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# Book Reviews

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## Book Reviews

***Grandpa Chopra's Stories for Life's Nourishment*  
Retold by Ashok Kumar Malhotra  
Idea India (Cooperjal Limited), 2011**

Reviewed by Peter Hecht

### Wisdom versus knowledge

In the modern era, information seems to be abundant. The internet is readily accessible for so many. It is a nearly endless source of up-to-the-minute information and qualified, or more often not-so-qualified, opinion. But is humanity any smarter than it was in the days before the internet? How about before the days of the printing press? Or an alphabet?

An important phrase in modern education is critical thinking. Although the definition of this phrase is debated by scholars, it is generally agreed that the spirit of the concept is the combination of learned knowledge with careful consideration. This is one way to understand wisdom; the combination of accumulated knowledge with the benefit of hindsight. Myths, legends, stories and fables are ways that human societies have passed wisdom along over time. Ashok Kumar Malhotra, with *Grandpa Chopra's Stories for Life's Nourishment*, has continued the tradition of collecting and redistributing wisdom. All can benefit in some way from his work.

Prof. Malhotra has re-introduced readers to the kind of information that has accompanied humanity for far longer than the written word. His collection of stories is a gathering of the kind of wisdom that is casually, but critically, passed along from generation to generation in the form of stories, told by those who are older, to those who are younger. These stories contain far more than just a lesson. They contain the accumulated wisdom of thousands of generations. And more importantly, they create, and then represent in memory, the loving relationships between the generations, and even more, between all previous generations.

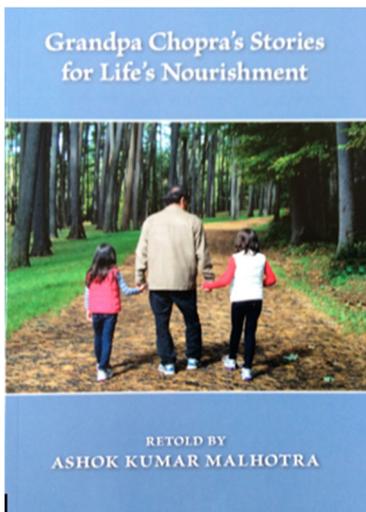
Dr. Malhotra explains that this is a retelling of stories, the first twenty as he remembers them from his Grandfather, the next eighteen from his own personal experiences. Each story has a moral, as in the widely loved *Aesop's Fables*. He recalls that his grandfather had collected hundreds of stories from various cultures and although he was only formally educated through high school, he could speak more than six languages.

On the cover of the book is a photograph of Prof. Malhotra walking down a path while holding the hands of his granddaughters. We see them as walking away from us, but what they are actually doing is progressing along the never-ending journey of humanity. And one day, we know, those two little girls will take the same journey with their grandchildren, maybe down the same path, maybe a different path, but the stories will be the same. The message will be identical: That you are loved, that you are a part of a larger journey by something far larger and greater than yourself, and that you are invited, and needed, to contribute to the continuing story of humanity.

Importantly Ashok Malhotra notes that all proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to the Ninash Foundation ([www.ninash.org](http://www.ninash.org)). The foundation is building schools in India for the poor, and for girls.

Volume 1 and 2 are available now on Amazon.

### **Grandpa Chopra's Stories For Life's Nourishment**



### **Grandpa Chopra's Wisdom Stories, Vol. 2**



### **Grandpa Chopra's Wisdom Stories, Vol. 3**



**Marek J. Celiński (editor). *Crisis and Renewal of Civilizations: The 21st Century Crisis of Ideas and Character.*  
New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2015**

Reviewed by Andrew Targowski

The editor and co-author, who is a practicing clinical psychologist, analyzes the state of civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century from the point of view of human behavior, which is a central element of nature and civilization (a relatively recent development of nature).

Nineteen co-authors were invited to help accomplish this task, all of whom had similar professional profiles as the editor and co-author.

Celiński bases his approach to the state of civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century on his published theory of Challenge-Resilience-Resourcefulness. Because an effective person is guided by reason, he or she will integrate sense-making and values and will increase his or her effectiveness in solving problems. This process allows humans to go beyond mere response to stimulation because reason allows humans to understand challenges that require creative responses. What civilization could persist with lifeforms lacking developed brains and minds?

