



Contents

It's just another day	Peter Lim	1
Oneness	Eleanore Bruere	2
The House Of One	Servaas van Beekum	2
M. Somerville's Wonder Equation	Alan Mann	3
What is Panspiritism?	Steve Taylor	4
Awareness as Anaesthesia	Colin Drake	5
Book launch	Margot Mann	7
	Greville Street Meetings	8
	Byron Sophia Philosophical Group	8

It's Just Another Day from Peter Lim

I wake up each morning wondering what the day will be like.

I don't plan, neither do I know. All that my heart desires is to feel, to discover, to explore, to reach out beyond myself—yes, I do believe there's something around the corner. But I must be humble enough to set myself aside, to forget what has gone before yesterday, to embrace and live in the moment, to be one with the moment.

For a long time, I have realised that life is possibility, freedom and a state of coming-into-being—yet, what I would be is still something that has not yet fully crystallised. There's that something within that whispers: you might be amazed.....be patient, wait, don't rush nor be too eager.....and here I am, as though in reverie, not contemplation, but like a bud waiting to be kissed by the morning dew and caressed by the first blush of light.

It's a new day, another day—me alone with and in time.

I need no reminder I am still alive, elemental in the scheme that life has placed me. It's not possible to be happy or enlightened without love, humility, compassion and selflessness.

This, this itself is a tiny miracle—I need not look beyond this silent and simple moment.

Peter Lim

<https://hellopoetry.com/poem/3464816/its-just-another-day/>

Oneness by Eleanore Bruere

Halcyon Evans showed me an article in the Autumn 2019 De Numine magazine by Eleanore Bruere from which I copied the following. It is an extract from her article 'Oneness' which is due to appear in the Spring 2020 edition of the magazine. Alan

I am just skimming the surface here as to what trees have offered us in the past and will continue to do for us in the future. The Wood Wide Web became alive for me, as I became alive to it, in a profound sense of oneness with these beautiful, generous, ingenious species that share this planet with us all. I became conscious of what was around me in a way that I had not experienced before.

This feeling was reinforced after reading an excerpt from Douglas E. Harding's book on meditation, entitled *On Having No Head*, which offers us the possibility of experiencing the world in a new way. The idea is that as you look around you, you picture the world as your head. A different kind of awareness jumps at you when you surrender your head to the world. As you forget about your head you open up to the world and the world joins you, becomes you. You are still aware of individual objects, like trees and flowers, and of people and dogs around you, but each are somehow connected to you for the world is no longer blocked off from you by your head.

I tried looking at the trees along the Green, leaving my head behind, and I was overwhelmed by a feeling of oneness with them, it was pure magic, I became the particular tree I was looking at, and the tree became me, I then felt a bit sad for not having been able to see beyond my 'me' barrier for all those years now gone by.

When I experienced this feeling of having the world around me as my head, I had the most marvellous feeling of finally being deeply connected and in oneness with my world. Now I greet my tall silent friends with smiles and thanks just for being there. They are not always silent, as they have the ability to transform themselves into marvellous musical instruments as the wind plays soothing symphonies among their leaves.

Eleanore Bruere

The House Of One—Three Religions Under One Roof.

Berlin is soon to become home to something truly unique. Jews, Christians, and Muslims are planning to build a house of worship here – one that brings a synagogue, a church, and a mosque together under one roof. The three separate sections will be linked by a communal room in the center of the building. This will serve as a meeting place, where worshippers and members of the public can come together and learn more about the religions and each other.

<https://house-of-one.org/en>

My Christmas contribution: In the good tradition of my father who crossed religious divides in the 1960s, recalling my many visits and long term love over 50 years for Berlin as centre for the good, the bad and the ugly of history and in memory of my brother Ivo, I am supporting this "House of One" project since many years.

Religions who cooperate and treat e.o. with respect and goodwill, instead of cutting each other's throat. A project like this can only be done in Berlin.

