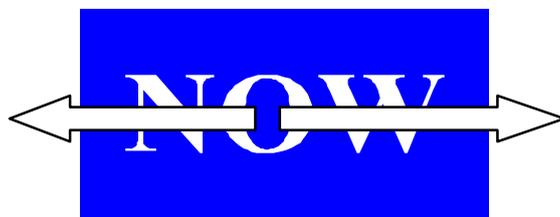


Issue 199—November 2017

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I intended to include, in this issue, a summary of the last Greville Street Meeting at which we discussed what it means to be awake. In my introduction I drew on Sam Harris, David Loy, Douglas Harding and Thomas Traherne as a foundation for explaining what 'awaking' means to me. However, owing to the backlog of your contributions, for which I am most grateful, I've run out of space in this issue so I will have to include in the next. Maybe a Christmas special! One of the results of the meeting was a note from Graeme Wilkins about the work of Drew Berry which in turn prompted a note from me which is the final item in this issue.

Our first NOWletter was dated 8th January 1993, the next will be number 200. The format is somewhat dated and I think it is time to switch to a more convenient way of sharing our thoughts and experiences. I am thinking of a dedicated web page on the Capacitie website to which we can first post and then access our various contributions. I would then circulate news of the new arrival on the site with a link and a summary of content. More on this proposed change in due course and any suggestions most welcome. We tried a blog a few years ago but that turned out to be a fizzer.
Alan

Anita Moorjani from Mal Mitchell

(This follows from the comments in NOWletter 198 on Anita Moorjani's book Dying to be Me).

I've just today finished Anita Moorjani's second book, "What If *This* Is Heaven?" I mentioned in my last email on her 'message' (23rd Aug) how my impressions were already slightly different from what they were when I wrote those now-NOWlettered comments – in some ways clearer, in some ways fuzzier, a bit like hearing and seeing a plucked piano wire ringing with many, many overtones... Now, a month later, my impressions are in some ways a bit different again. There's a clear root note with her message, which I think she expresses beautifully and brilliantly, about love as the essence of being, about being oneself fearlessly.... [*But I think I've banged on enough in this connection so I'll put a sock in it!*] All best wishes, Mal

From The Buddha Grove Website

(This note was prompted by my exposure to a highly text based approach to Buddhism which made me realise that Buddhism is no exception to the 'many approaches' pattern of other traditions. It also made me see whether I could recall a more direct approach within the field of Buddhism and I remembered the Flower Sermon. Alan)

Extracts from this particular interpretation of the famous Flower Sermon.

While the Buddha gave many spoken sermons after he became enlightened, during one sermon in particular he did nothing but hold up a flower. It is said that upon seeing it, his disciple Mahakasyapa was immediately enlightened. Why did the simple display of a flower have such a profound effect upon Mahakasyapa, and what can we learn from this lesson?

...The Flower Sermon was held near a pond during Buddha's later years. When he held up the freshly-picked lotus flower -- roots and all, dripping mud -- the assembled crowd was silent, not understanding its significance. But after a moment or two, Buddha's disciple Mahakasyapa smiled. He was the only attendee to receive the Buddha's message that day, but the account of The Flower Sermon is remembered and revered in Zen Buddhism even now...

...This story is a pillar of the Zen school of Buddhism, which focuses on direct experience rather than dogma or intellectual analysis. Meditation to reach the formless consciousness of Oneness is favored over dwelling too much on doctrines, words or concepts. The simple act of seeing a flower, bold yet fleeting, was enough to help Mahakasyapa through the "gateless gate." How might meditating upon a flower help you to see the true nature of things?

The full account at: <https://www.buddhagroove.com/the-flower-sermon/>

I understand this to be a particularly strong demonstration of the required step from saying into seeing and comparable to the direct approach of the Harding experiments.