Hence, humans can recover from crisis, and it is likely that a civilization controlled by humans can recover as well. The author's position is optimistic. He applies Targowski's theory of minds (steering, essential, reasoning, global, universal, digital, virtual, hybrid, and cosmic) and adds a new mind—the totalitarian mind—which is the source of many crises. He expands on a model of human engagement, emphasizing the role of instinct, intuition, reason and faith in the process of being co-creative with nature in order to successfully develop toward freedom.

The book is composed of three parts:

- I. Human nature and its potential for crisis and renewal
- II. Renewal of civilization
- III. Summary of the nature of crisis and renewal.

In the first part, Celiński examines models of alternative responses to threats and crises, which depend not only on a state of mind but also on available resources. What is more, some of those models analyze how progress can combat determinism. Celiński also emphasizes the importance of the role of parallel processes of cognitive development and moral sensitivity in the palette of tools available to humankind. In part II, the book reviews how to apply renewal approaches to civilization via social engineering methods.

David A. Eisenberg reminds us that *perfect societal order cannot be realized*. However, utopian ideas have some value for future generations who will face new crises, for they can apply some utopian ideas from the past to overcome problems.

Akop Pogosovich Nazaretyan tells us that *we face a non-linear future according to his view of mega-history*. Even worse, the crisis in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is triggered by knowledge-enabled destruction (e.g., nano-bombs, nanotechnology, robotics). He quotes disturbing data, such as the fact that, according to the World Health Organizations, the number of murders (repressions and wars) in the year 2000 was about half a million. In addition, there were about 815,000 suicides committed in that year.

He perceives our contemporary crisis as the confrontation of fundamentalism with globalization. Furthermore, besides this crisis, he expects there to be fundamental reconsiderations of death and immortality; humans and machines; solidarity, mind and intelligence; and soul, spirit, and spirituality.

David J. Rosner analyzes *challenges faced by humans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such as environmental degradation, overpopulation, and constant conflict*. These are taking place due to moral inertia and the wrong prioritization of means and ends. He expects that spiritual renewal is the primary process that can save civilization.

Michael Andregg argues that *civilization today is driven by a hidden evil under the form of psychopathic personalities and secret power systems among groups*. Both are especially prone to evil acts. He perceives the solution to lie in effective transparency in governing, in love and criminal justice, in improving mental health, in healing the living systems, and in spirituality beyond churches.

Stephen T. Satkiewicz scrutinizes *revolutions as a violent encounter with eternity*. He perceives revolutions as a peculiar form of civilizational crisis since revolutions usually aim to establish utopia through apocalyptic fervor and the destruction of the old order. Even more, they lay the foundations for their undoing, which is reflected in the saying that “the revolution eats its own children.” This is similar to what happened after the Arab Spring recently.

Adan Stevens-Diaz takes on *the future of civilization using science fiction to objectivize crisis and renewal*. The chapter presents scenarios of globalization, ecology, automatization and religious revival as “trajectories” shaping the future of civilization. Specific examples are provided for these themes through the analysis of popular series, including *Dune*, *Terminator*, and *Star Trek*, among others. The chapter concludes with an assessment of contemporary science fiction’s potential to be an instrument of popular understanding of crisis and renewal in civilization.

Marek Celiński analyzes *the trauma of time and development of cognition and morality*, assuming that civilizations have been developing as a result of traumatic experiences that separate present events from the past in our ancestors' minds. Such disruption of the self forced the mind to regain its continuity and cohesiveness through individual and collective efforts while also making it sensitive to potential disruptions.

A sense of personal responsibility combined with a respect for tradition and acknowledgment of the dialectic tension between the temporary and the eternal gradually led to the development of religion, science and art, all of which unite us with eternity and timelessness. The further development of civilization is dependent on a creative combination of both temporary and eternal aspects of existence.

Frank J. Lucatelli and Rhonda C. Messinger offer a solution regarding *how using axioms can unblock civilization's progress*. They argue that the data deluge is caused by insufficient methods for validating constructs (creative ideas and intuition). A-Prior Modal Analysis (APMA) is offered as a holistic, axiomatic method of logic for establishing construct validity and for overcoming the obstacles of our data-driven society. Governance and health care are used to demonstrate how systems can evolve in intricacy, how control can be dispersed more widely, and how civilization can progress without burning out.

