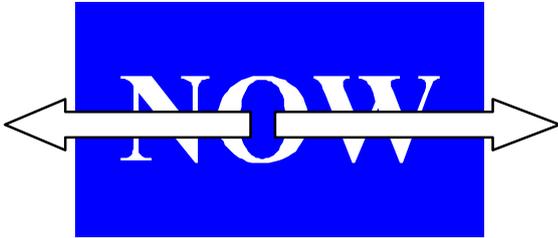


Issue 178—November 2014

Backnumbers at <http://www.capacity.org/now/archive.htm>



Email:
awmann@optusnet.com.au

Phone 02 9419 7394
Websites:
www.capacity.org
www.traherne.org

Next Greville Street Meeting — Saturday 6th December

CONTENTS

Perennial Philosophy—What Does It Mean	Doug Lloyd	2
Being Nicer To Nietzsche	Alan Mann	3
Krishnamurti at Springbrook	Alan Mann	9
The Self-Deliverance Ceremony	Greg Campbell	10
My Writings— Their Genesis and The Process	Colin Drake	12
Waking Up by Sam Harris	Alan Mann	17

Thanks to this month's contributors and please remind me if you have sent something which I've failed to include. We are just coming out of a series of computer changes and email upsets which resulted in a number of lost messages.

I continue my wrestling with Nietzsche under the watchful eye of Heinz Rahn and, as the enquiry has now led me to Altizer, one of George Schloss's heroes, the struggle may continue for a couple more issues.

Perennial Philosophy: What Does It Mean?

Noted thinkers refer to the 'Perennial Philosophy' in their writings, but they differ in their understanding of what it means. If we are to think clearly on this subject we need to realize this.

A Christian thinker, Karl Rahner, asserts that many Buddhists, Hindus, and Jews are anonymous Christians. So the 'Perennial Philosophy' is for him the Christian God.

A Hindu philosopher, Swami Pravhamananda says that all religions lead to God. But by God he means the Hindu God, or is it Gods? For him then the 'Perennial Philosophy' is for him the Hindu God or Gods.

Marvin Shaw in a profound work entitled *The Paradox of Intention* writes, Monism is sometimes called a perennial philosophy, its superior merit or truth being borne out by its recurrence in diverse times and cultures.'

Monism can be simply stated as the belief that all is One and One is all. There is just one reality that is manifested in the whole of creation.

Douglas Harding, the author of many books has a different understanding to the other thinkers mentioned in this essay. For Harding it means seeing the world as one, inside and out. Hence it is not a belief, but seeing or perceiving the world directly.

In his book *Beyond The Occult* Colin Wilson comments on Douglas Harding describing an experience he had whilst looking out at the Himalayas. Harding describes the sensation as utterly free of me, unsustained by any observer –lighter than air, clearer than glass, altogether released from myself, I was nowhere around. Wilson interprets this according to left and right brain theory. Yet split brain physiology suggests that we should not regard this me-less state as entirely desirable.

It is understandable that Wilson criticizes Harding on the basis of left-right brain theory. This is because he is thinking of Harding as a separate human being and as such observed the magnificent Himalayas scene. But Harding did not experience himself as the observer. He experienced the Observer as lighter than air, clearer than glass, altogether released from myself. '

Harding in his book *The Trial Of The Man Who Said He Was God*, has a chapter entitled *The Neurosurgeon*. The last paragraph reads, '*In a brilliantly thought provoking fantasy entitled, Where am I?, Daniel C. Dennett describes the experience of a man who is in radio communication with his own amputated brain floating in a tank. 'Here am I, says the unfortunate character, sitting on a folding chair, staring through a piece of plate glass at my own brain'.*

Harding comments, "I, John a-Nokes could say the same thing right now, given only a window in my forehead and a mirror in my hand".

To sum up: The perennial philosophy as Harding understands it is not a philosophy, rather it is an invisible, me-less reality that contains and is inseparable from all theologies and philosophies.

Doug Lloyd. October, 2014.

