
The Way Back to Paradise : Restoring the Balance between Magic and Reason by Joseph M. Felser (Hampton Roads, 2005; 1-57174-380-4), xxxii + 225 pp.; \$14.95.

Reviewed by Neil Broadbent of the *Sozein* Trust, a member of Council of CFPSS.

This is an autobiographical book written by an American Professor of Philosophy. Near the beginning of the book he writes, 'This book is the story of my own quest to recover my natural psychic sensitivity' (p. xxi). Towards the end we read, 'By sowing the seeds of our philosophical reflections in the fertile soil of our psychic sensitivity, sympathy, or whatever one wishes to call this natural magic, we are making our way back to paradise – the inward source of truth. That has been the central argument of this book' (p. 200). In between there is a prologue, seven chapters, an epilogue, endnotes, bibliography and index.

Dr Felser has an easy writing style. I was carried away, eagerly turning the pages to read more of his psychic adventures. He conveys an infectious enthusiasm for sharing with us his journey during which he learns to cherish his right-brained experiences of synchronicities, precognitions, dreams and finding mythological explanations for them, intuition, out of body experiences and, towards the end of the account, rescue – or deliverance – work of the kind that Geoffrey West has amply recorded.

We learn of the author's discovery of the writings and research of Rhea White with her 'Exceptional Human Experiences'. Our chronicler attended conferences run by the Monroe Institute, an organisation which guides its clients into arcane psychic experiences. There are numerous quotes and stories from native American Indian sources and philosophers of every hue. Incidents from the classroom, from nature, poetry, mythology, Freud and C.G. Jung are all thrown together weaving an enticing tapestry.

The professor does an excellent job in presenting his findings in a way which will appeal to anyone who, like himself, has thrown out all vestiges of

'decrepit, decaying cultural ideologies' or religion. This delightful testimony to discovering other levels of consciousness is conveyed with evangelical zeal - and is none the worse for that. He proclaims the need for living more awarely, more in tune with nature and in the present moment. Such is indeed the proper outcome from seeking to balance the realm of psychic sensitivity with the world of reason and logic.

Whilst admitting to being somewhat beguiled by this attempt to 'restore the balance between magic and reason', and acknowledging that it would be spurious to criticise Dr Felser for not referring to any Divinity, I nevertheless found myself asking what purpose this book serves. Whether or not a person has psychic experiences, surely their stature is shown by their self-giving blessing to others. Might there be a future book on the heroic nature of everyday love? As has been said many times in the CFPSS, we need to spiritualize the psychic.