APMA reveals how axioms and postulates can guide and limit data collection to only the critical information needed, and how statistical data can be meaningfully sorted and validated even with the increasing complexity of meaning.

Ernest Lawrence Rossi and Kathryn Lane Rossi *explain how the rise and fall of civilization and evolution of scientific spirituality is impacted by the psychosocial dynamics of mind, genes, war and peace*. Subsequently, the rise and fall of civilizations and their discontents originate in the crisis of cognition, consciousness and culture, which has been recorded throughout human history. The authors define a 4-stage creative cycle: 1) Mind (crisis & opportunities); 2) Mirror neurons—eRNAs (intuition); 3) Epi-genomics—HARs (adapt & heal); 4) Brain & Body—DRD (insight & applications). This cycle supposedly facilitates an understanding of why humans are in states of war and peace. They argue that this approach offers a new hope for understanding and optimizing the human condition and its dynamics since the Renaissance and Enlightenment.

Alex J. Zautra, Anna M. Palucka, and Marek Celiński argue that *social connectedness and creativity are mutually influencing processes that promote human evolution*. These predispositions lie at the foundation of socially intelligent behavior and mutually satisfying relationships.

They argue for the importance of the link between social attitudes and socially intelligent interactions on the one hand, and cognitive abilities on the other, as well as the importance of the consequences when the humanity of others is ignored or denied.

Based on this link, they define five principles (P) that may serve to guide the development of interventions to avoid a crisis. P1 is to recognize humanity of others. P2 is that our brains are wired to connect with others. P3 is that neurological processing is mostly unconscious since the human brain makes decisions 6-10 seconds before we are aware of them. P4 is that each person is unique. Finally, P5 is that socially intelligent behavior is guided by our choices and the consequences of each choice.

Their last appeal is to avoid a self-centered attitude and to broadly connect one's self with others so that our creative humanistic potential can be fully realized.

Darlene A. Osowiec takes on *a new world view of humanity's challenges*. The origins and sources of the current crisis are analyzed. Special attention is given to the lack of balance in power between the genders from pre-history to present times. The author suggests moving from a "Me vs. You" competitive approach to a "Us-Together" cooperative approach.

John A. Grayzel argues that the Marshal Plan (1948) after the *colossal crisis of World War II was the trigger for the development of global civilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Furthermore, this Plan, by triggering international cooperation, became a global norm for an emerging New World Order (NWO) after the fall of the Soviet Union and the Cold War in 1991. However, this is not entirely true since the NWO today is characterized by the clash of civilizations and since globalization is reduced to expensive labor outsourcing from western civilization to countries with low-cost labor.

Michael Hogan, Helen Johnston, Benjamin Broome, and Chris Noone analyze *how to design national wellbeing and how to provide policies and measures*. They analyze the approaches of some countries regarding how they plan the wellbeing of their citizens. Unfortunately, there is no standard policy and applicable structure yet.

However, they provide an extended example of planned wellbeing in Ireland. They also discuss the applied system science methodology with respect to the design of a national wellbeing index in Ireland. Despite that methodology, they argue for adopting a broader social science toolkit to address the challenge of facilitating social progress.

Marek Celiński, in summary, *synthesizes the nature of crisis and renewal*. He is optimistic and argues that crisis should be perceived as an inspiration for improving the state of wellbeing of individuals and society. He reminds us that human resilience and resourcefulness are critical for renewal.

Among significant resources, the editor argues for the crucial role of religion and democracy in minimizing crisis and energizing renewal.

The book is an excellent set of ideas, approaches, data and principles regarding civilizational crisis and renewal from the point of view of the human being. This is an innovative approach in the study of civilization, which usually is considered at the aggregated level of many elements and their relations.

Such edited books are usually composed of independent chapters, which is also the case with this work. Perhaps Marek Celiński will write his next book with coherent chapters, and their knowledge and wisdom will be supported by the crises and renewals which took place in the history of civilization.

I will remember Celiński, Zautra, and Palucka's statement that "social connectedness and creativity are mutually influencing processes that promote human evolution." Indeed, it is true, but besides reproduction and consumption, the next crucial process is developing security via confidence<sup>1</sup> through group-living based on connectedness and creativity. I hope that clinical psychologists agree with this statement.