Back to Contents

Being Nicer To Nietzsche

Editorial introduction. Heinz Rahn took me to task about my grumpy commentary on Nietzsche in the last NOWletter. He saw that I had not got the full picture and gave me three books which he felt I needed to read. I have spent much time on this assignment and submitted a response to Heinz which I also include in this issue so as to get full value for my efforts. Further controversial input from readers gladly received. The first of the three books was The Nick Of Time By Elizabeth Grosz

The Eternal Return and the Overman

She offers two variations of the return, the cosmological-ontological and the ethical-transvaluative. The first is a complex and speculative concept based on the claim that given an infinite universe and infinite time every thing and every event is bound to recur and go on recurring endlessly. I have completely missed the point of why this is assumed to be inevitable. Why does infinity imply recurrence? Why couldn't things go on endlessly evolving and changing? In the second aspect, eternal return as moral principle she opens her comments by saying "more convincing and currently more credible than the physical doctrine... is the ethical and transvaluative dimension of Nietzsche's claims". In my view this footnote to her first aspect of the return undermines any attempt to take it seriously. As an ethical parable eternal return carries some weight in implying that an affirmative response to the offer of return could only be made if one is entirely satisfied with one's performance in this life. The only human who could truly accept return would qualify as overman material. However, the overman is an evolutionary and not yet realised level of human development. References to our overlooking of the subjective dimensions of human being or of giving sufficient weight to the subjective could be seen as Nietzsche's ignorance, in the Buddhist sense, an example of Avidya.

So Elizabeth Grosz doesn't make me feel any more well disposed to Nietzsche than before I picked up her book. The problem with Nietzsche is that his reputation acts as a magnifying glass and I tend to approach him as a man who has seen more clearly and deeply than myself. I stand in awe. This attitude is the one that Nietzsche himself despises as the slave mentality. Consequently, I refuse to look up

at him looking down at me and reverse the positions so that the onus is on him to demonstrate that he has something of value to offer rather than what often comes across either as absurdity or confused indecisiveness. In doing so I engage the perspective to which he seems to be pointing as one of the necessary aspects of his overman, though in my opinion, better described as eternity consciousness.

The only reason I persist with this exercise on Nietzsche is that I am told he was impressed by Rilke, Emerson and Goethe all of whom hit the spot as far as I'm concerned. I *think* this will be the subject addressed in the second book, *The Disinherited Mind* by Eric Heller to which I now turn. But first I will insert several quotes I have saved from past reading to indicate where I think this trio are ahead of Nietzsche and before I start reading Heller's book.

Goethe

1. *Goethe's idea of an archetypal or model plant. The Urpflanze was formulated by the conceptual abstraction of all the features Goethe considered characteristic of all plants. The Urpflanze governed the structure of all plants by virtue of its existence, functioning as a kind of ontologically generative paradigm. ...nature is inherently ordered, this order has the power to govern individual instances, and that it is ultimately intuitable to the human mind.*
2. *There is a delicate empiricism that makes itself utterly identical with the object, thereby becoming true theory (visible). But this enhancement of our mental powers belongs to a highly evolved age.*

I have often wondered when reading about Nietzsche whether he got his overman notions from the second of these quotes and similar Goetheian expressions.

Somewhere I saw a quotation attributed to Goethe: *The world is the mirror of man.* That is a very headless statement if a true version of what he said. I haven't yet confirmed by finding the source.

Rilke

What Birds Plunge Through Is Not The Intimate Space

*What birds plunge through is not the intimate space
in which you see all forms intensified.
(Out in the Open, you would be denied
your self would disappear into that vastness.)
Space reaches from us and construes the world:
to know a tree, in its true element,
throw inner space around it, from that pure
abundance in you. Surround it with restraint.
It has no limits. Not till it is held
in your renouncing is it truly there.*

from The Poet's Death

*Those who had seen him living saw no trace
of his deep unity with all that passes;
for these, these valleys here, these meadow-grasses,
these streams of running water, were his face.*

End of 8th elegy

*And we: onlookers, always, everywhere,
always looking into, never out of, everything.
It fills us. We arrange it. It collapses.
We arrange it again, and collapse ourselves.*

*Who has turned us round like this, so that,
whatever we do, we always have the aspect
of one who leaves? Just as they
will turn, stop, linger, for one last time,
on the last hill, that shows them all their valley - ,
so we live, and are always taking leave.*

Emerson

—from his essay 'Nature'

"We return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, -- no disgrace, no calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, -- my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite spaces, - all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God." [1]

—from his lecture to the divinity students, speaking of Jesus.

Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. He saw with open eye the mystery of the soul. Drawn by its severe harmony, ravished with its beauty, he lived in it, and had his being there. Alone in all history, he estimated the greatness of man. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world. He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion, 'I am divine. Through me, God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or, see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think.' But what a distortion did his doctrine and memory suffer in the same, in the next, and the following ages! There is no doctrine of the Reason which will bear to be taught by the Understanding. The understanding caught this high chant from the poet's lips, and said, in the next age, 'This was Jehovah come down out of heaven. I will kill you, if you say he was a man.' The idioms of his language, and the figures of his rhetoric, have usurped the place of his truth; and churches are not built on his principles, but on his tropes. Christianity became a Mythos, as the poetic teaching of Greece and of Egypt, before. He spoke of miracles; for he felt that man's life was a miracle, and all that man doth, and he

knew that this daily miracle shines, as the character ascends. But the word Miracle, as pronounced by Christian churches, gives a false impression; it is Monster. It is not one with the blowing clover and the falling rain.

This selection, indicating an awareness that the strictly rational, objective, Newtonian view of life ignores or overlooks the collective- subjective which inspires these examples. We might say it is about the restoration of balance by reintegration of the 'right brain' component. So the question to be resolved is why if both Nietzsche and I think so highly of the above trio do I not find Nietzsche himself to be all that his reputation promises?

The Disinherited Mind By Eric Heller

Quotations from book in italics. My notes in plain text.

In starting to read this second book I held the view that both Nietzsche and Goethe share a belief in the need for or inevitable evolution of the overman but that they have quite different notions of what that will involve. As I am reading the Googleplex book at the moment I can't help bringing Plato into the discussion and it seems to me that we could think of Nietzsche as opting for *kleos* whilst Goethe goes for *arête*. Nietzsche intuits that a different order of being is necessary and approaches the problem solely at the objective level whereas the people he admires have a subjective, experiential connection with this aspect of being.

A few notes from the chapter:

P94 *And there is finally Makarie's ancient castle, looking so fresh and new —'as though the builders and masons had only just departed' —where Goethe's, not Newton's, physics are pursued, a science whose calculations reveal, rather than disturb, the harmony between man's intuitive and rational natures, showing him, not as the ruthlessly dominating, but as the 'spiritually integrating' part of the universe.*

That strikes me as pointing to the opposite of Nietzsche's overman.

When Margot and I were in Shiraz we visited the shrine of Hafez where, although he is revered as a Muslim scholar and poet, his Sufism is not openly acknowledged. Our guide mentioned that Goethe had been impressed by and written about Hafez and I asked him if he could tell me the name of the book. He said it was the Western Divan, I still haven't read it but now I see reference to it in this book by Eric Heller.

P96. On Notes and Discourses concerning the *Westostlicher Divan* and talking of the conflict between belief and unbelief there is an observation that is hard to pin down, what did Goethe actually meant by 'belief'. Based on my very limited reading I say he meant believing that his epiphanies of wholeness were 'true' in the sense of more real, or at least as real, as the so-called reality of everyday consciousness.

P99. *His (Goethe's) opposition to Newton, for instance, is ultimately based not on a conviction of his own scientific superiority but on his commitment to values which*

he believed (to be) threatened by man's adopting an exclusively mathematical analytical method in his dealings with nature.

P100. Nietzsche on Goethe. *What he aimed at was totality, he fought against the sundering of reason, sensuality, feeling, will.....; he disciplined himselfGoethe was, in the midst of an unrealistic age, a convinced realist.* That seems to indicate that Nietzsche was in agreement with Goethe but he then goes on to describe him in the Nietzschean, warrior- like superman terms. *He envisaged man as strong, highly civilized, skilled in all skills of the body, holding himself in check, etc.* This in my view overlooks Goethe's embrace of wholeness as fundamental.

P.11 ... *Goethe's vision of what is affirms the reality of much that in the consciousness of the Prosaic Age is not. Goethe is exemplary in his courage to trust in the absolute reliability of that experiment which in its utter 'subjectivity' is not merely one of many possible, but the experience of life itself.* In the poem that follows this which Heller says Nietzsche could have written himself Goethe says, talking of Hafez, *To them you are mystical because you inspire foolish thoughts in them , and because they pour out their impure wine in your name. Indeed you are mystical but only because they do not understand you.*

Yes, I have a long-held view that the so-called mystical is the complete (or more fully apprehended) actualisation of 'what is'. I read this chapter twice but remain lost as far as grasping the essence of Nietzsche is concerned. I alternately find myself in agreement with him and disagreement. This seems not unlike his own relationship with the work of Goethe.

