

on his/her circumspection as those obtained in case studies. Stevenson's birth-mark work is bound to be challenged, for it is serious work of great consequence. Arguments will not help much. The meaningful battles will be fought only in the field, *via* the replication process.

Stevenson's emphasis is on presenting his data in great detail, but he also discusses various explanations and implications of the data, such as those for genetics and for the mind-body problem. In *Where Biology and Reincarnation Intersect* he concludes:

Yet in saying that I think that reincarnation is the best explanation for many cases, I do not claim that it is the only explanation. Further research may show that it is not even the best one. This is a matter about which my opinion should count for little. I regard my contribution as that of presenting the evidence as clearly as I can. Each reader should study the evidence carefully — preferably in the monograph — and then reach his or her own conclusion (pp. 112-113).

Reincarnation and Biology and *Where Reincarnation and Biology Intersect* together are a work of truly unique proportions. I have not read anything as interesting and fascinating for many years. It is one of a kind and is bound to become a classic, defining a unique and difficult domain. It is the crowning work of a truly outstanding scholar and researcher.

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References

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Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative by Edward R. Tufte. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 1997, pp. 156, \$45.00 (c). ISBN 0-9613921-2-6.

The subtitle of *Visual Explanations* is fair warning: the name of this game is *synthesis*. Traditionally, images have been the province of temperamental artists, quantities and evidence the pastures of hard-headed empiricists, and narrative the peat of crafty storytellers. For centuries, the good yeomen of academic disciplines have been enforcing these property rights. But Professor Tufte roams, grazes, and tills these territories *ad libitum*. His thesis maintains that representing information about space, time, cause, effect, and number (the hard currency of scientific and technical discourse) requires a privileged place:

a warren where the “principles of design replicate the principles of thought” so that “the act of arranging information becomes an act of insight” (p. 9).

This book’s high standards of form-content complementarity support this lofty goal without caricature. At the same time, this is a practical book; the reader can learn numerous graphical-design strategies for representing order-of-scale reasoning, process and change, kinematics and causality. These lessons are credible for three reasons: a) the author is an expert on aesthetic matters by virtue of having authored and published two highly regarded texts on so-called visual literacy; b) he teaches courses in statistical evidence at a venerable institution; c) he is a fellow of the American Statistical Association. This seemingly paradoxical combination of credentials signals the reader that the author’s right and left brains have not been deployed in mutually encumbering contradiction. Further, given the pride of place which the language of statistics holds in the study of anomalous phenomena, generally, and the pages of the *Journal* now in your hands, specifically, the opportunity to absorb Tufte’s amalgam of art and science could prove refreshing.

Visual Explanations is also valuable because its well-organized chapters are addressing an essential issue in human communication, *i.e.*, how can we combine, compress, and transform the multidimensional parameters of objective information *and* the subtleties of subjective experience into two-dimensional media? On the basis of Tufte’s superb treatment of this issue, I personally hope that his next book includes a discussion of the problems associated with depicting the geometry of higher dimensions. An explanation of how strange-yet-fascinating objects like the hypercube, Klein bottle, and tesseract represent visual explanations of “spaces” would provide an edifying and felicitous extension of his thesis.

If you prefer your logic cold and your abstractions mathematical, then this is probably not the book for you. But what if, as a child, you were enchanted by the sensuous spell of books — their imaginative possibilities, physical accessibility, colors, textures, and redolence? Then this beautifully crafted book can carry you back in time. It will be your *Madeleine*, one of those delicate baked goods which Marcel Proust described as a source of inspiration for *Remembrance of Things Past*.

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ERRATUM

Satwant Pasricha’s article “Cases of the Reincarnation Type in Northern India With Birthmarks and Birth Defects,” which appeared in Vol. 12, no. 2, contained the following errors. On the top of page 274, “ashbir” should read “Yashbir.” On page 283, footnote 2, line 3, “who had a birthmarks” should read, “who had a birthmark”(singular), and on page 287, the last line of footnote 3 should read “...adequately close to exclude coincidence.”