Alan Mann

Euthanasia - Compassion in action? From Trisha English

In a society where we are constantly bombarded with messages concerning how we live and relate to one another, it may not be a good time to raise yet another “problem”. Even so, the matter of euthanasia cannot be postponed indefinitely. It is like death itself. Sooner or later, you will have to face it. If not personally, then in regard to those you love.

It is interesting that, so far as other animals are concerned, almost everyone agrees, that the most merciful thing to do in the case of serious injury, or impending death, is “to put them to sleep”. I have known people who have gone into deep mourning following the need to terminate the life of a beloved dog or cat.

Even so, I do not know of a single person who would keep a suffering animal alive. So why is there such a fuss, when human beings need the same kind of unconditional love? Is it because humans have bank accounts and animals don't? Is it because humans know “fear” and animals simply accept things as they are? Let's briefly examine the matter.

Death is terminal. Death is inevitable. No amount of medical science can bring the dead back to life. What science can do, is to prolong dying. Even though, as time goes by the body wears out.

You can eat well, live well, fill your system with every kind of medicine and swallow all manner of pills and potions. But you cannot cheat death. This is the fact.

Now straight away, some people will argue that the dead do come back to life. It is called “near death experiences” (NDEs). They will point to a voluminous amount of literature on the subject attesting to the fact that their own, or someone else's heart stopped, and they were pronounced “dead” but something happened and they came back to life. And what people recall after such an experience is “tunnels of light”, divine beings speaking to them, meeting relatives, or being turned back because “it was not their time”. It is interesting to note, that people who have no belief systems recall the opposite. Kerry Packer famously said, after his NDE – there is nothing there.

Our belief systems are crucial to the understanding of death. In general terms, the West has a denial of death. We live and amass material goods at such a rate that it could be said that we are masters of avoidance. In the East death is feared, but not avoided, and the attitude of people generally is that “offerings to the gods”, whoever they may be, will ensure a good return trip. Hindus believe in reincarnation. All their temple worship and private worship in the home is directly related to having a good life and having a better life next time around.

They seem to be remarkably stoic about the passing of loved ones. After all, death is a mere interval - a rest if you like - before returning to another physical incarnation. Buddhists have similar beliefs, except the term used is rebirth. The main difference between the two beliefs, is that reincarnation brings with it elements of personality which are said to be the result of karmic influences. Put crudely, the belief is that “what goes around, comes around”

Buddhists have similar beliefs, with the important difference that individual personality is not involved. Rebirth is not personal, it is universal. Nothing survives after death except the

aftermath of desires and attachments which are common elements of consciousness. Strictly speaking there is no individual consciousness, there is only the consciousness of all mankind. Others hold beliefs about resurrection. On the last day of creation, the dead will rise. Not all the dead, but those who have been declared righteous before the Lord. The beliefs about death vary from culture to culture, and there are countless permutations.

Sometimes, death itself breeds fear and sometimes it is the process of dying which is of major concern. Beliefs may vary, but fear does not. It is the greatest foundation for money-making and myth-making that could possibly exist. Almost everything in society is marketed on the belief that you can hold off the inevitable. Religion is no exception. Churches, temples, ashrams, whatever..... seek your money and promise you something in return, be it the endless joys of heaven, or paradise, or the conviction that your next life will be richer and more successful than the previous one.

I remember some years back, travelling with a group of American Buddhists to Nepal and Bhutan. We stopped off at every monastery from Kathmandu to the border of Tibet and at every stop, the American tourists jammed US dollars into envelopes to offer to the Rinpoches. It reminded me of how the Catholic Church used to sell “indulgences” to the poor, in order to “buy” a soul out of purgatory. Today, people still pay priests to say masses for the dead in order to mitigate whatever purgatory or disfavour the dead have incurred. It is a kind of celestial banking system.

My point in mentioning all this, is to show the depth and breadth of conditioning which is all pervasive and all consuming, no matter what our backgrounds.

Whenever the question of euthanasia comes up, the vast subterranean levels of consciousness and conditioning are activated. Our fear of death is triggered. Death is a ceasing of everything. The “I” the “ego” is no more. The fear of annihilation is real and obvious. It is “our” annihilation that is of concern to us, and it is the process of dying, of meeting that annihilation, which fashions our fear.