Rilke and Nietzsche

P131. *They are both initiates of the alchemy of loneliness and suffering. Rilke as well as Nietzsche discovers the fountainhead of joy in the very heart of the land of sorrow. Happiness for them is not, as it was for Schopenhauer, in the absence of pain, it was in so radical acceptance of suffering that abundant delight springs from its very affirmation. For the denial of pain is.*

In the same way presumably as the denial of joy would be the denial of existence, otherwise I can't see the point of what is self-evident. The denial of any component of 'what is' can't stand examination. I'm missing something here. This section continues with Nietzsche going on about the torture of his life which, notwithstanding, he endorses a world with all its faults going on forever

P138. *The artist is eternity protruding into time.* The elitist strain which seems to run through Nietzsche is one of the aspects I find so deplorable. What he dismisses as the ordinary men are also eternity protruding into time. Both Nietzsche and Rilke have a sense of themselves as 'special'. This affirms for me the view that their tortured search for truth as opposed to a joyful, awe-full acceptance is a sign of deep identification with their egos. And as for the ordinary men are they not the source or stock from which the mighty overmen arise?

P148. *...in Rilke's mature work, which is that our traditional ways of distinguishing is false throughout the whole range of our fundamental distinctions between transcendence and immanence, God and man, man and things, external reality and inwardness, joy and suffering, communion of love and separation, life and death to which Nietzsche's contribution is good and evil.*

Well, I can't argue with that, it is what can be summarized in one word 'life'. And I agree that everyday consciousness does magnify the separation. So have Nietzsche and Rilke discovered the skilful means of ending the separation. That is what I'm seeking in this reading and note making.

P160. Nietzsche notebook entry. *He who no longer finds what is great in God will find it nowhere—he must either deny or create it.*

Why doesn't what I find in and as creation meet Nietzsche's definition of great?

P161. *How is the vanished glory issuing from a transcendental god to be recreated by a world gloomily imprisoned in its own immanence.*

I think Nietzsche's reputation as the source of the death of god industry is highly over-rated. The mystics have been at it for ever. An example being Eckhart's *we must go beyond God*.

P161. *...Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence and Once and No More are contrasts merely in verbal expression, but identical in meaning. (That is a rather questionable interpretation.) This identity lies in the emphasis both these symbols place on the eternity of the moment here and now, the irrevocability of the one and unique opportunity and test of living.*

I'd like to believe that to be the case but it seems to me that he's straining to give us an acceptable explanation of what, in the case of Nietzsche at least, is a view of eternity as endless time rather than the context in which time arises. This leads into the next quote.

P163. Rilke on the theme of his mature work. *We need **eternity**; for only eternity can provide space for our gestures. Yet we know that we live in narrow finiteness. Thus it is our task to create infinity within these boundaries, for we no longer believe in the unbounded.*

Repeat of quote with suggestions for improvement:

*We need **eternity** (we have eternity in the sense that eternity is); for only eternity can provide space for our gestures (not only for our gestures but for every gesture and thing). Yet we know that we live in narrow finiteness (we think that we live in narrow finiteness). Thus it is our task to create infinity within these boundaries, for we no longer believe in the unbounded. (1. Is this arrogance or, more likely, ignorance? 2. (The unbounded, or God if you prefer, is not always a matter of belief it is validated when experienced not imagined).*

P163 *There is no redemption.* Well, dedicated as he is to the 'aint it awful' school of philosophy, he would say that and it depends on whether he is talking about

redemption from the ultimate emptiness and meaninglessness of life or redemption from the stranglehold of ego.

P165. The first para on the page is a very useful summary of the fear of the void and its resolution in pure relatedness; a falling into the wholeness of life.

