, past to present, and among different age groups. One particular social phenomenon is the creation of social slang among various youth groups.

Tom Dalzell has compiled a tremendous list of slang words of American youth from the 1850's to the present. *Flappers 2 Rappers: American Youth Slang* is a rich look at the development of the language of American youth since the 1800's. Have you ever wondered what slang words were used by your parents, grandparents or even the youth of the 1960's? Well, this book provides a large category of slang terms from all walks of life. There were, and continue to be, slang words for many sections of society, such as music (e.g. groove), college (e.g. necking), fashion (e.g. straps or suspenders), drugs (e.g. bennies), other cultural terms (e.g. Chicano), violence (e.g. posse) and even gay culture (e.g. miss thing). One aspect of slang is its continual creation, reinvention and termination. Slang comes and goes with the changing social climate. Thus the cool slang of the 1960's was not so cool in the 1970's. This can also be observed among social groups within a specific time period. For instance, the slang terms of the hippie movement were considered uncool by the more straight-laced youth of that time.

Although the book is a compilation of American slang terminology, there are still some words that can be found among Canadian youth. The richness and social complexity of slang words offers some cultural and historic information about the youth of a period in time. The hopes, fears, concerns and dreams of youth are captured in the terms that they use as a rebellion against society, a way to express and identify themselves more fully, and as a means of symbolically giving themselves a niche in society. It should be noted that certain slang words have survived the flow of language from generation to generation. Words such as cool, hip, trip and sweet have changed very little in their meaning and usage. Others have changed meaning, but retained the spelling and emphasis (e.g. drag, dope, rap, etc.). *Flappers 2 Rappers* is a thorough examination of the slang terminology of American youth. Some are humorous while others reflect the serious concerns of youth during a period in American history. Overall this book is a good read.



3-D craze meets sexual classic



If we could print 3-D, you'd be looking at the Kama Sutra in a whole new way.

Kama Sutra in 3-D
illustrations by François Guérin
text adaptation by Martine Dorra
HarperCollins Publishers

DREW GILBERT
THE BRUNSWICKAN

The *Kama Sutra*, written around 300 AD, has become an instructional manual for different sexual positions and love making techniques. The *Kama Sutra in 3-D* is beautifully laid out and allows you to read the story and then look across and have the image pop out at you.

For those people out there who can never see those 3D images there is a helpful two page tutorial that will teach you how to see the images. The tutorial gives three techniques and an explanation of how they work.

The book itself contains 25 erotic stories and

their corresponding images. If you can't see the images there are smaller versions in the back. It makes for an interesting conversation piece if left on a coffee table or desk or something.

While I was reviewing the book I left it sitting around the office and throughout the course of the week it was read by almost everyone here (everyone being about 20 people). A great book if you are looking to learn some new positions and spice up your love life.

There isn't much new to this version other than the novelty of the 3D images. Also, it is only a partial representation of the original *Kama Sutra*. All told it was very educational, but not recommended for children.

come on down and see what's shakin'



the cellar

fat bastard blues explosion



the cellar
thursday, 27th march

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