about unique and well-defined problems and interesting perspectives. Nonetheless, the overall frame feels a fraction too big and is never problematized to any major extent. Why are these texts included and what is their validity in the choice of field and subject, other than that they are placed under the same category? Even if the different texts are profoundly discussed and the uniting texts are well argued, the selection of the texts feels somewhat arbitrary.

But at the same time, the complexity embedded in the choice of subject and field is confirmed and also reflected in the different textual contributions. The importance of attempting to find definition and clarity within innovation processes is successfully shown, and that the innovation concept actually can be used in a good way to understand the technological development in developing countries is demonstrated as well.

So, the reading is interesting and the different contributions well accomplished. On the other hand, the line is not sustainable through the whole book. A more well-defined and coherent material would provide the possibility to draw more clear and concrete guidelines and recommendations. But the work is well written and well worked-out, and the benefit of a book with this empirical and theoretical extent is hard to question.

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Craig Hall, The Responsible Entrepreneur: How to Make Money and Make a Difference. Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press, 2001, 282 pp. ISBN 1-56414-581-6, US$24.99, £19.95 (hbk).

For those entrepreneurship scholars who rely on interviews instead of the mailed questionnaire this book is a reminder of the joy of meeting entrepreneurs, since they are more often than not fascinating people who tend to look at the world slightly differently than the rest of us. This book captures some of the genius and insight of the entrepreneur. The author began his own entrepreneurial career at age 10, was a millionaire by age 21, and has for some time been the largest property developer and manager of apartment complexes in the USA, owning and managing 700,000 apartments. In 1986, his company, Hall Financial Group, was the largest private placement investment sponsor in the USA having raised over US$1bn in equity. Hall was also onetime owner of the Dallas Cowboys and his wife was mayor of Dallas and later US ambassador to Austria during President Clinton's second term. So why would a book by someone so quintessentially American be of interest to an international readership? While his wife was being an ambassador, Hall was actively involved in doing what he does best in Eastern and Central Europe and this book profiles some of the most interesting entrepreneurs whom he met. Furthermore, he developed a strong interest in social entrepreneurs and what he calls the ‘responsible entrepreneur’.

A weakness of the book is that the author alternates between telling us about
his own life, entrepreneurial journey and philosophy, and sharing stories about European (and American) entrepreneurs who have impressed him for their social responsibility. One might say that it is possible to take the Texas entrepreneur out of Texas (and he will flourish) but one cannot quite take the Texan out of the author. It is not that Hall’s personal story is uninteresting. Exactly the opposite is the case. He cannot quite restrain from sharing his own entrepreneurial experience and it is sufficiently fascinating that we want more. He is too young to write an autobiography, but this book would have been better if he had first written one and then tackled the topic of responsible entrepreneurship.

The book begins with 10 myths about entrepreneurs that include: ‘Entrepreneurs only care about making money!’ and ‘Nice guys finish last!’. These principles set normative standards by which he judges his own behavior and would like all entrepreneurs to judge theirs. The next four myths are more descriptive and subject to empirical challenge. ‘A book business plan is the entrepreneur’s critical roadmap to success! You can be taught to be an entrepreneur! Entrepreneurs must start young! Entrepreneurs can be found only in business!’ The last two say something commendable about Hall. The author rises above his own experience as an entrepreneur, but like many entrepreneurs Hall believes that it is a myth that we can teach entrepreneurship. When I have encountered that view in field research, it reflects a life experience where success came without specialized entrepreneurship education. Hall quotes one of his profiled entrepreneurs: ‘You can’t teach someone to be an entrepreneur more than you can teach him or her to become a great piano player or a great artist. You can teach the techniques of painting or piano playing, but only people who have real skill for greatness can become a concert pianist or accomplished artist’ (p. 23). This quote captures the sloppy thinking that often comes from entrepreneurs when they reflect on their own profession.

The US entrepreneurs that Hall profiles include Steve Mariotti, founder (in 1987) of the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurs (an interesting choice given Hall’s skepticism about entrepreneurship education) who brings entrepreneurship to poor children in the inner cities of the USA. A mother is Albert Black Jr., an African-American entrepreneur who grew up in a public housing project in South Dallas and who founded a successful custodial service and supply firm. Black is committed to improving the tax base and infrastructure of the inner city and building better communities through community business. Ambassador Richard Schifter forms the basis of another story of a kind of social entrepreneurship; he came up with the idea of the Southeast European Development Cooperative Initiative. A complementary story is that of another American who founded the not-for-profit National Service League Inc. that brought business and young people together to aid in the transition to a democratic, free-market system in Eastern Europe with funding from the Soros Foundation, USAID, AT&T and others. This entrepreneur’s day job focused on creating Skyjet, providing private jet travel for the great masses of Central Europeans who travel by private luxury jet.

Included among the East and Central European entrepreneurs profiled are Gerry Hargitai, who founded California Fitness, a multilevel marketing firm.
Hall argues through this account that when people work together in a new venture in places like the former Yugoslavia, they put aside ethnic animosity. It is an attractive hypothesis, but a few people working for one company hardly makes a compelling case. Doraja Eberle, a rich Austrian woman who in 1998 moved 900 tons of desperately needed food from Germany to Bosnia, advanced an interesting hypothesis in this story of social entrepreneurship: “So often, I have found that the best entrepreneurial successes come when we don’t know enough about something to realize an idea ‘won’t work.’ A positive attitude and a refusal to hear why something can’t be done are often how what seems impossible becomes reality” (p. 105). Another insight is less credulous. Hall claims that Eberle’s effort was more efficient than ordinary aid programs because there “[were] no administrative costs, 100 percent of the money that comes in goes out to meet the needs of the poorest of the poor” (p. 112). This is a great breakthrough, but Hall fails to explain how social entrepreneurs can run major programs without fixed or variable administrative costs.