P177. *It is the redeeming achievement of Nietzsche and Rilke that they have raised, the one in the intensely felt plight of his thought, the other in his intensely meditated poetry, the abysmal contradictions of their age to a plane where doubt and confusion once more dissolve into the certainty of mystery.*

Wouldn't it be truer to say 'the uncertainty of mystery'?,

At this point I was beginning to become interested in Nietzsche and on one or two occasions I thought I might get around to liking him. With this in mind I took it upon myself to go back to his own writing and bought a Kindle version of his *On the Genealogy of Morality* which is turning out to be much more entertaining than the title suggests.

I will let you know if he has finally won me over and, if so, how.

Alan Mann

Back to Contents

Krishnamurti at Springbrook

I attended the recent annual Krishnamurti gathering at Springbrook, Queensland. I don't go every year but it was time for a catch-up and it was good to relax amongst the trees after a whirlwind week in Brisbane and Noosa, there is always something to learn. The dialogues help me to look at myself and aspects of life I've overlooked. Krishnamurti has been a major interest and influence in my life but I don't feel well disposed towards him personally. I have the same sort of relationship with him that I seem to have with Nietzsche. Nevertheless, I do like many of the people who do seem to like him.

As far as this gathering was concerned we had some interesting dialogues. I liked the question posed by Slavka as to 'What am I without my story?' and Krishnamurti, in one of the videos says "we are prisoners of the verb to be". That is, as he went on to explain, we are constrained by maintaining the past, present and future as actuality and, as editor of a newsletter with the NOW as its title, I would have to agree with him about that, wouldn't I?

I have a personal investment in persuading the Krishnamurti folk that he is *saying* exactly what Douglas Harding is *showing* and I scrawled a Sam Blight aphorism on the verandah blackboard: *I awaken when I realise that what I'm looking for is what I am looking out of.*

I am unaware of any impact this priceless wisdom might have had on the assembly.

Alan Mann

The Self-Deliverance Ceremony

- an introduction -

As a boy utterly bored in grade school I was intensely interested in the American Indians and their remarkably deep traditional lives *prior to their being slaughtered or imprisoned on “reservations”*.

I once read of a Tribe with a deeply moving ceremony honoring extremely old Tribal members in exiting this limited life.

When a Tribe Member had reached an advanced age such that they could no longer care for themselves there would be a great formal gathering of the entire Tribal Family. The Grandfather or Grandmother being honored would exchange a

Final Family Farewell

one by one by one...

At the conclusion of this Solemn and Sacred Ceremony the person who in effect had now died to the Tribal Family would leave the campsite

accompanied by a few Tribe Members.

The little group would go somewhere into the Wilderness to a place where drinking water was present.

A temporary shelter would be assembled.

The person who had Formally and Sacredly exited the Tribe would remain there at that place fasting into death...

At the appropriate time,
which means before all ability to remember leaves me
right here in the Weeping Wilderness of our society

I will end all eating.

I must stress – Self-Deliverance is not Suicide.

In these Tragic Times

many are so pathetically terrified of

DEATH

they are unable to see *Self-Deliverance* clearly.

Nevertheless *Self-Deliverance* is:
the Conscious Decision to bid Farewell to both
the Tender Sacred Beauty and the Tragic Mass Insanity.
Then Completely, Thankfully, Surrendering and
Fasting into Forever...

Greg Campbell

Back to Contents

My Writings – Their Genesis and The Process

After my first awakening, in 1996 at a seven day silent retreat given by Gangaji, I began to be aware of the utter simplicity of the process, especially as it became more established through repeated self-inquiry. The realization that one is the Pure Awareness that underlies the whole of life, and in fact all things, became startlingly obvious; so much so that I became increasingly disillusioned by spiritual writings (in all forms) which mystified this whole subject. This created the desire to put the matter in the simplest, most straightforward, way so that anyone could understand it ... and through repeated inquiry (or investigation) 'get it'.

Then in 2000 I was on a solitary silent retreat, on a beautiful farmlet in the Gold Coast Hinterland, when I felt the urge to express this simplicity and the joy of the awakening that this produces. So I sat down and wrote my first essay since my schooldays, entitled 'Simply Free to Be' which now appears in my first book *Beyond The Separate Self*. I distributed this to friends, via email, and as a pamphlet at Byron Bay markets, where I sold our pottery, and it was very well received. Also during this time I was attending satsang with Isaac Shapiro and looked after his email list so I started to write the occasional article and send them out to this group. It was here that 'Investigation of Experience', which forms the basis of all my books, was formulated and received its first 'airing', to Isaac's approval.

