

I started out by highlighting the role of gardens as a possible antidote to therapy; it seems more plausible that gardening and therapy have more in common than first appears. The gardening charity Thrive (www.thrive.org.uk) is a good example. In conclusion what really matters is engaging with nature and getting our hands dirty. I leave O'Brien to have the final say on the matter.

*Gardening may cultivate wisdom, but not that of the philosopher;
rather that of the common man.*

(O'Brien, 2014: p 140)

References

- Coltart, N. (1993). *How to Survive as a Psychotherapist*. London: Sheldon Press.
- Harrison, R.P. (2008). *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Heidegger, M. (1971). *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Trans. Hofstadter, A. New York: HarperCollins.

Rupert King

Sailing – Catching the Drift of Why We Sail. (Philosophy For Everyone).

Patrick Goold (ed). (2012). Chichester: Wiley.

Cycling: A Philosophical Tour De Force (Philosophy For Everyone).

Jesús Ilundáin-Agurruza and Michael Austin (eds). (2010). Chichester: Wiley.

These are 2 out the 18 books currently in the *Philosophy For Everyone* series. From the wording of the titles you can get an idea of the way the books are written. Punning can sometimes be seen as a cheap narrative trick, but used well it can enhance the meaning and even indicate meanings that were not otherwise available. It does occasionally get a bit self consciously clever but never quite enough to detract from the content. It is one thing to adopt a particular style of writing for a book but to get all the contributors to do the same is a more difficult task, but all the chapters in both books generally use it with the same facility. It is highly likely that should you choose to read one of the books in the series you will choose one that speaks to you, one that you know something about and that has led you to think, to wonder, about your relationship to yourself and the world around you. This is certainly the case here. I have been

sailing since I was teenager, on and off, having taught myself on a boat my father built, and I currently sail a dinghy on the sea on the Essex-Suffolk border, on the east coast of the UK. I have had at least one bike (currently 4; space prevents getting any more) for all of my life so far except for my first 3 years and 3 years in my twenties.

The sailing book has 15 chapters and all but 6 of the 22 authors are US based, which means that it floats (sorry!) in a US sensibility.

The cycling book has 25 chapters and all but 3 of the 26 authors are US based, which means that it also cannot help but give a US spin on the subject.

The sailing book is too rich to refer to all the chapters so I will be selective. Sailing, moving from one place to another either for discovery or for economic survival, must be the earliest mode of transport known to mankind that involves technology i.e. a boat and a sail. It probably predates the wheel. Sailing also features literally and metaphorically in all the great myths of the world. It is certainly the earliest that involves the use of a physical and external given i.e. the wind. The use of gravity is obviously limited. Going downhill is easier than going uphill. But with sailing you can effectively travel uphill, that is you can travel against the direction of the wind. This ability to use the elements is a part of its existential value and its magic, and it is far more than just a way of getting somewhere. In fact, as some of the writers say, on most occasions you actually go nowhere. You leave the bank, beach, mooring or harbour, sail round and go back to where you came from. What's the point? You could just as well ask what's the point of being alive if on our path through life, we start from nothing, become something, then return to nothing. But that is the question asked in the introduction: What is the ultimate purpose of the thing in question? Given that we no longer need sailing for transport, fishing or for warfare: what is it that draws the soul to sailing? Whether competitively or not. The point comes across clearly in the book that even in competitive sailing the competition is not between you and the other sailors, it is always between you and the elements. That's what makes it so powerful and multifaceted. This is shown clearly by Peter Nichols (2011) in his account of the The Sunday Times Golden Globe round the world race. Although people may ostensibly sail for different purposes now, racing or as a hobby, no one will persevere with it unless they recognise that 'everything is process: not just the weather and the waves, but person, boats everything' (p xiv). In this, 'the act of sailing[...] represents a kind of singularity in which the beingness of human existence and the being-in of universal existence are as close as unified as it may be possible to be' (p 76). To sail is to be grounded, albeit on a medium which is anything but solid, and it requires you to develop a sense of the wind such that you can almost see it. To read the ripples on the water, the movements of the

trees or the flow of the clouds. If you do not have this sense you will most likely capsize or worse. This is living on the edge, it is being-in-the-world. A working definition of wisdom is the ability to face life in the face of life itself and there is something about sailing that does this. 'Being at peril at sea can be deadly, but it can also be redemptive, a personal process of getting life into perspective. The sea is a microcosm of nature's indifference, impartiality and caprice in regard to human will' (p 36). Or as Camus (2013) put it, 'the gentle indifference of the world' [*la tendre indifférence du monde*]. Camus clearly wasn't referring to sailing here, because it very rarely feels like 'gentle indifference' even when the wind is light and steady, and the sun is warming, and the land is in sight. There is always an awareness that the gentleness is only temporary, that at any moment the wind can suddenly shift direction and strengthen dramatically. Like life. The transcendental experience of time stopping is referred to a number of times as the most profound and awe inspiring moment a sailor can have. When you are in the middle of a very strong wind you don't have time to think, but when becalmed at sunset hundreds of miles from land and with a clear sky, and seeing the stars appearing in the sky with only a few seagulls and dolphins for company, one cannot help but be moved by a profound sense of insignificance, privilege and being-in-the-world. We are always poised somewhere between life and death, and both the wind and the water are utterly unforgiving and have to be respected. We have only our skill to pit against the immense forces of nature in the full knowledge that this is where all the interesting things happen.