Katharine Wittmann was born in Slovakia of Jewish heritage and after World War II and communist supremacy the family business was expropriated. Wittmann returns after 1990, takes back what is rightly hers and re-establishes the family business working through organizations such as the Slovak American Enterprise Fund. For upholding private property rights, justice is served when Wittmann is rewarded with a lucrative acquisition offer. Kenny Blatt spent 10 years developing businesses in Central and Eastern Europe and as an angel investor in technology-driven companies in the USA and Europe (mostly Romania). His story revolves around developing gambling casinos along the Romanian coast and is a little disconcerting in a book on responsible entrepreneurship. One might expect that responsible entrepreneurs would add value rather than simply live handsomely off a consumer capitalist system, but we are relieved from any feeling of moral uncertainty by these astute words of moral relativity: “Don’t superimpose your field onto theirs. Understand the differences and adjust your practices accordingly.” Kenny Blatt went on to tell me that what may be black to us is white to them and on their playing field, white is white” (p. 167).

The Blatt story leads, by mutual friendships in Romania, to an empty and troubling story about Fahim Tobur, “one of the most contagiously happy, friendly, optimistic, exciting, and outgoing people I have ever met” (p. 173). Fahim’s great contribution to humanity was a plan to build an international shopping mall in Romania. Hall wanted to know more about why he was doing this but was interrupted by “course after course” of great food, good wine, and a fun sing-along at a restaurant where the interview occurred (p. 174). The ‘responsible entrepreneur’ must first deal with basic human needs before addressing ideas of a higher order and more abstract issues. Hall’s dinner companions are the people Hall sees as a ‘bridge to the future’ (p. 175), which reinforces Left critiques of globalization suggesting that even good sentiments and good deeds only reinforce a global consumer capitalist system that is inequitable and exploitative. The affable host as responsible entrepreneur is a less than compelling contrary perspective.

The book is not without a latent ideology as suggested by a Cold War mindset.
and language that includes terms such as ‘Iron Curtain’ (p. 82). Elsewhere, Hall accurately attributes to Communist propaganda a description of America as a land of ‘no medical coverage and people having no jobs’ but he misses the mirror image quality of the propaganda stereotypes. In reality, a higher percentage of Americans lived during the Cold War without basic medical coverage than in the former Soviet Union. At some level, Hall – like other representatives of the upper strata of American society whether Republican or Democrat – has replaced anti-Communism with an ideology of neo-liberalism and entrepreneurship. However, the ideological quality of the book is relatively subdued, for Hall is more a true believer based on personal experience than an ideologue operating in the world of ideas. But he is clearly a reflection of his society.

The book closes with a series of reflective essays and advice including a chapter with a list of 30 traits of successful entrepreneurs (which could serve as a useful platform for discussing entrepreneurial behavior) and 7 secrets about entrepreneurs. These lists reveal the fundamental weakness of the book. Out of 30 traits, only the last mentions ‘responsibility’, while most celebrate the heroism of the entrepreneur. Five hint at a darker side of entrepreneurship, including successful entrepreneurs can ‘pull the trigger’ (a particularly unfortunate metaphor), are angry, frustrated and hungry for control. Even allowing for the emotional exuberance of Texas idioms and personality, there is little in this book that is likely to advance what Hall describes as a ‘tidal wave of responsible entrepreneurism’ (p. 266).

The absence of a coherent theoretical or conceptual framework or even definition of ‘responsible entrepreneurs’ dooms Hall’s good intentions. The reason can probably be explained by the values espoused by Hall in his list of 30 traits of successful entrepreneurs (charisma, passion, vision and goals, etc.). Missing from the list are terms like empirically grounded, critical thinking, or testing reality. This reliance on passion over reason affects the selection of his responsible entrepreneurial role models. It is not reassuring to find that his role models’ ventures include casinos, an international mall in one of the poorest countries of Central Europe, a private luxury jet service for the very rich and multilevel marketing. It is not enough for rich entrepreneurs to soothe their conscience with some good deeds after building small or great fortunes pandering to the rich and powerful. Responsible entrepreneurship ought to be built around opportunities that add value to the community. Opportunities that enhance productivity are presumably more responsible than those that reallocate wealth from the poor to the rich or the already affluent. There is no hint of this in the book.

The index of the book has no references to ethics or social responsibility. Issues of worker safety, safe products and environmental protection are also missing from this book. The social entrepreneurs profiled offer a kind of window dressing to legitimize the title and lead us to Hall’s celebration of a heroic type of entrepreneur.

I liked the book more before drafting this review because Hall is a good storyteller. But good stories told around a Texas campfire are not enough to advance the important concept of the responsible entrepreneur. Hall seems too easily swayed by friendship, jovial entrepreneurs acting as generous and gracious hosts
and money making of any kind (disclaimers to the contrary) to be taken as seri-
ously as the concept deserves. For those wanting more information there is a
website (http://www.theresponsibleentrepreneur.org) that promotes the book
and gives some insight into the concept.

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