I’m sure everyone has heard the phrase: “When I die, I just want to go to sleep and not wake up”. What does this actually mean? It surely means I don’t want to die in pain, in psychological distress, or unnecessary discomfort. Doctors, nurses, in fact many connected with the medical profession, will tell you that nobody has to die in pain. They have various means “to make people comfortable”, or sedate them so that any pain is lessened.

Notice that I said pain “is lessened” not eradicated completely. There are many diseases and illnesses which do not respond to sedation. If you have ever been unfortunate enough to watch someone you love die in pain, I suspect your verdict about euthanasia would be immediate. (Providing of course, that you don’t think that suffering is good for the soul, or some other horrific belief).

Psychological distress for dying patients can also be related to belief systems. Until we are actually dying ourselves, we will not know the force of this distress. It can be far greater

than actual pain, particularly if the dying person is paralysed as in the case of motor neurone disease or severe stroke.

Some hospitals actively arrange for chaplains, priests, monks or the like to visit the dying. Sometimes family and friends arrange this. Some refer to it as “comfort” and others see it for what it is – the cause of anxiety and distress. Most of my friends have made “living wills”, or something similar, which directs friends and relatives what to do in certain situations where suffering and illness occur. Some go further and demand that no treatment at all be applied if the condition they are suffering from (such as stroke) cannot be reversed. In spite of all endeavours, there are people who object to euthanasia on the grounds that it is “killing”.

But the same people are not pacifists when it comes to war. They have no compunction at all, in sending out able bodied men and women to die, in order to “protect national interests”. They have no objection to killing animals for meat. They are not particularly concerned either, if people die of starvation or persecution in other countries. Just so long as it doesn't occur in their own country.

There is another factor to be considered. Old people are often frightened of their family. Only the other day an elderly lady asked me the value of my property, or property in the area where I live. I gave her a ballpark figure, but asked her why she wanted to know. She replied that she had two sons, and they wanted her dead as soon as possible so that they could sell her home and get the money. I was speechless. Here was this frail old lady, doing her best to survive, feeling she was pressured by her avaricious sons. It made me wonder, how many people are living with this tremendous weight bearing down on them and how they must feel. I can understand how doctors don't want to be involved in making life and death decisions, but I can't understand why they do not delegate responsibility to the human beings concerned.

The problems surrounding all the questions to do with euthanasia come down to the fact that human beings can easily be corrupted by negative and destructive forces. But that is true whether it relates to euthanasia or any other aspect of human nature. In fact it only reinforces, rather than negates, the view that people should be allowed to choose- as a basic human right - the manner of their death, and the moment of their departure. What about the mentally ill? you will ask. What would happen in this case, or the case where people are no longer able to make such decisions? Maybe this means that we should face death when we are young, and renew our situation constantly. Why wait for some catastrophe to overtake us? Why not make death a part of life, an aspect of living, if you like. When humans face up to their own mortality - to the inevitability of death - then perhaps it will show us that we need to pursue different lives, with different values, and travel with gratitude and true compassion. When there is compassion, there is no need for fear. When fear is banished, compassion remains the most precious characteristic of what it means to be human.

Some of the complexities surrounding death are contained in two marvellous DVDs. Both are excellent dramas. One is called *The Grey* with Liam Neeson, and the other is *Solace* featuring Anthony Hopkins. No need for sentimentality or the tissue box. These films will stay with you and challenge your views on death no matter what they happen to be.

At the present moment there is a euthanasia bill before the Victorian Parliament and members hope to have it passed before Christmas. The main opposition at the moment is coming from those of Catholic belief and others who believe it will turn us into a killing machines. Were we ever anything else?