Although this process satisfied my desire somewhat I still felt the need to write a book on the subject, which would be accessible to all readers, and distribute this as widely as possible. At this time (2002) our pottery business was shrinking leaving me plenty of free time so I decided to take a double-major degree in Comparative Religion and Philosophy, which I felt would enable me to write in such a way that would be accessible to everybody, irrespective of their religion or philosophical outlook. The outcome of this was my second book, published in 2010, *Humanity – Our Place in The Universe*, based on my honours course-work and thesis, which elucidates the central beliefs of the world's five major religions – Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

When this was finished, in 2007, I felt ready to tackle the book, which I had decided to call *Beyond The Separate Self*, but was somewhat daunted by the process. I remember thinking that I needed over 30,000 words for a medium size book and writing a rough synopsis of how the chapters may look. In the meantime I was still writing the very occasional article to be posted online and then one day I was looking at my folder of articles written over the last seven years when it struck me! There was no need to start from scratch, and reinvent the wheel, for here was nearly everything I wanted to say ...

So I wrote an introduction, a first chapter explaining the main problems that we are faced with, when misidentifying oneself as a separate object in a world of such, and

then arranged the articles in the order of their 'conception'. The only variation was that I put 'Investigation of Experience' as the second chapter, for this is the nub of the matter, before 'Simply Free to Be' which was written earlier. Then after the final article I added three relevant revised assignments from my degree which dealt with 'The Full Potential' (of Awakening), 'The Absolute Reality' and 'The Essential Self'. Finally I wrote 'Self-Liberation Through Naked Awareness' comparing my realizations with those of Dzogchen (Tibetan Buddhism) given in chapter four of a new translation of *The Tibetan Book of The Dead*. For I had just become acquainted with this and could not believe the harmonies between them, especially considering that I had almost finished the book before I became aware of this. Then to round it all off I added an appendix, containing an analysis of my own experiences at the 1996 Gangaji retreat, which was written as a major assignment for one of my degree modules. This was so that the reader could see 'where I was coming from' and the basis of my realizations that caused the book to be written.

So now the only thing left to do, after editing and proof-reading by a good friend of mine who worked for Penguin (and others), was to get published. This is much easier said than done, especially in this minute field of human interest, as finding a publisher is almost impossible. I could have self-published but then how do people get to know your work? Luckily serendipity intervened in the form of a recommendation that I try Nonduality.com; actually I made a 'mistake' here for it was actually suggested that I try Nonduality Press, but it all worked out for the best. For when I submitted the manuscript to Jerry Katz, the owner of **www.nonduality.com** he replied by saying that he did not publish books, but then followed up two weeks later by saying that he had read mine and was going to start (publishing books) with *Beyond The Separate Self*!

So in December 2009 the book was published and sold via his website as an eBook with a great deal of promotion which resulted in over 500 sales in the first year ... far beyond my expectations. It has continued to sell well and is still the top seller of my ten books especially since my interview on Conscioustv, which can be viewed on utube, of the same name. In the introduction to the book I included my email address and received many encouraging reviews and reports of its usefulness. I also got questions, the replies to which formed the basis of new articles, and these plus those that came from my further investigations into (awareness of) Awareness formed the next book *A Light Unto Your Self*. This was published in 2011 on **www.nonduality.com** and has sold steadily, eliciting even more questions which created further articles as they were responded to. This, plus my ongoing investigations, resulted in the publication of *Awakening and Beyond* in 2012.

¹ About this Ramaji, an American spiritual teacher and author of *1000 (levels of Consciousness)*, wrote: "Investigation of Experience." it is a step by step method for doing that which, if you do it diligently, will inevitably lead you to the true foundation of your moment to moment experience as well as the universe itself. For those of you who cannot read between the lines, I just said it will take you to "enlightenment."

In 2011 I also discovered **www.lulu.com** , a wonderful website for self publishing, and started to produce my books in hard-copy. They are printed on request, at very reasonable rates, in various locations around the world and mailed directly to the buyer. They also allow the author to have a 'spotlight page' where one's products are automatically displayed, as they are published, and which also can provide an autobiography of the author and up to 20 links to other websites. Mine is **<http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/ColinDrake>** which has my books, a bio, and links to many of my articles and poems which have been published on the internet by a wide variety of sites.