This book shows that there is a need for anti-crisis thinking from different perspectives. This book has sketched the psychological approach to crisis. Thus, one can expect a future book with a comprehensive approach to impending crises triggered by overpopulation, climate change, the depletion of strategic resource, cyberwars, cybercrime, a labor-free economy, and civilization clashes.

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<sup>1</sup> This idea was provided by Henryk Krawczyk, co-author of publications with Andrew Targowski.

**Piotr Dutkiewicz and Richard Sakwa. *22 Ideas to Fix the World*.  
SSRC 7 NYU Press, New York/London, 2013**

Reviewed by John Grayzel

While procrastinating from writing this review I picked up the August 5 (2019) edition of Bloomberg Businessweek magazine to find multiple page of the same ad — differing only by the different personality featured: Janet Yellen, Bill Gates, Ajay Banga—each saying they wanted me to email them my ideas on how to fix the world, which they will carry to Michael Bloomberg's New Economic Forum scheduled for November 2019 in Beijing.

The first question, of course, is why, if they need my ideas, are they, and not me, going to Beijing? The second, more germane to this book review, is the question of why don't they just read *22 Ideas to Fix the World*?

The answer to the latter is simply: *22 Ideas to Fix the World* really does not contain what its title purports. Rather it, itself, is demonstrable evidence of just how serious and intractable the challenges to current global civilization are.

In fact, those interviewed for the book (the interviews being its actual substance) are highly credible and accomplished individuals. They include Nobel laureates Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank and economist Joseph Stigler, as well as world-systems theorist Immanuel Wallerstein and former UN Undersecretary General José Ocampo. To their credit, most of them, despite the optimistic title of the book, do not hide their deep concerns that the challenges faced are not seriously addressable by specific "fixes," but reflect deep and maladaptive systemic conditions.

Thus, Yunus quickly fingers how "money has become a habit, an obsession, an addiction (and how) ... every human being is interpreted as a money maker".<sup>1</sup> He notes that while the Grameen Bank microloan approach, by combining microcredit with technical and social support, did raise many out of abject poverty, over time its success has become the basis for a new microcredit industry whose objective is profit-making for the engaged institutions rather than poverty alleviation for their clients.<sup>2</sup> Somewhat similarly, Paul Watson sees the problems in terms of people "being sold into paying for things we don't need" (e.g., water in plastic bottles),<sup>3</sup> and that today "the whole nature of governments is such that they cause problems. They don't solve problems".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dutkiewicz et al p.8

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.13

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 100

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p.105

And Manuel Montes sees adequate progress requiring "states being able to be less beholden to money politics."<sup>5</sup> (What's the chance of that happening soon?)

Even more sobering, is how the contributors themselves seem incapable of venturing beyond the walls of the current reigning paradigm of man and society as primarily an economically driven phenomenon. For example, Shimshon Bichler, at the same time as he identifies the prevailing understandings and practices of capitalism as counterproductive to achieving either national or global equity or sustainability, proposes as his solution a yet unknown new definition and understanding of "capital".<sup>6</sup> Thus, at the same time as he identifies the culprit, he is incapable of freeing his mind from its embrace. It is as though he (along with economics in general) is suffering from an ideological "Stockholm syndrome" wherein hostages develop a psychological alliance with their captors.

In another interview, Ha-Joon Chang admits that "if any (other) theory had failed in practice...as free market economics, it would have been discredited and banned".<sup>7</sup> Yet he thinks "basically we need to take a gradualist view of change"<sup>8</sup> because neither he nor any of the other contributors can offer any "safe" suggestions as to alternative dramatically transformational solutions.

It is as if even the most thoughtful and sincere of our current thinkers are, like the ancient mariner, caught on a ship in the doldrums of the conceptual sea upon which our civilization currently sails, while the albatross of "money" hangs from their necks. For students of civilization, the book's resulting portrait of our times seems to correspond to Arnold Toynbee's statement that: "*In the growth phase, (a) civilization successfully responds to a series of ever new challenges, while in the disintegration stage, it fails to give such a response to a given challenge. It tries to answer it again and again, but recurrently fails.*"<sup>9</sup>

Given the book's title, it would seem that my description of its actual presentations dramatically differs from what its editors intended. Why they were unable or unwilling to accept the reality of the presentations themselves, and build better upon them, is unclear. However, to the credit of most of the interviewees, in their answers, truth manages to emerge from the fog of classical "economics."