Trisha English

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The Heart from Barry Hora

(Barry has been giving a series of lectures to his local chapter of U3A and gathered a number of quotations on one of his talks on the matter of 'heart'. He thought we might like to see the references and quotation he collected. Here they are. Alan)

Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.” — Carl Jung;

“We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals.” Immanuel Kant.

Don't let your brain interfere with your heart. Few are those who see with their own eyes and feel with their own hearts. Albert Einstein

Dating back to the ancient Greeks, human thinking and feeling, intellect and emotion have been considered separate functions. These contrasting aspects of the soul, as the Greeks called them, often have been portrayed as being engaged in a constant battle for control of the human psyche. In Plato's view, emotions were like wild horses that had to be reined in by the intellect and willpower.

The thinking of today about the heart; by the HeartMath Institute.

- Research explains how the physical and energetic heart plays an extraordinary role in our lives!
- Our heart rhythms affect the brain's ability to process information. The heart has 40,000 sensory neurons involved in relaying ascending information to the brain.
- The human heart's magnetic field can be measured several feet away from the body.
- Negative emotions can create nervous system chaos, but positive emotions do the opposite.
- Positive emotions can increase the brain's ability to make good decisions.
- You can boost your immune system by focusing on positive emotions.
- A mother's brainwaves can synchronize to her baby's heartbeats even when they are a few feet apart.
- Positive emotions create physiological benefits in your body.

- In fetal development, the heart forms and starts beating before the brain begins to develop.
- Did you know the heart has a brain of its own?

Dr. J. Andrew Armour (www.care2.com/greenliving/let-your-heart-talk-to-your-brain-2.html) introduced the term, "heart brain," in 1991. Armour showed that the heart's complex nervous system qualified it as a "heart brain." Intrinsic Cardiac Afferent Neurons. The heart brain, like the brain proper, has an intricate network of neurons, neurotransmitters, proteins and support cells. It can act independently of the cranial brain and has extensive sensory capacities.

Scientists at the HeartMath Institute (www.heartmath.org/) have conducted research on emotional energetics, coherence, heart-brain connection, heart intelligence and practical intuition. The heart sends signals to the brain that can influence: perception, emotional experience and higher mental processes. (Deborah Rozman) Your heart emits an electromagnetic field that changes according to your emotions. Others can pick up the quality of your emotions through the electromagnetic energy radiating from your heart.

Heart-Brain Factoids:

The heart has a system of neurons that have both short- and long-term memory, and the signals they send to the brain can affect our emotional experiences.

The heart sends more information to the brain than the brain sends to the heart. Coherent heart rhythms help the brain in creativity and innovative problem-solving.

Connecting with the Intuitive Guidance of the Heart, Deborah Rozman (HeartMath Institute) recent discoveries have found the heart possesses its own intrinsic nervous system of sensory neurons that can feel, learn and remember, referred to as the "heart-brain." This intelligence processes information independently from the "head-brain"

Research at the HeartMath Institute demonstrated that our intuitive sensitivities are closely tied to this heart- brain and our heart's rhythms. A specific rhythmic pattern of the heart, referred to as "heart coherence," has been shown to increase intuitive discernment and improve decision-making skills.

How heart coherence brings the physical, mental and emotional systems into balanced alignment for easier access to our heart's intuitive guidance for simple or hard to make choices. Our choices are constantly determining our peace, happiness and self-security — or the stress and decline of our well-being.

Learning to utilize our heart's intelligence is a natural gift we can refer to for moment-to-moment guidance, no matter what personal growth, spiritual path or religion we may practise. Research on collective heart coherence and energetic connectivity, a heart coherence technique to amplify the group energetic field.

The potential of collective heart coherence and a deeper understanding of the intelligence of the heart is that we can co-create a heart-connected world and a better future. *Deborah*

Rozman Ph.D. has been a psychologist and executive for over 30 years. She helped HeartMath founder Doc Childre launch the Institute of HeartMath non-profit research and education organization in 1991. © 2017 HeartMath Institute

Creating Your Heart-Brain Connection; by Gregg Braden; American author, born 1954. The most vital communications we will ever find ourselves engaged in. It's the silent, often subconscious, and never-ending conversation of emotion-based signals between our hearts and our brains, also known as the heart brain connection.