The other notable event in 2011 was the beginning of my 'career' as a poet. This was caused by a particularly intransigent questioner who was just not really hearing anything I was saying. He is an earnest spiritual seeker who has been searching for over forty years but who is dominated by identification with his mind, which has left him totally confused. He was continually asking for 'proof' of what I was pointing to, without really being prepared to investigate, with an open mind, for himself. So finally in desperation I wrote the following:

You Ask For Proof

You ask for proof,
 What more proof could there be?
 That which lives and breathes in me,
 Also lives and breathes in thee.

The Lover and Beloved are ever within and without,
 Of this amazing Mystery there can be no doubt.
 She feels every sensation that our bodies feel,
 As we eat She partakes of every meal.

That which we hear and see,
 Is also heard and seen by the Beloved, Thee.
 All that we taste and smell,
 Is sensed, through us, by Thee as well.

Every thought with which our minds resound,
 In Thine infinite Cosmic Mind is found.
 For behind every conscious body/mind,
 The Seer, Knower and Enjoyer can we find.

Moreover, not a thought nor sensation escapes,
 Without appearing in Thine universal 'tapes'.
 Within each of us our experiences are 'recorded',
 By which device awareness of them is afforded.

In this there can be no separate 'saying',
 Manifestation is the Lover and Beloved playing.
 What appears to us as 'you' and 'me',
 Are expressions and instruments of the One Reality

Between Awareness and The Creation,
 There can be no real separation.
 For the Lover and Beloved are always one,
 Appearing as the 'many' just for fun!

Alas, this also did not get through, although he did say it was a nice poem, which was much more affirmative than the usual cynicism and scepticism he brought to our conversations.

However, when I e-mailed this poem out it evoked the most number of positive responses I have ever received from a mail out. When discussing this with a poet friend of mine he asserted that poetry has the potential to be more powerful than prose, as it is more condensed and thus requires the reader to investigate its meaning more than prose, which tends to put the meaning 'on a plate'. As my writings are always an exhortation for the readers to investigate the Truth for themselves I was greatly attracted to this and I think that it has some validity.

As a result of this I wrote a few poems based on chapters of *Beyond The Separate Self* which were also well received, so I decided to write a whole book of poems, one per chapter, based on this. The great thing about the poems is that they reduce the roughly 1000 words, of the original article, down to about 250 and thus have the potential to distill the essence, whilst eliminating much of the explanation, of the subject matter. This makes them more potent, although slightly more obscure, requiring more contemplation to 'get' what is being said. However, once one has truly 'got it' they are then very powerful reminders requiring a lot less time and effort than reading the original article. Interestingly they sometimes 'say' more than the original as more has been 'seen' during the process of conversion from prose to poetry.

I have continued this process, slowly creating a book of poems from each book of prose, whilst also writing 'stand alone' poems when inspired to do so. I greatly enjoy this process and the results; in fact I read two poems from different books before each investigation/contemplation session and find this a very inspiring way to start. I must say, however, that they sell very slowly as compared to the books of prose but this doesn't dampen my enthusiasm for writing, and enjoying, them.

So this process of writing replies and articles, then eventually the poems, has continued resulting in more books. As this is written there are ten:

Beyond The Separate Self - The End of Anxiety and Mental Suffering 2009

A Light Unto Your Self - Self Discovery Through Investigation of Experience 2011

Awakening and Beyond - Self Recognition and its Consequences 2012

Awareness of Awareness - The Open Way 2013

The Happiness That Needs Nothing - Pointers to That Which is Always Here 2014

The first four are also available in poetry form, one poem per chapter, entitled 'Poetry From *Book Title Name*'. I have also published a book comparing the world's major religions and how they define Humanity's essence and 'place' in the universe:

Humanity - Our Place in the Universe - The Central Beliefs of the World's Religions 2010

So as you can see I always have at least two books in the pipeline, without necessarily intending to write more 'books', due to the replies, articles and poems that are being written. There is another one ready for publication in early 2015, plus another book of poems almost completed, and I have articles for the following one already 'squirreled' away ... The books have also been made available in all formats, hard-copy, .pdf, epub, and Kindle (.mobi) from various outlets including Amazon, Nook, Ibookstore and many other book stores around the world.