Anxiety always makes us unsettled until it finds a direction. This is what happens when a light wind suddenly strengthens and changes direction. The world instantly becomes a more dangerous place. What we do at this time is to try not to panic and take a note of which way the boat is pointing with respect to the prevailing wind (this is where ones sense of the wind comes in) and pull in the sail just enough to make the boat stable (too much can lead to capsizing and sometimes you find out too late), and simultaneously take the tiller to steer a course using the wind. At this point we immediately gain a direction, which is unlikely to be the one we want, but is the only one possible in the circumstances. We learn that the best route to our destination may not, most probably will not, be the most direct and in order to get there we need to aim for somewhere different. We have to work with the wind, for it is as Camus says, utterly indifferent to us as sailors and also more powerful than can be imagined. Above all, you learn humility in the face of the elements for hubris always leads to nemesis.

The cycling book is a different block of sprockets. It is as unsatisfying as the sailing book is satisfying. It is a lost opportunity. The main reason is that it concentrates if not on competitive cycling *per se* then on the

competitive attitude to cycling both on the track, the road and off road.

An aspect of the political dimension of cycling that is reflected on in one chapter though is that cycling was a major driver of women's suffrage at the beginning of the 20th century. For the first time women were able to control their own transportation.

Competitiveness is certainly not why I cycle. I could write my autobiography in terms of my bikes, when and why I got them, where I went on them, who I went on them with, what repairs I made or had to improvise etc. But most important is my relationship with them. A fundamental aspect of our relationship with technology is our ability to transform the 'present-at-hand' into the 'ready-to-hand'. To own it by use, rather than be owned by it. Paradoxically, on the bike I use most, only two (non-moving) parts now remain from the bike I originally bought. But the longer I have it, the more it changes from A bike into MY bike and hence into a part of me.

I would guess that although many people, cyclists and non cyclists alike, could have a passing interest in the Tour de France as a spectacle, few would aspire to or think that that kind of cycling was possible for them. Not that you would get this idea from the cycle porn on display in bike shops, which all seem to push technology and competitiveness. But this is not all that cycling is. This is cycling as competition, cycling as macho posturing, cycling as winning and beating, cycling as fashion statement. Now I'm no stranger to ambition and competition, but I also know from my own experience and also from research that competitiveness can not just destroy enjoyment but more importantly also close oneself to other aspects of the activity.

While mechanics is referred to, the fact that a bicycle is basically extraordinarily low tech is hardly referred to. It takes no knowledge to understand the mechanics and only a little knowledge and application to repair or replace almost every part. Commercial interests though are conspiring to technologise it and undermine the immediacy of cycling. They have a harder time with walking. Matthew Crawford (2010) has written eloquently about this in the area of motor vehicles, but his thesis applies just as much to cycling. Repairing machines brings ownership and repairs the damage that technology does to our humanity. Alongside this is the almost magical stability of just two wheels over 3 or 4.

There is also no mention of the joys of cycle touring. Of taking everything with you that you need for eating, sleeping, cooking and repairing your bike and being able to cover hundreds of miles in only a few days, simply by your own effort. There is no reference to the way, compared to being in a car which seals you off from the world, cycling is a way to be in and of the landscape, the weather, the character, smell and feel of different localities, rather than simply looking at them. It has many of the same dangers as sailing and I have written about the effects of these (2006).

Cycling is a way of not just getting somewhere, but of being in the world and of the world. Similar to walking but much easier to technologise. There is something special about riding off car ferries, over mountain ranges and through border posts between countries simply by ones own physical effort. It is enlivening and empowering.

The book also takes a rather morally and also philosophically uncritical stance to doping in competitive cycling, and should this book get to a second edition I suspect that the chapters that talk about this, and especially the chapter (written before he finally owned up) that maintains that Lance Armstrong is the greatest cyclist ever, would either get left out or substantially rewritten.

The series is generally to be recommended and the reader is advised to start with a subject close to themselves and see what they make of it. They can only gain a greater understanding of its meaning. Unless they are of course busy doing the thing in question.

References

- Adams, M. (2006). Towards an Existential Phenomenological Model of Life Span Human Development. *Existential Analysis*, 17(2), 261-280.
- Camus, A. (2013). *The Outsider*. Trans. Smith, S. London: Penguin. Original work published 1942.
- Crawford, M. (2010). *The Case for Working with Your Hands: Or why office work is bad for us and fixing things feels good*. London: Penguin.
- Nichols P. (2011). *A Voyage For Madmen*. London: Profile.

Martin Adams

Sexual Attraction in Therapy: Clinical perspectives on moving beyond the taboo – A guide for training and practice

Dr Maria Luca (ed). (2014). Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Sexuality: Existential perspectives

Dr Martin Milton (ed). (2014). Ross-on-Wye: PCCS Books Ltd.

No Sex Please, We're British was the classic 1971 London West End show that pushed the boundaries in exploring Western perceptions and attitudes towards sex and sexuality. Despite the stereotypes associated with the British stiff upper lip, the show ran successfully until 1987 fuelling a curiosity with the subject. Were audiences drawn to the topic of sex and sexuality in 1970s Britain as a way of tackling the taboo or were people feeding their natural innate hunger to want to satisfy human desires that are present and universal with all beings? Either way, the human desire