The most vital communications we will ever find ourselves engaged in. It's the silent, often subconscious, and never-ending conversation of emotion-based signals between our hearts and our brains, also known as the heart brain connection. The reason this conversation is so important is because the quality of the emotional signal our hearts sends to our brains determines what kind of chemicals our brains release into our bodies.

When we feel what we would typically call negative emotions (for instance, anger, hate, jealousy, and rage), our hearts send a signal to our brains that mirrors our feelings. Such emotions are irregular and chaotic, and this is precisely what the signal they send to the brain looks like. If you can envision a chart of the ups and downs of the stock market on a wild and volatile day, you'll have an idea of the kind of signals we create in our hearts in times of chaos.

There are similar notions to Heart in past history, starting with: -

- Empedocles; Greek pre-Socratic philosopher born 495 BC, also speculated on the nature of human physiology. He believed that blood represented the most perfect intermingling of the four natural elements and that the heart was the centre of the blood-vessel system. He therefore believed that the heart was the seat of life itself. The heart nourished in seas of blood coursing to and fro, and there above all is what humans call thought, because, for humans, blood around the heart is the thinking.
- Parmenides, Greek philosopher; born 501 BC: "Heart" is the starting point, as centre of aletheia focus. Parmenides intends us to think of Truth is alive and the heart more often to denote centre and source of life. Heart as used here for the most basic level of experience is a symbol for the human totality "thou" what touches the centre.
- Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, English Sufi mystic, born 1953: "The Sufi Meditation of the Heart." For the Sufi the death of the ego takes place in the arena of love. Entering this arena, we turn our back on the values of the world and our instincts of self-preservation. Love is the energy that breaks down our patterns of resistance and transforms us. Love is the energy of oneness in which lover and Beloved are united since before the beginning of time. Deep within the heart there is a place that has no knowledge of duality or separation. The Sufis call this innermost chamber of the heart the 'heart of hearts.' The heart of hearts is the locus of the spiritual quest, the arena of transformation. One of the early founders of Sufism studied Empedocles & Parmenides teaching and Rumi the Sufi poet followed the poetic style of Parmenides.
- Sufi Way of the Heart.

A quote from the Sufi Message of Inayat Khan, Volume IX, illuminates the Sufi purpose: "If anybody asks what Sufism is, what kind of religion is it, the answer is that Sufism is the religion of the heart, the religion in which the thing of primary importance is to seek God in the heart of mankind.

The first way is to recognize the divine in everyone and to be considerate towards every person with whom we come in contact, in our thought, speech, and action.

The next way of practising this religion is to think of the feelings of someone who is not with one at the moment. One sympathizes with the trouble of someone who is with one at the moment, but it is more praiseworthy to sympathize with one who is far away.

The third way of realizing the Sufi principle is to recognize in one's own feeling the feeling of God, to realize every impulse of love that rises in one's heart as a direction from God, to realize that love is a divine spark in one's heart, to blow that spark until a flame may rise to illuminate the path of one's life.

The truest aspects of Sufism are extremely subtle. One can't make assumptions from the ego, but must rely on an inner wisdom and an inner sight that is found only in the heart. The wisdom of the heart is sometimes talked about as the "single eye within the heart," and the symbol for Sufism as Khan taught it is a "heart with wings." It is considered by many Sufis that the heart holds the key to consciously living life in the presence of God.

These are the words of a real Sufi and a real master. Sufism is a lived teaching. A little knowledge that is applied brings wisdom, whereas too much book learning results in mental and spiritual indigestion.

