

## **Marblehead League Book Discussion Group 4/11/2022**

League members offered analysis of the following books at our April 11, 2022 book group.

1. **“How Emotions Are Made”** (2017) by Lisa Feldman Barrett The human brain was originally designed to take care of the body, but that is not what it does today. Our reader enjoyed the section about how to interact with children to help them develop emotional intelligence, so they learn what they are feeling in different situations.
2. **“Seven And A Half Lessons About The Brain”** (2020) by Lisa Feldman Barrett Sometimes, the way we talk about reality is in metaphor, which doesn’t accurately reflect the real world, so it is important to understand the limitations. Our reader found the section on how we process memories to be particularly interesting.
3. **“Pachinko”** (2017) by Min Jin Lee a fascinating book of fiction that takes place after the war through current day, tracing a Korean family’s experience of discrimination as the family enters Japanese society. National Book Award Finalist
4. **“Klara and the Sun”** by Kazuo Ishiguro (2022) Science fiction. Story is set in England in the future, in a time when Artificial Intelligence (AI) has developed to the point where children’s parents choose to buy Artificial Friend (AF) dolls to fill needs in children’s lives. Klara is such a doll for children. Without ego, Klara helps everyone and benefits all. However, the message is, it is still better to be a human. Engaging, surprising and gets you thinking about the decisions that need to be made about AI and how it is used.
5. **“The Ickpick Surgeon: Murder, Fraud, Sabotage, Piracy, and Other Dastardly Deeds Perpetrated in the Name of Science”** (2021) Sam Keene. The author discusses multiple instances where science and scientists have gone awry. Entertaining, horrifying, and scary at the same time.
6. **“Principles for Dealing with the Changing World Order: Why Nations Succeed and Fail”** (2021) by Ray Dalio A comprehensive review of world history written by an investment banker to summarize how he advises his clients on economic swings based solely on capitalism and with the goal of accumulating more. Our reader was not impressed due to omissions of discussion about compassion, care of others, and basic values other than money.
7. **“Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World”** (2005) by Jack Weatherford A surprising look at the rise of Genghis Khan and the Mongol world, his conquests and the changes he wrought, which often were positive. Highly recommended.

8.       **“Lawrence in Arabia: War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East”** (2014) Scott Anderson This book was a Finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in Biography. It discusses the role Lawrence played in the Arab Revolt against the Turks (in World War 1) and how the results shape present day Mid-East.
9.       **“The Monarchy of Fear: A Philosopher looks at our Political Crisis”** (2017) Martha C. Nussbaum. The author is a philosopher and offers insights about how fear is at the basis of present-day political divisions in America. Beautifully written, an in- depth meditation on fear in all its incarnations. The author quotes historical figures commenting on dissolution of their politics, such as Cicero, Kant, Lucretius. The book ends with how to combat these forces.
10.      **“Strongmen: Mussolini to the Present”** (2022) by Ruth Ben-Ghiat Fabulous in depth look at authoritarians who become strongmen tyrants, written by a historian who uses a multitude of strongmen from the 20<sup>th</sup> century as her sources. The book is divided into three parts: how they get to power, the tools they use to stay in power, how they eventually lose power. Highly recommended. The author also gives a weekly talk anyone can sign up for called Lucid.