One further point that I would like to make is that writing the books has been an absolute blessing for me as it has unfolded over the years. The recording of the discoveries, answering questions, and the honing of the texts, has been a joy and has increased and prolonged my periods of 'wakefulness'. On re-reading the manuscripts so many times, for editing and verification purposes, I have come to realize that I (the separate self) do not write them at all but that they come from, and through, this limited manifestation of Pure Awareness. As such they are bound to contain some errors due to the limitedness of the manifestation, but hopefully these will become corrected as further discoveries occur. Thus they will always be 'works in progress', which is wonderful for it will spur me on to overcome its limitations by further investigation, contemplation and meditation. So I would absolutely encourage you, the reader, to record your own discoveries, and never be totally content with what you have written, so that your record will inspire you and encourage you to deeper investigation/contemplation/meditation.

Colin Drake

Back to Contents

Waking Up by Sam Harris

It is refreshing to read a book about enlightenment by a prominent atheist and one who has stood beside Dawkins, Hitchens and Kraus against the creationists and orthodox religions. However, unlike the rather shrill and evangelical tone of Dawkins and Hitchens his is a more balanced view. He has had extensive contact with Buddhist philosophy and method which has shown him that religious traditions include truths that are by and large dismissed by scientists and those committed by their belief system to a strictly secular approach.

The book is sub-titled *A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion*. Sam Harris is a neuroscientist and well qualified to comment on the questions around consciousness and his approach reminded me of a series of talks I gave to the Theosophical Society which I labelled 'Secular Mysticism' as a way of communicating my sense of a need to approach 'enlightenment' from the perspective of everyday consciousness rather than through the esoteric approaches of most spiritual traditions.

The book opens with an account of the writer's first experience of fasting and contemplation, a three day exercise which he found to be utterly pointless and boring except that at the end of the programme he found that some of his fellow participants reported transformative experiences. How could the stripping away of customary comforts and activities possibly become a source of happiness? Later, as a result of experimenting with drugs he found himself dumped into this unfamiliar openness, a state he could only describe as unconditional love. I imagine this is what we have sometimes referred to as upper case as opposed to lower case love, it became the spur to his search for the reason we overlook this vital aspect of mind.

Page 5. The experience was not of love growing but of its being no longer obscured. Love was—as advertised by mystics and crackpots through the ages—a state of being. How had we not seen this before? And how could we overlook it ever again?

It would take me many years to put this experience into context. Until that moment, I had viewed organized religion as merely a monument to the ignorance and superstition of our ancestors. But I now knew that Jesus, the Buddha, Lao Tzu, and the other saints and sages of history had not all been epileptics, schizophrenics, or frauds. I still considered the world's religions to be mere intellectual ruins, maintained at enormous economic and social cost, but I now understood that important psychological truths could be found in the rubble.

He goes on to explain why spirituality must be distinguished from religion if we are to get to the bottom of what it is that gives rise to the various religious traditions which, though possibly well intentioned, nevertheless usually succeed in completely obscuring their source. The book is about enquiring into why we overlook this aspect of ourselves and how we can overcome our overlooking. Harris pays particular attention to the nature of 'self' and various spiritual and scientific perspectives. There is a matter-of-factness about his perspective that I have found to be the key to my understanding of what really matters:

Page 124. The ultimate wisdom of enlightenment, whatever it is, cannot be a matter of having fleeting experiences. The goal of meditation is to uncover a form of well-being that is inherent to the nature of our minds. It must, therefore, be available in the context of ordinary sights, sounds, sensations, and even thoughts. Peak experiences are fine, but real freedom must be coincident with normal waking life.

I was delighted to find that Harris is aware of Douglas Harding. He devotes a section of the book, entitled *Having No Head*, to the experiments. He even takes the trouble to explain how badly off the mark was Hofstadter's critical dismissal of Harding's essay in *The Mind's I*, the book Hofstadter co-edited with Dennett. Another example of otherwise great minds entirely missing the point.

The book looks at the associated areas which address the problem of awakening, meditation, gurus, drugs, etc., but the basic message is that although the deep identification with self as entity is the root of the difficulty, the cause of overlooking what is already the case, it is resolved in our everyday being and not in some transcendental, wonderland state of mind.

This highly recommended read concludes with this sentence:

Open your eyes and see.

Alan Mann

Back to Contents