They now have enough funds to start building. And still need to sell 'symbolic bricks' for its completion. I forward you their end of year newsletter / website

<https://house-of-one.org/en>

Servaas van Beekum

I complained to Servaas that I think they have short-changed the 'Oneness' of their chosen title by excluding belief systems of the East and of atheism. Alan

The Wonder Equation by Margaret Somerville

I received another very interesting message from a former regular at our meetings but now living too far away to attend. Yvonne Truen and her partner Thomas Hancock sent me a copy of a recent talk by Professor Margaret Somerville which they have permission to share with friends. Thomas is the author of the book *Generation of Hope* which featured in NOWletter 215.

The full title of her presentation was 'Can the 'Wonder Equation' help us to be more ethical?' After meditating on the question and waiting for her unconscious to give a reply it came up with 'You should be open to experiencing amazement, wonder and awe , in as many situations and as often as possible'.

Apart from what I thought a very appropriate response I had a personal moment of 'amazement' as this was the first time I had come across someone else who employed this particular technique.

I present the following extract which I think captures the essence of the presentation:

Might acting ethically be dependent on recognizing that I am part of a we which is composed of others like and equal to me In other words, has intense individualism caused us to lose a sense of the need to protect the common good through losing the sense of belonging to "we"? Does acting ethically require both that we are a "we" and the importance of the individual.

(This was another match as it closely resembles my headless heresy about first person plural versus first person singular. Alan).

The presentation follows wonder, and we-ness, with commentary on: the human spirit, meaning, and both the religious sacred and the secular sacred and the

proposal that amazement, wonder and awe are entry doors to the experience of transcendence. I thought this to be very close to our collective enquiry.

The talk covers the importance of re-uniting science and religion for much the same reasons as covered by Steve Taylor in his book I referred to above and concludes:

In short, I propose that individual and collective experiences of “amazement, wonder and awe” have the power to enrich our lives, help us to find meaning, bridge the secular-religious divide and change how we see the world, the decisions we make, especially regarding values and ethics, and whether we live our lives as a “me” or a “we”. No small power. And that should help to promote the ethics of each of us as individuals and all of us as collective “we’s”. Margeret Somerville.

Alan Mann

What is Panspiritism? From Alan Mann

This is a summary of an article by Steve Taylor in the latest Philosophy Now magazine. Steve Taylor is Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Leeds Beckett University and chair of the Transpersonal Section of the British Psychological Society.

He opens by reminding us of the increasing interest in Panpsychism as a consequence of the persistence of the hard problem of consciousness, how a material brain produces a supposedly immaterial consciousness. Panpsychism offers the hypothesis that the problem of mind arising in a material brain is resolved by proposing that it was always in matter and exists in all matter in varying degrees of intensity depending on size and complexity of the substance in which it is ‘embedded’, and with maximum levels of consciousness manifesting in the most highly developed forms such as in human beings. Taylor has an alternative hypothesis which he thinks provides ‘more elegance and explanatory potential than panpsychism’, which he calls panspiritism. The following extract explains the distinction:

*Panpsychism literally means ‘mind is everywhere’; but usually this is taken to just mean that mind is in all material particles. However, panspiritism suggests that there is a fundamental quality inherent in all space as well as in all material things. This quality might be called ‘spirit’ or ‘fundamental consciousness’. Panspiritism, as the name suggests, takes it to be all-pervading: it is everywhere and in everything. Moreover, it is the most fundamental quality in the universe, because it is the quality from which the universe, and hence all things in it, arose. Australian philosopher David Chalmers suggested in his 1995 book *The Conscious Mind* that consciousness is irreducible in a way similar to forces such as gravity or electromagnetism, which aren’t caused or*

produced by anything – they simply are. But according to panspiritism, consciousness is even more fundamental than gravity or electromagnetism, because unlike them it precedes the formation of the universe, and the universe, including all its physical forces, is an expression of it.

Also, in contrast to panpsychism, panspiritism doesn't hold that all material particles have their own mind and therefore their own experience. That is, panspiritism suggests that although consciousness is in all things, all things do not have their own individuated consciousness. Although fundamental consciousness pervades everything, all things are not themselves conscious. Only structures that have the necessary complexity and organisational form to receive and channel fundamental consciousness into themselves are individually alive, and individually conscious.