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p.325

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p.338

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p.57

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.69

<sup>9</sup> Toynbee, Arnold. 1947. Abridgment. *A History of Civilization*. Oxford University Press. New York - London. Vol IV p. 20

Whether the economic captains of global civilization that are scheduled to meet in Beijing for the 2019 Blumberg New Economic Forum will see any of the truths of this book through their spy glasses is questionable.

**Mark Pearcey. *The Exclusions of Civilization:  
Indigenous Peoples in the Story of International Society.*  
New York: Palgrave, 2016**

**Nick McDonell. *The Civilization of Perpetual Movement: Nomads in the Modern  
World.*  
London; Hurst, 2016**

Reviewed by John Grayzel

Both Mark Pearcey's book *The Exclusions of Civilizations*, and Nick McDonell's book *The Civilization of Perpetual Movement*, focus on the phenomenon of the marginalization of a specific category of people in the actual operations of nation-states and in the conceptualization of membership in the civilizations with which those states are identified. For Pearcey the category is "indigenous," while for McDonell it is "nomadic." However, both see political globalization and an evolving global civilization as possibly offering a new set of emerging justifications, opportunities and assertions for their recognition, inclusion and participation as integral members of both their respective nations and their respective impinging civilizations.

In *The Exclusions of Civilization*, Pearcey has two resounding points. The first is that the concepts of "civilization" and "indigenous" peoples are the direct products of Western colonialism and represent normative judgements rather than objective classifications. The second is that the label of "indigenous" is not a simple normative description but actually a brutal political label that has allowed specific populations to be forcefully subjected to the full powers of the nation-state holding sway over them while being denied the normal prerogatives accorded those generally recognized as citizens of that state.

Pearcey notes how the word "civilization" itself first appeared in the mid-1700s, beginning with a general understanding of the term as connoting refinement of manners and moral sensibilities and, thereafter, became a distinguisher, particularly between those of European origin and newly discovered "savage" people. As such it conveniently served as a justifier for claiming the lands on which "indigenous" and "non-civilized" people live as being Terra Nullius ("nobody's land") and therefore claimable by European discoverers. The term "indigenous" became increasingly important as "civilization" becomes increasingly associated with the nation-state and national cultures.

When later arriving reigning groups were faced with the reality of earlier populations having an enduring presence within their nations, the term "indigenous", by creating a separate status for the original inhabitants, became a convenient way of excluding them from full recognition and participation, both within and outside their commanding nations — somewhat akin to their being recognized and managed like native flora and fauna rather than citizens or sovereigns.

Thus, Americans didn't see any contradiction between a policy of trying to force Indian populations to adapt American/Christian culture and expelling them — as happened when the Cherokee Indians were thrown off their lands in Georgia even after they had settled down to a commercial agricultural life and had won Supreme Court recognition of their legal status within the United States (*Worcester v. Georgia*, 1832).

Similarly, after WWI, the Covenant of the League of Nations "used the concept of civilization to extend the sovereign reach of some of its members to the former territories of Imperial Germany and the Ottoman Empire."<sup>1</sup>

Like Pearcey, McDonell also has two major resounding points that might be seen as similar but in fact are quite different. For him, the classic problem between "nomadic" groups and nation-states is not that of the nation-state or dominating civilization trying to "exclude them through inclusion" but rather the desire to capture and control them administratively for purposes of taxes, trade and security. Thus, McDonell's first focus is on what he sees as the inherent tension between nomadic people, who endeavor to avoid the political and administrative grip of the surrounding sedentary civilization, and the exasperation of the authorities and institutions of that civilization at their own inability to impose their dictates and norms upon groups that strive to be forever transient. (e.g.: Think how America denies all sorts of benefits to people without a permanent address).

His second concern is how political and civilizational studies have largely ignored nomadic people *per se*. Despite the important role they have often played in trade, transport and livestock production, and the fact one such group, the Mongols, ruled the largest empire in the world, they are predominantly portrayed as outsiders who become relevant when they become temporary intruders and lose this recognition after they are either repulsed, sedentarized and/or assimilated.