An Exercise for Opening the Heart

The more aware you are of your heart centre, the more the heart becomes open and energized. As you are going about your daily business, think of your heart as a miniature sun that radiates light to everyone and everything you meet. While your head and your mouth are busy with conversation, let the light from your heart touch and warm the heart of the other. It is as if there is a second, heart, interchange that is going on beneath the conversation. Let your heart-sun touch the heart-suns of everyone you meet. No matter who they are or what their personality is like, their hearts are just like yours; their hearts yearn for the divine light, just like your

- Blaise Pascal, French mathematician, physicist, inventor, writer and Catholic theologian; born 1623. "The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing. We know the truth not only by the reason, but by the heart."
- Jiddu Krishnamurti; Indian philosopher, Born 1895. Unity of Mind and Heart. Training the intellect does not result in intelligence. Rather, intelligence comes into being when one acts in perfect harmony, both intellectually and emotionally. There is a vast distinction between intellect and intelligence. Intellect is merely thought functioning independently of emotion. When intellect, irrespective of emotion, is trained in any particular direction, one may have great intellect, but one does not

have intelligence, because in intelligence there is the inherent capacity to feel as well as to reason; in intelligence both capacities are equally present, intensely and harmoniously. Now modern education is developing the intellect, offering more and more explanations of life, more and more theories, without the harmonious quality of affection. Therefore, we have developed cunning minds to escape from conflict; hence we are satisfied with explanations that scientists and philosophers give us. The mind, the intellect, is satisfied with these innumerable explanations, but intelligence is not, for to understand there must be complete unity of mind and heart in action.

- Deepak Chopra; American author, public speaker, alternative medicine advocate, born 1946. There is a centre in the body where love and spirit are joined, and that centre is heart. It is your heart that aches or fills with love, that feels compassion and trust, and that seems empty or overflowing. Within the heart is a subtler centre that experiences spirit, but you can't feel spirit as an emotion or physical sensation. Spirit lies beneath the layers of sensations, and to experience it, you must go to the heart and meditate upon it until everything that obscures spirit is cleansed. In the words of the mystical poet William Blake, "you are cleansing the doors of perception

I finished the talk with Rumi, 13th century Persian Sufi Mystic and Poet

*“Outward colours arise from the light of sun and stars,
And inward colours from the Light on high.
The light that lights the eye is also the heart's Light;
The eye's light proceeds from the Light of the heart.
But the light that lights the heart is the Light of God.”
Because my next talk is on Light.*

Barry Hora

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The Trial Of The Man Who Said He Was God, By D. E. Harding

*(Robert records that in 2006, Harding said to him that he thought THE TRIAL OF THE MAN WHO SAID HE WAS GOD is his best book. Given below is Robert's abridgment of Chapter 2 of a scientific-philosophical cum spiritual-religious cum verbal-pictorial artistic masterpiece, the brilliant THE TRIAL OF THE MAN WHO SAID HE WAS GOD book, the book that he thinks is most worthy of close reading and re-reading, for those who are interested in discovering, and re-discovering, and consciously living from, their true Self. This is an abridgement of Chapter 2, which is headed *The Humanist*) Robert Penny*

Start of abridgement of Chapter 2

You must know about the Perennial Philosophy, according to which you and I are essentially divine - like it or lump it. It's to be found, more or less concealed, at the heart of all the great spiritual traditions. It insists that, really and truly, I am the One Self - alias Atman-Brahman, the Buddha Nature, Tao, Spirit, Being, God, the Aware No-thing that embraces All things. And that the whole reason for living is to realize that at core I am This and This Alone.

In that case my true dignity consists in my denial that I'm only human after all. A dignity arising out of lies isn't anything of the sort. It's disgraceful and shaming and due for a tumble.

In the East the Perennial Philosophy has obscured all other philosophies for twenty-five centuries. Here in the West, it's the *only* philosophy that has survived intact down the ages, and is now more vigorous than ever. It doesn't date. Many a passage from the *Tao Te Ching* of 300 BCE reads as freshly today, and rings as true, as on the bright morning of its composition. No other body of doctrine is so free of historical and geographical discoloration, so practical no matter what the cultural constraints, so simple and self-evident and yet so deep. No other has stood half so well the test of time and of day-to-day experience. And yet no other is so wild, so daring, so madly and gloriously *happy*! So far from being speculative or vague, the Perennial Philosophy tells you precisely:

(1) *Where* to find God: namely, right where you are.