The article outlines the case for panspiritism in some detail, pointing out the various aspects of strict materialism and its shortcomings and reference to the aspects of quantum research which offers some potential areas of support for Taylor's hypothesis. I found his presentation sufficiently compelling to buy the author's latest book which is entitled *Spiritual Science—Why science needs spirituality to make sense of the world*.

I think it is possible for non-subscribers to Philosophy Now magazine to access a limited number of articles on their website and this link should deliver the article on Panspiritism.

https://philosophynow.org/issues/131/What_is_Panspiritism

Alan Mann

Awareness as Anaesthesia from Colin Drake

Six months ago I had an interesting experience which I elucidated in 'Overcoming Pain By Awareness of Awareness' and promised to provide updates on this fascinating process. In the original case of toothache I wrote the following:

I brought my mind to noticing that I was aware of the toothache and did not allow it to dwell on the pain but only on the Awareness of its presence. It took some time for the necessary focus to develop but as it did the bothersome aspects of my condition slowly lessened and this encouraging outcome stimulated the focus to become even stronger. As the pain was constant the noticing of the Awareness of it could be practised constantly also and so the 'awareness of Awareness' became strongly developed which resulted in the pain receding even further and the peace (of Awareness) increasing ... which then resulted in falling asleep! Then when I woke up in the night, as I tend to do being a light sleeper and in my 70s, I just reapplied the practice to lessen the pain and go back to sleep.

Since then I have been applying the process with even more spectacular results for concentrated Awareness of pain can completely eliminate it for some time, rather like being anaesthetised! In the first instance of ligament pain in my left arm^[1] which had been quite bothersome when lying in Savasana, my preferred contemplation and relaxation pose, I brought my fixed attention to the pain and mentally repeated ‘there is awareness of the pain in my left arm’. As I did this the pain slowly became less bothersome and actually started to lessen in intensity, so then I increased the attention by repeating ‘there is total Awareness of the pain in my left arm’ which resulted in the pain melting away completely! It felt like the arm had been anaesthetised and this lack of pain remained for the rest of my practice.

This process is reapplied almost on a daily basis as this type of injury takes a long time to heal and I spend up to three hours daily in this pose. The length of time that is pain-free varies on each occasion but this is not a problem for concentrated Awareness of the pain soon removes it. I have also tried the practice on the various other pains that this old body encounters with equally good results. I sometimes suffer from IBS (irritable bowel syndrome) when I am in bed and this can be quite annoying making sleep difficult but the last time this occurred I remembered my ‘fix’ and lo and behold it worked, removing the pain and allowing sleep to resume. Then again I had arthritic twinges in an old injury to my left big toe and when the pain became constant this fix once again worked wonders!

The reason why this works is somewhat of a mystery but I suspect that John Wren Lewis^[2] had the clue when he said that pain is only nasty until it is recognized and appropriate action taken^[3]. In the cases I recount the appropriate action is just to relax and do nothing allowing the body to take care of it. The concentrated Awareness of the pain is this recognition and the continued relaxation is the appropriate action! This deep relaxation increases the endorphin levels in the body which also helps to reduce pain for endorphins interact with the opiate receptors in the brain to reduce our perception of pain and act similarly to drugs such as morphine and codeine. ... With high endorphin levels, we feel less pain and fewer negative effects of stress.

As I said in the original article this is very encouraging, but even then I would not like to state that this method will work for constant excruciating pain, and naturally I do not wish to find out, but I am cautiously optimistic ... and will keep you posted

Colin Drake

^[1] I strained this quite badly when twisting my arm whilst throwing a heavy object.

^[2] In his famous interview with Caroline Davis in ‘A Search For Meaning’.

^[3] He also said, “it is our attention away from consciousness that causes us to feel physical pain as ‘pain’”(this applies, of course, to mental pain as well)).