Both Pearcey and McDonell share a third point. It is that since the end of the colonial age, three new phenomena have created new realities and opportunities around which to refashion new relationships between nomadic and indigenous peoples, and between the nation-states in which they reside and the larger international world order.

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<sup>1</sup> Pearcey p. 85

The relevant factors are the expanded ability of nation-states to dominate entire populations, the quest for self-determination by various groups across the globe, and the emergence of self-aware transnational communities and identities in the age of globalization.

In addition to these factors, both authors see the present role that a minority of the members of these groups play in activities that threaten national and global security, such as drug smuggling and terrorism, as creating new incentives for nation-states to improve the political treatment of the innocent majority. However, as Pearcey characterizes it, "exclusion through inclusion" into the nation-state continues to play an important role in keeping them from both equitable national inclusion and appropriate internationalization.

Regrettably, as important as the authors' points are, neither book is either adequately comprehensive or sufficiently exacting in its coverage to provide a solid foundation on which to build a comprehensive understanding of the actual circumstances of indigenous and nomadic peoples, let alone to develop and to recommend realistic alternative policies and practices in response to current needs and opportunities.

In the case of Pearcey, his rather short book spends an inordinate amount of space paying homage to the political science lineage of his concerns. This comes at the cost of his even mentioning such factually and philosophically critical cases as the Australian aborigines and Amazon populations, let alone groups such as the Tibetans and Urghers, whom China seems to be treating as neo-quasi indigenous peoples.

McDonell, in his relatively short book, focuses mainly on the Saharan Tuareg and Mongolia, to the exclusion of arguably even more important groups. Such groups include neighboring Mauritania (one of the only two nations in the world whose majority population was, at independence, still primarily nomadic), as well as the associated Western Saharan Polisario and the Fulani to the south, who, like the Mongols, historically moved between nomadism and empire building. McDonell especially devotes a relatively large sector of his book on a case study of conflict between nomadic herders and sedentary mining interests in Mongolia (the other, until recently, predominantly nomadic nation). In the case of Mongolia, the country has so recently flipped to a sedentary majority that almost anyone over forty still fully understands the qualities of nomadic life. Today, the reigning conflicts in Mongolia are over power and money, not political, social or environmental ideology. What's more, till the collapse of the U.S.S.R. in 1991, Mongolia was an example of an authoritarian (communist) state which strongly supported the nomadic way of life and a nomadic economy. (Moreover, Mongolian nomads have lived within various state-like confederation, Khaganates and dynasties since circa 300 BCE).

The Mongolian situation reflects four methodological deficiencies, found in both the works:

- 1) their almost exclusive reliance on English language sources when probably the best information, at least for Africa, is in French — particularly from the French school of human geography;
- 2) their minimizing the importance of the factor that has always been a major determinant of the treatment of nomads by others — namely resource competition, predominantly land but also mineral wealth and trade route control;
- 3) their inattention to critical realities. For example, many nomadic groups are not, as McDonnell defines them, embodiments of “perpetual mobility.” Rather, most are transhumant — meaning certain individuals and families move their livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle, while the old, the young, and the infirm reside in semi-established settlements. In fact, the Roma and the Irish travelers are probably more truly nomadic than the Tuareg of Fulani.
- 4) lastly, both authors see the critical phenomena as primarily political. This may be true from the perspective of the nation-state and its representatives, but it is not the case for many indigenous and nomadic people.

For the Fulani (among whom I lived for 16 months), the driving value is the maintaining of “personal freedom” expressed in many forms — from geographic mobility to creative thinking to economic independence to sexual love, all in ways corresponding to their code of behavior called *pulaaku*. In Mongolia (where I worked intermittently for fifteen years from 1993 to 2008), the *ger* (their round cloth nomadic hut), their encampment (*ail*), and the rules of hospitality that are indispensable to nomadic survival, serve, with specific related manners and rituals, as mental psycho-social vehicles for organizing much of their personal and social behaviors and feelings.