(2) *When* to find God: namely, right now.

(3) *How* to find God: namely, by turning the arrow of your attention round 180° and looking inwards - looking in at what you're looking out of. And with childlike sincerity taking what you find there.

(4) *What to look for*: namely, that which has no form, features, colour or limits, but is like light or air or clear water or space. Great space, filled to capacity with what's on show. Great Space, *aware* of itself as thus empty and thus full.

The Perennial Philosophy has consistently and persistently put forward a hypothesis so amazing and so delectable - one's essential Godhood, no less - that it cries out to be tested by every available means, just in case it should turn out to be true. For good measure, as we've seen, it comes up with just the right tools for the job. *Precisely the four tests listed above, as it happens*. Precisely - in terms of feet and inches, of hours and minutes and seconds, of degrees of the compass. And to blazes with all spiritual-metaphysical waffle and cotton wool!

Tennyson said that God's nearer than my hands and my feet and my breathing, Muhammad that He's nearer than my jugular vein. Well then, let me see if they knew what they were talking about. Following those four guidelines we are agreed on:

(1) I point, with both forefingers, at this nearest of places, the place I'm looking out of; (2) I do so now; (3) I do so in the spirit of a little child who takes what he gets; and (4) I notice whether what I'm pointing at is face-like or space-like, human or non-human, a thing or nothing, small and bounded or limitless, dead to itself or alive - alive to Itself, in all Its blazing obviousness and uniqueness and - yes! - power.

Just to watch and listen to me carrying out this crucial experiment would be worse than useless. What have you and I to fear from the truth? I beg you to follow my example, point *right now* - repeat, *right now* - to the Spot that's nearer than *your* breathing, and see *for yourself* what I'm going on about. Don't be nervous! Even if your mother (like mine) told you it was rude to point at anyone, I tell you it's all right to point at this One. He loves it! O how He loves it!

What is it like right where *you* are? What, on present evidence, are *you* looking out of? Who lives at the Centre of *your* universe? Only *you* are in a position to see and to say.

I ask you: looking *in* now at what your two forefingers are pointing at, isn't it Aware Capacity for them and for the scene that lies between - namely, those little feet and those foreshortened legs, and those thighs, and the lower part of your trunk? Doesn't Diagram No. 3 (which I ask you to turn to) give a fair representation of what you're experiencing?

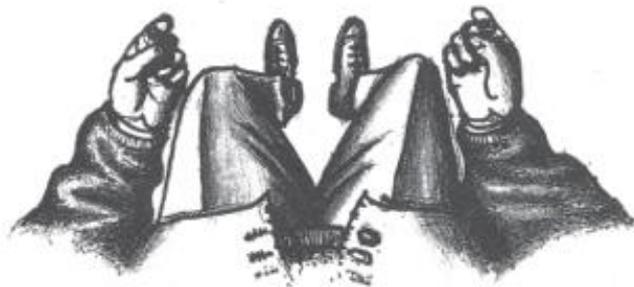


Diagram No. 3

Just what name do you propose to give to this Immensity that's nearer to you than your hands and your feet and your breathing, to the Radiance here that is the Light and all It lights up? To call It Mary Smith or William Brown or Gerald Wilberforce or John a-Nokes would be as perverse as to call it Little Green Apples. It's precisely the opposite and the absence of those persons. Here is the one place in my world that's clean of John a-Nokes, where I'm let off being that little fellow, so opaque and unluminous. Here, at my Centre, is the one place where there shines the Light that lights up the light. This is the Light which, according to Dante, 'makes visible the Creator Himself to His creature, who finds his peace in seeing Him'.