Book launch—A story by Margot Mann

“And if you ask me why I wrote the book ... well to be honest I have to say I'm a sucker for flattery.” There were a few titters from the audience. Morag beamed. “So when they made the offer I couldn't really refuse.” She paused and readjusted her long red scarf which sang out for attention beside her red hair. “Some people have pointed out that there are plenty of books on how to handle relationships at home and in the workplace, but of course every author brings their own experience to bear on the subject.” Morag paused again. She looked up to the back of the long room and saw that a few more people had arrived and were helping themselves to wine. Two or three of them were whispering and pointing to recently published books on display, none of them hers.

She spoke quickly. “I have a very short anecdote which may help to shed some light on my interest in this subject.” The group of recent arrivals stopped talking and turned to face her. “I have a sister and a brother and we have recently been dealing with a serious illness of my mother's. I'm happy to say that she is better now, but in the initial stages of her illness my brother was very angry and left most of the practical and emotional stuff to my sister and me to deal with. Then my sister's marriage broke up and I found that all these issues were pretty much left to me to sort out.” Morag laughed deprecatingly and tossed her scarf back the other way. “My father died many years ago,” she added.

She took a long sip of water, patted her eyes with a tissue and raked the audience with a smallish smile. She saw that the group at the back were whispering again. Cecil, standing at the side of the room, about halfway back, was making upward movements with his hands. She raised her voice and said, “In the final three months of my mother's illness, from which she has now, thankfully, fully recovered, my sister and brother and I worked brilliantly together and we are now much closer than we ever were before, which pleases my mother - she says she is better because her children co-operated so beautifully.” Some people in the front rows smiled and nodded. Someone from the back of the long room called out “What was the matter with your mother?” She ignored the question and caught Cecil's eye. He was shaking his head.

Dear Cecil. How lucky she was to have him. Her thoughts wandered to the confrontation with her brother, shortly after her mother was diagnosed. “Why mum? Why us?” he had kept saying loudly. “I haven't got time to be visiting and worrying about mum.” Cecil had told him to leave and not come back until he had a better attitude and it was weeks later when her mother began to discuss their inheritance that he had reappeared on the scene. When Morag told him she was writing a book on relationships he laughed and said “What's it called? Relationships - how to make them work to your advantage?”

Morag saw that people were beginning to get up from their chairs and chat with their neighbours. “There are copies of the book on the back table and if you buy

one tonight there is a very small discount. Ha ha. Thankyou for coming.” Her words were drowned by the sound of chairs scraping and members of the audience calling out to each other. Morag shouted “and thankyou to my darling husband Cecil, I couldn't have done it without him,” but no one heard her.

She stood a moment longer on the temporary dais. A small queue was forming to speak to her. She looked around the crowd but there was no sign of her brother - or her sister. Morag winced when she remembered their last meeting. “It's all very well for you,” her sister had spat at her, “you've got the lovely Cecil looking after you. And don't quote that bloody book at me. I'm struggling to keep my head above water here.” At the time, Morag had bitten off a retort and walked away.

She spoke briefly to the small group of people lining up to congratulate her. Thankyou, thankyou, she said mechanically, air-kissing those she knew, and smiling until her mouth ached. She realised that she was exhausted and still the night was not over.

Cecil had booked a table for twenty friends and colleagues at a nearby restaurant. When he and Morag finally arrived there, they were welcomed by the owner who escorted them to a long table at the back where several people were already seated. There was some subdued clapping and Morag waved and smiled as she sank into a chair, muttering to Cecil, “Champagne, quickly.” The level of conversation rose as menus were consulted and drinks ordered. Morag began to relax as she sipped her champagne and looked at the faces around her. Someone called out loudly from the end of the table. “Well done Sis. I didn't think you'd mind buying me dinner. We can play happy families for your friends.” Her brother raised his glass and chortled at the expression on his sister's face.

Margot Mann

Greville Street Meeting Programme

Meeting dates: Sunday February 2nd and Sunday April 5th.

There is the possibility of a ‘Seeing’ workshop at Greville Street on Saturday 14th March, subject to demand.

Byron Sophia Philosophical Group

Marvell Hall, 37 Marvell Street, Byron Bay, Beyond Sports-Fields

Open Meetings: every Thursday from 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm

Celia – 02 6684 3623 / byronsophia@gmail.com