

**The Red Market: On the Trail of the World's Organ Brokers, Bone Thieves, Blood Farmers, and Child Traffickers**

SCOTT CARNEY  
*William Morrow: 2011.*  
272 pp. \$25.99

midwestern family was stolen from his biological mother while her back was momentarily turned in a Chennai slum.

Other shocking cases include the reported execution of political prisoners in China to provide organs on demand — highlighted in 2006 by United Nations delegate David Matas and retired Canadian politician David Kilgour. Or the blood farm on the India–Nepal border, where

a dairy farmer imprisoned poor Nepalese refugees and literally bled them dry, prompting Carney to delve further into India's murky blood trade.

*The Red Market* is an excellent piece of reporting, but the book is framed around a flawed concept. Carney describes the “specialness” that defines a living person. “There is a clear difference between the living and the dead and that specialness — whatever it may be — is the rock that I’ve built this book upon,” he writes. But there is no such division: death is a process, not an event. Over the centuries, the arbitrary line that society has drawn between life and death has shifted.

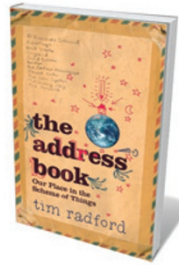
**DRAWN OUT DEATH**

It used to be that the heart had to stop beating before death could be declared. Now brain death is the usual criterion, and a dead person's heart can continue to beat for a while. As death encroaches on life, more and more people are considered to be eligible for organ harvesting. Carney does not specifically mention this trend, but it inevitably affects organ supply.

He does, however, allude to the blurring between life and death by describing the trade in a waste product: human hair. Although hair contains DNA, it hardly represents a biological link between donor and wig-wearing recipient, thus failing to satisfy one of his red market factors. It still meets the other criterion: the hair is ‘donated’, while increasing sums are exchanged for it as it moves up the supply chain.

Temple-goers in Tirupati, India, have their heads shaved for religious reasons, and are not paid for the raw material that ends up in expensive salons in Brooklyn. Likewise, in many countries, women who ‘donate’ their eggs are prohibited from receiving payment beyond their expenses. Organs too are given away, while every physician, nurse and health coordinator ▶

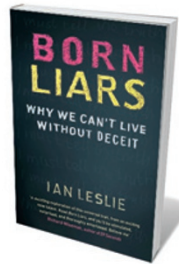
## Books in brief



**The Address Book: Our Place in the Scheme of Things**

Tim Radford FOURTH ESTATE 272 pp. £16.99 (2011)

As children, many of us will have written down a long version of our address — with our street, home town and country followed by planet Earth, the Solar System, the Universe. In his latest book, science journalist Tim Radford muses on our relationship with locations at increasing scales, asking how they become part of our identities and why we make strong associations with certain places. Starting with his perspective on his possessions, house and town, Radford's horizons expand to encompass the place of humans on the planet, in our Galaxy and in the Universe.



**Born Liars: Why We Can't Live without Deceit**

Ian Leslie QUERCUS 352 pp. £12.99 (2011)

Most people say they dislike liars, but we have all told untruths. We may consciously tell a white lie, assuring a friend that an outfit suits them when we know it doesn't. Or we may fool ourselves by adhering to unrealistic beliefs, such as that we will always be healthy so it is fine to smoke. But lies are not necessarily bad, says writer Ian Leslie. Although most people feel psychological discomfort when they tell falsehoods, deceit has positive benefits. As well as playing a part in advertising, politics, sport and war, it is central to human character, he argues, and has evolutionary advantages.



**Aping Mankind: Neuromania, Darwinitis and the Misrepresentation of Humanity**

Raymond Tallis ACUMEN 416 pp. £25 (2011)

Human consciousness and behaviour are more complex than can be explained by our brains alone, argues clinical neuroscientist Raymond Tallis in his provocative book. Although he acknowledges that neuroscience has made great strides in recent decades towards understanding how the brain works, he suggests that some scientists have over-reached themselves in believing that everything from art to religious belief can be explained in neural terms. Such ‘neuromania’ is misleading, he believes.



**The Crafting of the 10,000 Things: Knowledge and Technology in Seventeenth-Century China**

Dagmar Schäfer UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS 352 pp. \$45 (2011)

The demise of China's Ming Dynasty in the seventeenth century was accompanied by a surge in publications detailing the state of knowledge and technology. One of the most significant was Song Yingxing's 1637 volume *Tiangong kaiwu*, or *The Exploitation of the Works of Nature*. It documented the production of materials and goods, from yeast, wine and ink to paper, boats and firearms. In this book, historian Dagmar Schäfer sets Song's encyclopedia within the broader commercial and cultural context of Ming China.



**Compassion, by the Pound: The Economics of Farm Animal Welfare**

F. Bailey Norwood and Jayson L. Lusk OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS 416 pp. \$45 (2011)

Economic assessments have been largely missing from debates on the welfare of farm animals. Agricultural economists Bailey Norwood and Jayson Lusk rectify that in this volume by evaluating the value of organic eggs, free-range pork and the use of antibiotics in farm animals. Consumers are willing to bear the extra costs for greater animal welfare in food production, they find, but the price in some cases is reduced efficiency, which requires more animals to be used.