To put Jack here at the Centre of his world isn't just diabolical pride and blasphemy: it's being horrible to myself. It's playing Bottom the Weaver, and mounting a jackass's head on these shoulders. It's unbelievably stupid. The third person's not for divinizing, the First Person's not for humanizing. True humanism *there* is true divinism *here*. The very best I can do for Jack is to keep seeing him off, and God in.

In so far as I am, I am Him. As Rumi explains: 'I am God' is an expression of great humility. The man who says 'I am the slave of God' affirms two existences, his own and God's, but he that says 'I am God' has made himself non-existent and has given himself up... He says 'I am naught, He is all: there is no being but God's.' This is extreme humility and abasement.

Out of the scores of further witnesses I have lined up, these are the ones I have chosen: In appearance a man, in reality God. *Chuang-tzu*

Jesus said: What I now seem to be, that am I not... And so speak I, separating off the manhood. *Acts of John*

They saw the body, and supposed he was a man. *Rumi*

Man is not, he becomes: he is neither limited being nor unlimited, but the passage of limited being into unlimited; a search for his own perfection, which lies beyond him and is not himself but God... The stirring of religion is the feeling that my only true self is God.

A. C Bradley

No matter how often he thinks of God or goes to church, or how much he believes in religious ideas, if he, the whole man, is deaf to the question of existence, if he does not have an answer to it, he is marking time, and he lives and dies like one of the million things he produces. He thinks of God, instead of experiencing being God. *Erich Fromm*
 God is alive and well - and living guess where. *Graffito in a lavatory*

Computer Graphics and God from Alan Mann

When we were in Rome in May Margot and I wandered into a museum where we watched a short video, it was an animated illustration of how a chromosome assembles a protein. It manages to do it by 'knowing' exactly what to grab, how to combine the various components and when to stop when the job is done. I have been trying to find this video ever since we came home and yesterday I was pointed to an article in the Sydney Morning Herald about an American-born Australian scientist, Drew Berry, who specialises in these computer graphic animations to which there are a number of You Tube links. I recommend this as a starter.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfB8vQokroQ>

A long time ago, I was walking along a beach with my grandson Lewis who suddenly asked me whether I believed in God. Or what God was all about. I can't remember exactly what I said at the time but I recall I felt that my reply was inadequate. I have never felt comfortable with the notion of God as the whiskery old guy in the sky but I have always felt the word was a reflection of truth at some level.

I have for many years been interested in the work and ideas of the physicist David Bohm who spoke of the *Self-ordering Principles of the Universe*, and I found he was quite happy to regard this description as a synonym for God. The Drew Berry videos demonstrate beyond anything I have come across the miraculousness of the everyday and remove the notion of God as all good. Ethics, under this lens, is revealed as a matter of human input rather than basic to the system.

I take the processes that Berry is illustrating, to be what A. N. Whitehead was on about with his system of process theology which is a way of saying God is 'what is' or that the whole shebang is God in action. Likewise, David Bohm with his *Self-ordering Principles of the Universe*. It is certainly the only acceptable interpretation of the word God that I am comfortable with. Surely, whatever the word points to, must be a matter of experience rather than belief. And whatever its nature, the meaning of it all must lie in the living of it. These videos are the best sermons and representations of 'God' I have ever found, notwithstanding the literary or poetic attempts at description in the great traditions. For example, this from the Bhagavad Gita:

He who sees that the Lord of all is ever the same in all that is, immortal in the field of mortality —he sees the truth. And when a man sees that the God in himself is the same God in all that is, he hurts not himself by hurting others: then he goes indeed to the highest path. BG 13 verses 27 & 28.

In my opinion that is a 3000 year old version of the message the Drew Berry videos manage to carry for me.

Alan Mann

Meetings:

Byron Sophia Philosophical Group Masonic Centre,
6 Byron St. Byron Bay –
Open Meetings: every Thursday from 1 to 3 pm

81 Greville Street —Chatswood –
Next meeting 10am SUNDAY 4th February

Let me know of changes or of other meetings we could list here.

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