Likewise, in Mauritania, where I lived and worked for five years, the combined power of an unusual desert aesthetic and an all-pervasive spiritual/religious presence have played a vital role in enthralling and mooring its people to life under its harsh desert conditions. Unfortunately, such non-tangible, non-materialistic factors are imperiled more than ever by the onslaught of global neo-liberal capitalism, resource-related political conflict and, now, rapidly emerging climate change. Yet they are not (and possibly cannot be) adequately addressed by even enlightened academic theories, national policies or international agreements, such as are suggested in these works.

In the end, both these works provide a valuable service in highlighting how the two respective groups—indigenous and nomadic—have been, and still are, purposely ignored, misrepresented and mistreated by the preponderance of scholarly analysis in civilization and political science studies and the *realpolitik* of nation-state and international behavior.

In this regard they are effective raisers of reader conscience and consciousness and should be recognized and commended for so doing. However, readers stimulated by either of the works will need to search further than these books for more meaningful understandings of the predicaments, prospects and realities of the lives of those subsumed under the categories of "indigenous" and "nomadic" peoples.

**David Ringrose. *Europeans Abroad, 1450-1750*.  
Rowman & Littlefield, 2018**

Reviewed by E. Wesley Reynolds, III

David Ringrose reveals just how much early modern world history needs revision. For decades the post-colonialist historiography has given undue emphasis to the rise of Western imperialism, but as Ringrose argues, from 1450-1750, Western “empires” hardly existed. Instead, it was the empires of the east, namely the Ottoman, Chinese and Mughal empires that controlled trade and permitted European merchant families to live and work within their trade networks. The world over, European “expansion” in the age of exploration was limited to small enclaves, home to diasporas of multi-ethnic and even multi-religious families who relied on native allies more than gunpowder to survive.

This work accomplishes several feats. First, it gives a more convincing reason for European migrations to other places of the world. Europeans wanted to cash in on preexisting trade routes. They relied on diplomacy rather than force in naval affairs and avoided large-scale conflicts with their Ottoman and Mughal neighbors. The Armenian, Sephardic Jewish and Multani Indian diasporas allowed Europeans to contact and to expand the overland trade routes of spices, silks and porcelains from Cairo to Northern India and Southwestern Asia. Spain conquered preexisting empires in Mesoamerica by promoting native administrators. The Portuguese depended upon the Songhai West African empire and the Kingdom of Kongo for its slave trade. Ringrose proposes that western imperialism belongs to the nation-states of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and not to the early modern world.

Second, Ringrose’s work demonstrates that Europeans were not fundamentally racist in their initial contacts and assimilated into native life when and where they could. Rather than seeing Catholicism as an imperial force, Ringrose argues that Catholics believed in the common decent of all men and assimilated into other civilizations. Many Europeans took native wives, raised their children of mixed ethnicity inside local communities, and even adopted native religions. Extended families were the primary social networks for trade relationships and patriarchal or matriarchal associations fostered cross-family apprenticeships. European communities abroad grew more diverse, whether it be the French and Italian merchants in the Indian and Persian pepper trade, the English and Dutch in the South China Sea, or the Portuguese in Africa. Even in America, English settlers sought out native alliances until the mid-eighteenth century, after which time, New England in particular embraced a racial social order. European migrations were diasporas rather than centers of control.

Third, Ringrose's work reveals the importance of silver in effectively subsidizing the Far Eastern trade for two centuries. When the Ming dynasty in China switched to silver currency, the value of silver steadily rose until the Spanish discovered silver in Mexico and Peru. Europeans, particularly the English, used silver from America and Manila on the European market as a linch-pin to open up Chinese trade. So important was the trade that by the 1630s, most English East India Company ships headed for ports in India carried only silver. Here again, Europe was at the mercy of an eastern market.

Some would perhaps desire a more direct engagement with the orientalist "othering" narrative — an issue mainly confined to the footnotes. And some of Ringrose's claims appear, on the face of it, too benign, like arguing for periods of amicable relationships between natives of North America and Dutch and English settlers. Ringrose does not address the more crusading rhetoric of Richard Hakluyt and the visionaries behind many European joint-stock companies. The Navigation Acts and the imperial reorientation of the British Atlantic world are left out. Ringrose also does not discuss missionary efforts, which were by their very nature not assimilationist with regards to salvation. Still, Ringrose does much to recover a more dynamic world than one of mere exploitation and victimization.