

conferences thereby became less distinctive, and that their influence was diluted.

Brown also notes the tension between those who wished to promote piecemeal progress and those, such as Rotblat, who did not wish to lose sight of the long-term aim to rid the world of nuclear weapons. This latter view was widely derided as woolly idealism. But it gradually gained broader establishment support. In his later years, for instance, Robert McNamara, defence secretary to US presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, attended several Pugwash meetings. This might have seemed incongruous, as did Rotblat's friendship with Soviet Union President Mikhail Gorbachev. But these men came together with the realization that eliminating nuclear weapons should be an eventual goal. This view has become mainstream, espoused recently by the US 'gang of four' (former secretaries of state Henry Kissinger and George Schultz, former defence secretary William Perry and former Senator Sam Nunn) and proclaimed in President Barack Obama's 2009 speech in Prague.

When the Pugwash Conferences were recognized by the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize, half of the award went to the organization and half to Rotblat personally. It was characteristic that he donated his half of the prize money to the organization.

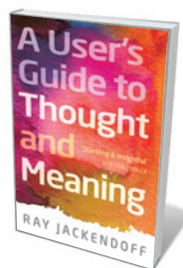
That was also the year of Rotblat's absurdly overdue election to the Royal Society — recognition that meant a lot to him. In a memorable speech, he warned against exchanging the ivory tower for secret work. He quoted Solly Zuckerman, long-term adviser on nuclear policy to the UK government: "When it comes to nuclear weapons... it is he, the technician, not the commander in the field, who is at the heart of the arms race".

Until his last few months (he died aged 96), Rotblat travelled the world with the resilience of a man half his age. He was concerned about the hazards that could stem from the misuse of twenty-first-century science, so was keen to convey his disquiet beyond the Pugwash community, and to a younger generation. He favoured a 'Hippocratic oath' whereby scientists would pledge to use their talents for human benefit. Whether or not such an oath would have substance, there can be no doubt of his success at raising awareness. Even in his nineties, he could still captivate students.

Brown's balanced and comprehensive biography is welcome. Rotblat's inspiring life — against a backdrop of tragedy and hardship, with idealism but without illusions — deserves to be better known. ■

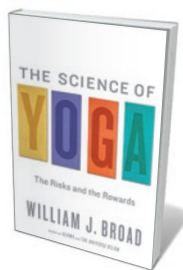
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## Books in brief



### A User's Guide to Thought and Meaning

Ray Jackendoff OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS 288 pp. £16.99 (2012)  
Linguist Ray Jackendoff wends his way through thorny questions around language and thought, hedge-clippers in hand. Covering words and meaning, consciousness and perception, reference, rationality and intuition, he reveals the split between how we experience the world and how perception and language are organized. His conclusion is that rational thought rests on intuition — and that meaning and thought are almost completely unconscious. The book is a multi-perspective journey into the hinterlands of the 'problem of knowledge'.



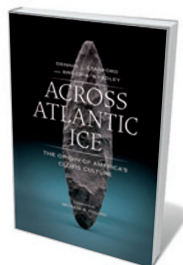
### The Science of Yoga: The Risks and the Rewards

William J. Broad SIMON & SCHUSTER 336 pp. £16.63 (2012)  
Whether it is hatha, ashtanga or kundalini, yoga is swathed in hype. This ancient discipline is a vast and growing industry in the West, and ripe for investigation. Science writer William Broad, a two-time Pulitzer prizewinner and experienced yoga practitioner, has spent five years researching the teaching and practice. The result is illuminating and often unnerving. Yoga has proven physical and psychological benefits, yet Broad shows how even ordinary poses, poorly taught to the unfit, can lead to strokes, serious hip-joint damage and worse.



### Steam-Powered Knowledge: William Chambers and the Business of Publishing, 1820-1860

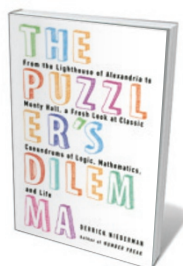
Aileen Fyfe UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS 336 pp. \$50 (2012)  
As e-books rise, it is salutary to recall another technological revolution in bringing words to mind: the steam-powered printing press. Historian Aileen Fyfe focuses on Edinburgh publishing firm W. & R. Chambers to reveal how the cheap print that flooded both sides of the Atlantic in the 1800s transformed the dissemination of knowledge. This chronicle of great endeavour is studded with small pleasures, from the horror over 'sordid' railway literature to engineer Charles Babbage's awe of printing speeds at *The Times*.



### Across Atlantic Ice: The Origin of America's Clovis Culture

Dennis J. Stanford and Bruce A. Bradley UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS 336 pp. \$34.95 (2012)

North America's first peoples were long thought to be Asians who migrated over the Bering land bridge some 12,000 years ago, bringing with them the tools of the Clovis culture. Now archaeologists Dennis Stanford and Bruce Bradley have radically recast the story. Drawing on climatic, genetic and archaeological evidence, they argue that the roots of Clovis culture rest in the Solutrean people of Spain and France, who sent some of their number across the Atlantic in boats 18,000 years ago.



### The Puzzler's Dilemma: From the Lighthouse of Alexandria to Monty Hall, a Fresh Look at Classic Conundrums of Logic, Mathematics, and Life

Derrick Niederman DUCKWORTH 216 pp. £14.99 (2012)

Mathematician Derrick Niederman takes classic logic puzzles and weaves them into a fiendish brain-teaser of a narrative. He covers 'kangaroo' puzzles that contain their own answers, lateral-thinking posers, and even riddles that abide by Sherlock Holmes's great technique — eliminating the impossible so that "whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth".