

NOWletter 246 November 2024

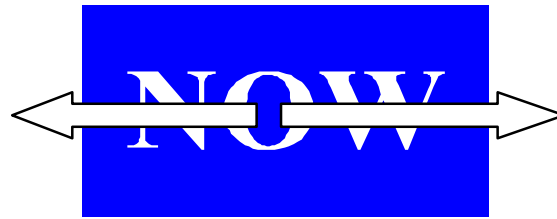
Website: www.capacitie.org

Sydney Workshop

24 November

See: www.headless.org

And page 8 of this issue



CONTENTS

On Meditation	Eliot Redelman	1
On Consciousness	Trisha English	2
The 'Other'	Bernardo Kastrup	4
The 'Other'	Alan Mann	4
At the Barn	Margot Mann	6
Messages from Friends	Margaret Gracey, Garry Booth & Brentyn Ramm	8

Meditation from Eliot Redelman

As any meditator starts to find, there's some states in meditation that feel good and "better" than the non-meditation states. After meditation I feel refreshed, rested, relieved, more present, I can be in the world in a more effective way, I can enjoy myself easier. It would be easy to get hooked on the meditation state, get addicted to both the material states and also the immaterial states.

As any meditator also starts to find, the meditation state wears off. At first, it's at my next sit, I notice that there was a difference between when I last ended meditation and now. Then I notice an hour after I am done meditating. I feel less centered. Then I notice a few minutes after I get off the cushion that I've already "lost" something. Then I realise it's a few moments after I stop meditating. Then I realise that it's even within my meditation and there's a whole bunch of suffering... aaaahhhh. And it's all caused by my tracking and obsessing over my state and if it's clear and suddenly I have the insight that I have to let go of being in any particular state in order to get past this particular suffering.

Then I have a really bad day. A day where Every.Miserable.State arrives one by one to try to convince me that I should crave, I should run, I should believe that there's something I can do to escape my reality into a meditation practice that has become a crutch. I may be a foul person for a day, then the craving surrenders too and everything is just fine. There's no more crappy states trying to trick me into that type of clinging ever again.

I just show up in my state, and accept it and enjoy it and go from there. Some days I'm the best meditative wizard, other days I feel like a hack, but I accept myself as I am and I never again crave immaterial rebirth ("the desire to be in a particular state").

Eliot

On Consciousness from Trisha English

On the 10th September, I received the first Nowletter for sometime, which meant I received some exceedingly interesting material in relation to consciousness.

I wrote the following letter to Alan Mann, our esteemed editor: *“It was good to hear from you after so long, and even better to see you take up the reigns of the NOWletter. I’ve missed it and missed you.*

I read the article thoroughly, but must admit a good deal of it went over my head. I was reminded of JK’s statement “the word is not the thing”. As it happens, Prof. P. Krishna is on YouTube discussing consciousness, or what purports to be his understanding of what Krishnamurti had to say about it.

I’m afraid I momentarily sided with Sir Roger Penrose, who I thought had taken the view that understanding human consciousness would never be resolved. In actual fact he couldn’t get it into a mathematical computation, which is something entirely different. Personally, I regard human consciousness as being an expression of cosmic consciousness, though I am not quite sure what I understand by “cosmic consciousness”.

If the universe, or multi-verses had a Creator, then clearly, even with quantum physics and space journeys to the moon or planets, we will not have any understanding, or even a mindfulness of what we are missing. Humans can create telescopes and technology but that doesn’t mean the objects created can understand us. Though some AI programmers would probably disagree.

So with some alterations, this was the email I sent to Alan. Then I saw my own lack of knowledge about consciousness so I set about “exploring the field” and found myself even more confused. Knowledge is not wisdom. It is a form of conditioning that is part of the development of every human on the planet. It manifests itself in “thinking which comes through the brain”.

The power of conditioning is beyond computation. It is beyond propaganda, belief, and conviction. It can however, be felt through “awareness” or “mindfulness” since these attributes may primitively be expressed as “flight” or “fight”. It can be deepened by an alertness to how our conditioning is expressed from day to day and moment to moment, as Jiddu Krishnamurti may have said. And it can be explored through attention to our “significant others” those people who influence us and create in us agreement or negation.

In carrying out my programme of research, I found some fascinating facts. Einstein, Tesla, Tchaikovsky, Krishnamurti, Hawking and many others, fell into long periods of “meditation” or “mindlessness” in the course of their work. They saw, heard, or imagined the most extraordinary things. *Something came to them, they did not go to it.* Now if you want to know what “it” refers to, then you have to go and make your own journey. That is why Krishnamurti could not tell people “how” to get there. There is no “how”, and there is no failure, only “exploration”.

I realize that most people will not understand what I have written. That’s okay, because now I am going to present you with an inadequate summary of what is happening in the realm of “consciousness theory”. Please note, that the word theory can be used in a myriad of ways. Theory in actuality, refers to speculative thought and does not refer to certainty. Whenever you see the word written anywhere, you should be on your guard. It cannot be substituted for truth, at best it can signal a path of enquiry. The study of evolution, the creation of mathematics, the declarations about technological advancement are only *tentative* statements about what we declare as “truth”. The more you search, the more you find, the more you find, the less you know and the less you can be certain about anything. Religion came about because human beings were searching for certainty. Every so called “certainty” is subject to change, to alteration, to reconstruction. It also understructures wars, divisions, and mass extinctions.

The fields of study concerned with consciousness include areas of philosophy, neuroscience, psychology, cosmology, and theology to name a few.

Most overviews begin with a mention of Cartesian dualism proposed by Rene Descartes and is encapsulated in his famous saying “I think, therefore I am”. This is a dualistic approach that separates mind from body. The “mind” researchers tend to stress thought, perception, and intentionality, whereas the body tends to restrict itself to the laws of physics.

Mathematicians love anything that can be measured. The trouble is that measurement is inadequate to explain the diversity of human experience. The trouble with this view is that many physicists find the theories limiting and restricting. They wander off the beaten track (depending of course on what University they are attending), and into Panpsychism which is really a metaphysical theory. Why do they go in such a direction? Because they believe that all matter possesses some form of consciousness though not of course, to the same degree. So, you have human consciousness on the one hand, and more primitive expressions such as a universal consciousness which is said to exist in elementary particles.

One thinks of a *conscious universe*, which takes us into the realm of Rupert Sheldrake (morphic resonance) and David Bohm (the implicate and explicate order). Bohm proposed two layers of reality: the explicate order which deals with the reality we perceive and the implicate order which refers to a deeper underlying reality. I mention these two theorists because both were heavily influenced by Krishnamurti and were frequent discussion partners.

Max Velmans is a psychologist and philosopher of mind best known for his reflexive monism. He aims for the middle ground between materialism and reality. Bernardo Kastrup is a contemporary philosopher who advocates for a position of analytic idealism. As I understand it, Kastrup believes that our sense of being a separate person is a kind of dissociation within individual consciousness.

Now if you feel that all this is interesting but somehow irrelevant to your personal existence, you are not alone. I direct all interested persons to read the last issue of the NOWletter for a fuller perspective of matters related to these viewpoints.

It seems to me that the entire “debate” comes down to a belief. Is the brain the source of consciousness, does consciousness exist outside the brain but uses the brain to interpret existence? Is consciousness confined to humans, or does it exist in all living matter? What is the function of conditioning, language, experience and identification in deciding our views?

What happens when you observe without the observer? Is Krishnamurti right after all, that consciousness is conditioned by thought, but awareness beyond thought can lead to transformation. Until we try it for ourselves, we will never know and will remain adrift in the sea of speculation and competitiveness.

One last question. What do we mean by “transformation”? On his deathbed, Krishnamurti said that no one had “transformed” or even understood what he pointed to. Yet there are many followers of JK who go on offering us interpretations of what he meant. Perhaps the answer lies in “silence”.

Trisha English, WA

A few words from the editor to follow Trisha’s final observation about Krishnamurti, his opinion that nobody understood what he was on about. I agree with her that is what he really thought but strongly disagree with his notion that he was the one true way, the sole seer, and that none of his listeners ‘got it’, etc. His blind spot was that although he saw through his ego, and overcame its dominance, he thought that he no longer had one or needed one. Those around him were only too well aware of this mistaken view of himself as they occasionally suffered the consequences. In spite of my reservations about him I value his message and regularly attend the weekly Sydney Krishnamurti meetings where I meet some fine people who appreciate the positive aspects of the Krishnamurti story.

The 'Other' 1 - Bernardo Kastrup & Psychedelics

Notes on "More Than Allegory: On Religious Myth, Truth and Belief" the book by Bernardo Kastrup and some personal examples from my notebooks.

I was introduced to this book following discussions about what Krishnamurti meant by his use of the word 'other'. It is written by a contemporary polymath whose dialogues with experts in science and philosophy are available on the web and he is the author of a number of books on these matters. The Allegory book is primarily concerned with what the author recognizes as the need to consider carefully what the various religious traditions have to offer and not to dismiss them solely on the basis of what meets what is regarded as rational criteria. Kastrup explains that one of the aspects of 'right apprehension' or what I call the 'Wider View' can result from controlled experiments with psychedelics and describes the research by an organization named Trilobite which specialises in this field. Under the influence of psychedelics the unconscious or undifferentiated mind, what he prefers to call the 'obfuscated mind', can respond to questions posed by our everyday ego mind. He writes:

I found that the easiest way for me to rationally make sense of, and later remember, the transcendent insights attained during each trip was to frame the journey in the form of a dialogue. Naturally, this raised the question of whom I was dialoguing with. The most honest answer is a deeply obfuscated but knowledgeable complex of my own mind that, at the same time, was also entirely alien to my ego. It became a habit for me and other Explorers—who later used similar Recipe setups—to refer to this psychic complex as 'the Other,' a designation inspired by our Continental Philosophy courses. Indeed, I spent substantial effort trying not only to tune my mental attitude to this dialogue format, but also to get the A.I. to optimize the Recipe for it. One's limited ego would play the part of the questioner, while the Other would answer the questions with deeper, broader knowledge of what's going on. The dialogue format—the dissociation it enabled between ego and Other—allowed one to retain one's analytical wits and memory access capacity in the ego complex, while bringing the deeper, broader aspects of consciousness out of obfuscation in the form of the Other. This simple dissociative trick allowed us to nail down the Club's original, apparently contradictory goals in a rather elegant manner. There was no complete ego dissolution, as in traditional psychedelic trances, but neither was the ego able to obfuscate the deeper aspects of mind any longer.

Kastrup provides extensive examples of his own experience of these exchanges which I would be tempted to dismiss as too fanciful for serious consideration if I hadn't had personal experience of this phenomenon myself. So, after reading the book I set about searching my old notebooks for records of what I think are similar experiences and which I now add below.

The 'Other' 2 – Alan Mann - Extracts from my old notebooks:

1974

In January 1974 we camped at M and J's farm in Northern NSW. We were with friends after a happy week camping at Port Stephens. We ate goldtop mushrooms one night. There was no apparent effect until I went to bed. Then I had an experience of colour and shapes of incredible beauty – all patterned and geometric. (Very close to the fractal patterns which I came upon later) There was a complete assurance that everything was alright, no sense of knowing the answers but only that all was well and, in the context of that understanding, any questions about the meaning life, death, etc., were completely irrelevant, (as if transcended).

Nevertheless, in spite of this assurance, I decided to ask a question of whatever it was I was experiencing. I thought of it as the universe at the time. I enquired 'What is death' and it was as though, in response, the universe burst out laughing.

The experience was drug induced but it carried with it a sense of authenticity and truth and I determined to get back to this newly discovered aspect of my being without the use of drugs.

I began to explore various meditation methods and spent time at Glen Davis doing nothing at all except sitting and waiting which is hard for me as I can always dream up some critically important project that needs attention. After two or three days I found that the door to the hypnagogic realm opened quite often. I was amazed by the beauty and complexity of the 'designs'. I had the feeling that all this unfolding colour and design was nothing to do with me and must be continuous creativity normally obscured by my everyday consciousness. The images or visions were sometimes like constantly changing jewellery designs, sometimes architectural wonders; on other occasions just endless swirling, ever-changing patterns of extraordinary beauty. The 'jewellery' was a good way of starting as the bright and brilliantly shining colours seemed to accelerate the process. 'Gold' was another recurring theme and the appearance of either of these usually indicated the process was well established. Once started it continued without any input at all and I often fell asleep under its spell. I should add that these visions were not drug-induced, which confirmed my prediction at the mushroom event that this field was 'natural' and could be encountered in a drug-free situation

Some of my meditation experiences resolved puzzling questions I was exploring and resulted in some unusual experiences of the type described as impersonal consciousness, in which the sense of separation between me and other evaporated. These experiences combined with the inner visions described above convinced me that we have access to all necessary information of a spiritual or philosophical nature built in, as it were. Further, that in the light of such riches it would be absurd to seek external guides or gurus. Consequently, I developed a method of tapping this resource. This involved counting 100 breaths without losing attention to the breathing. In the event that I lost concentration I had to go back and start again. Before starting the breath-counting procedure I would work out a brief form of words to express some question that I was working on.

1976

16 October 76. I was following a traditional meditative practice of observing an object and progressively identifying and naming its characteristics, shape, colour, size, etc., down to the smallest detail until all description is exhausted. I had started this meditation on the green vase Arnold and Wright gave to Margot when she resigned her job with them in Christchurch, when I noticed that the carpet colour seemed unusually intense. It was a gold colour, a cheap flax or jute product called Tintawn. After about ten minutes, I had a sense of depth to the vase I hadn't noticed before and a feeling of gladness. I had a feeling of affection for the vase and a sudden awareness of this being reciprocated, or rather, common to us both. I remember thinking "what sentimental rubbish" when the words "no it is not it is love" entered consciousness.

This is an experience I have returned to many times as my understanding of it varied over time and as it repeated itself in different ways. I think that on these occasions one simply falls in love or awakes into love and this becomes possible when the usually dominant centre of self is absent for one reason or another; when its absence becomes clear would be a better way to describe the way it seems to work.

In December 76 I came upon this quote from St. Augustine: Go not outside, return into thyself: truth dwells in inward man.

One of the most powerful examples of the successful application of this technique occurred on 23 December 1975. My notes record that on this occasion my concentration broke at 95 so I had the frustration of starting again.

In view of the presence of Atman in all human beings why can't 'Atman purity' illuminate the individual system (organism)? The striving for perfection or illumination in the presence of same, seems odd.

The response arrived in the following form, *"It is in the perfection of creation that we are engaged"*.

I can't remember the exact way I framed the question. But I remember the reply exactly, it appeared in my head without any conscious construction. I thought, at the time the answer implied that there is a component of the individual system requiring perfection and, possibly, that this part must be perfected before extending the process.

End of Notes. There were subsequent examples from time to time over the following years.

The second example above is very similar to what Kastrup is describing. The cynic might conclude that I am simply talking to myself but dialogues with the 'obfuscated mind' are more like talking to one's SELF with the feeling that, that aspect of me is not confined to the individual but whilst inclusive of the egoic self it comprises a much wider field, better described as the undivided. Hence the appropriateness of the label 'Other'.

Alan

P.S. In researching the above I came upon this note of our involvement in the 1991 Headless gathering at Douai Abbey, Reading, UK.

The evening gathering involves people talking about matters that interest them, playing music or giving demonstrations of various kinds. I gave a talk on Traherne, one night, explaining my interest in the correspondence between what Traherne said and what Douglas is showing. On two of the evenings Marc Ablon from the French Avatar group taught us harmonic chanting. The first night he showed us the basics, and we did a practice. The second night, we wandered into the Abbey and were asked to spread out and carry on chanting in our own good time. This induced a state of synaesthesia in my case, with colourful patterns, shapes then silver waves and gold with jewels of all kinds. In other words, the unconscious parade again, or as Kastrup might say, the 'obscured mind' freed by the chanting to participate in consciousness.

At the Barn– a story by Margot Mann

Millie noticed the stranger straight away. He was well dressed in casual/country fashion – designer jeans, bespoke brown high-top shoes, and a stained and shapeless old Akubra. The mandatory sunglasses were big and black and his beard was short and trimmed. He looked around for a long time before deciding on a table quite close to Millie's. The sun shone on all the outdoor furniture scattered about The Barn and Millie looked across the waving grasses to the misty purple mountains. Tiny swifts flew in circles above her head and the resident brown sausage dog trotted along to sniff her leg. It was a busy morning at The Barn, a cafe in the middle of an empty paddock, close enough to the country road to lure thirsty coffee-drinking travellers, and well-enough established to have its own group of local regulars. Millie had met some interesting people since she had moved from the city. She had become a regular at The Barn and was friendly with the owners. One of them came towards her table now and said, "Hi Millie. The usual? And I've saved you the last piece of carrot cake." "You're an angel," Millie replied. The young waitress turned away and was about to walk back to the café when she turned suddenly, and leaning confidentially towards Millie said, "Who's your fancy friend? I think he's looking for you," and with an elaborate wink before Millie could reply, she walked quickly back to the café.

Millie looked around at all the patrons from under her broad-brimmed hat. She waved to some of the usual faces and leaned back in her chair, eyes carefully avoiding the stranger, as she gazed at the mountains framing the timeless scene. At one point she caught his eye and realised with alarm that he was walking across the grass to her table.

“Such a beautiful view,” the stranger ventured as he neared her table. “Do you mind if I join you?” Millie smiled and gestured towards the empty seat. She was annoyed with this person who was interfering with her enjoyment of the peace and calm of her magical place. She waited for him to comment further. “Sorry to approach you like this,” he said, sitting opposite Millie at her small table, “my name is George Jacobs and I was told to look out for someone called Millie who might be interested in what I have to say.” Millie groaned inwardly. Not another one, she thought, edging her chair slightly away from George Jacobs. “I don’t do that sort of work any more,” she told him. “Who told you where to find me?” “It was easy enough,” George replied, “a cafe called The Barn was mentioned – in a paddock. There aren’t many cafes in paddocks around here,” he added unnecessarily. Millie sighed.

“I’m prepared to pay of course,” said George Jacobs, bending to dust some grass seeds from his shoes, his heavy gold snake-shaped ring flashing in the sun. “It’s not the money,” Millie said quietly after a pause, “I’m just not interested. Been there, done that, sick of all the publicity and carry-on. Can’t you find someone else?” she asked, aware that she didn’t even know what he wanted her to do. After a short pause Millie said, “Haven’t I seen you somewhere?” “I doubt it,” George Jacobs replied, carefully cleaning his sunglasses with a handkerchief he pulled from the breast pocket of his jacket.

The young waitress returned with Millie’s coffee and said to Millie, “I’m sorry, I didn’t realise you had company.” She turned to George and said, “What can I get you?” He ordered coffee and a piece of cake, “like my friend’s,” he said pointing to Millie’s plate. “Sorry Sir,” the waitress replied, “I’m afraid that’s the last piece.” She smiled at Millie, glanced quickly at George and walked back to the café. Millie took a bite of her cake and gazed at the mountains in the distance. She loved The Barn’s carrot cake. Fresh from the oven, it always sold out quickly. More patrons were arriving, parking their cars in the long grass behind the café and sauntering around the tables, looking for the one with exactly the right amount of sun and shade, while children ran and shouted in the long grass.

“Pity I missed out on the cake,” George said suddenly, “it looks really delicious.” Millie nodded. Where had she seen this man? She was sure she had seen the gold ring before: it was ill-suited to the monotone environment of the bush, where the soft purples and smoky greens soothed the eyes. There was a pause. Millie spooned some cake into her mouth and finally said, “what do you want me to do and who told you where to find me?”

George Jacobs shifted in his chair and fiddled with his gold ring. “I work with Bill Smithers and he said he was sure you wouldn’t mind if I asked you...” he paused and looked at Millie who stared at him and then said slowly, “Bill is a good friend, how is he these days?” George replied, “He knows I’m about to get married – actually he’s going to be best man - and he suggested you might be persuaded to make one of your special rings, but you say you don’t do that kind of work any more?” There was another pause and then George continued, “Bill said to tell you that the old crowd misses you and he hopes you are enjoying your new peaceful life.” Millie sipped her coffee and let her eyes track across the grass to the mountains. The sun had disappeared behind a cloud and the colours of the bush were changing. She looked at George for a moment, smiled, and said, “I hope Bill told you it would cost you a lot of money;” and then, “would you like some of my cake?”

Margot Mann

Messages from Friends

1. Garry Booth suggests we have a look at

https://youtu.be/Ov8NFpzRAzU?si=ziq3_ZWui23O30Tm

Garry says, I've been following neuroscientist Robert Kuhn's "Closer To Truth" for many years on You Tube. Over the years Kuhn has interviewed scores of scientists , philosophers, religious and spiritual people mainly about the Nature of Consciousness

In my opinion Deepak's 10 minute explanation is a good summary. It's hard to rule out the possibility that "something" may continue after death that is impossible to imagine or comprehend as mere mortals so why not keep an Open mind - without thought ? Upon death we may not have any memory of our life but we may exist in another way. Like Deepak, when my time comes I hope to see my departure as a new experience and not be so fearful.

As Deepak says (as does Western Mysticism, Hinduism & Buddhism ie over half the world's population) that our true Being is our pure Conscious/Awareness - That which observes our thoughts - which is the same Conscious/Awareness of the Universe (ie " I Am That ") as some truly credible physicists like Frederico Faggin are saying. It's curious that the 2 greatest mysteries to humankind are "God" (a misleading word) and " Consciousness" and they are perhaps One and the same - a hidden Idea as old as civilization. Garry

2. Margaret Gracey recommends this interview with an unconventional priest

<https://youtu.be/BAzP3Q51s8w>

Mystic Catholic Priest On Jesus, Evil, Reincarnation, Sexuality, Abortion & War | Fr. Sean O'Laoire

This is an interview of Father Sean O'Laoire by [Aubrey Marcus Podcast](#)

This is one of the most special conversations I have recorded in the dozen years I have been recording. Father Sean O'Laoire lives in the unique intersection of being a PhD in transpersonal psychology along with being ordained as a Catholic priest in 1972, spending 14 years working among the Kalenjin people of East Africa. He speaks six languages, including his ancestral Gaelic tongue, replete with the myths and stories of not only the biblical texts, but the esoteric legends of magic from his native Ireland.

3. **Afternoon Workshop SYDNEY Sunday November 24, 2024, 1:00pm-5:00pm**

Whites Creek Cottage - 31 White Street, Lilyfield, Sydney - Cost: \$30

Contemplative traditions have variously described your true nature as void-like, empty and yet full of the world, a clear light, pure awareness.

Douglas Harding developed innovative experiments for directly seeing your true nature. This approach, the **Headless Way**, is simple and practical and offers techniques for investigating who or what you really are for yourself. As it is based upon your own experience, you are the authority, no one else. **Brentyn Ramm** is a philosopher who researches consciousness and first-person experience using the Headless Way experiments. Join him and others interested in this approach in Sydney for an afternoon of exploration of our first-person identity.

For more information visit www.headless.org

**To register for a spot at the workshop please contact Brentyn:
brentynramm@gmail.com**

