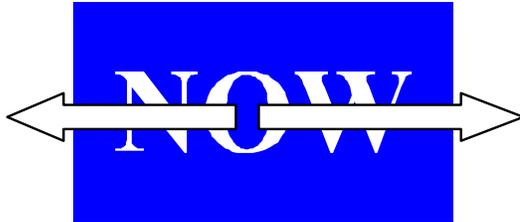


Issue 143—September 2009



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The NOWletter appears between 8 and 12 times every year and is a vehicle for news and views about awakening to what is really going on. The content is based primarily on contributions from readers, either their own writing or examples of what moves or interests them. Subscription is free.

Index of articles and back numbers at: <http://www.capacitie.org/now/archive.htm>

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Editor's Note,

We seem to focusing on time and eternity which shouldn't come as a surprise in view of the title of our publication. The present cycle of notes and exchanges on the topic, many of which are included in this issue, was prompted by an excellent little book on Karl Jaspers by Filiz Peach to which there are references to and quotes from in this month's edition. Many thanks for your feedback and comments and special thanks to Katie Mann for providing me with hard to find books.

Harding Meetings – usually every second month. Anyone wishing to add their name to the list for notification of these meetings please send an email or phone 02 9419 7394) Next Meetings– 4 October 2009 & 13th December 2009

Workshop at Brockwood from Alan Rowlands

Dear Alan, I thought you would like to know that I did a very successful workshop at Brockwood recently. This was at the 40th anniversary reunion, a wonderful 4-day celebration. Twenty-two people came, including a Brockwood staff-member, one of the Trustees of the Krishnamurti Foundation, and two of Friedrich Grohe's dedicated Krishnamurti team. I did all the major experiments and felt everyone got it - didn't sense any resistance. The Trustee and one of Grohe's team (who had both known of Douglas's work before) came out with most positive contributions, and when I met the latter again later on he shared so clearly and movingly about it that I was almost reduced to tears. Of course, as well as that, I was involved in a lot of music—choir as well as piano.

Alan Rowlands

(Alan is involved in a very big musical project - to complete, edit, perform and record a 2-piano arrangement of Vaughan Williams's 6th symphony which is in the British Library. This will be completed in November. Ed.)

Conversation on Time from Jim Clatfelter

(The following is an exchange between Jim Clatfelter and me arising from the last NOWletter.)

21 August—Jim Clatfelter wrote:

Dear Alan, I enjoyed reading all the perspectives on Time in the August Nowletter. As always, I appreciate your work getting it to publication. Thank you.

Time is an interesting topic. It seems we don't really experience time passing. We only experience the present, life in the present. When we talk about time, we use spatial terms, because we do experience space. In 2006 I read a book by Don Cupitt called *The Great Questions of Life*. Question 8 is this: *Is the past real?* His answer to that question has given me a new way to experience time, a way that fits perfectly with the design of headless seeing.

He mentions that the Old Hebrew language doesn't have our past, present, and future tenses. It has only two tenses, which are called aspects. These aspects are the perfect and the imperfect. Here is some of what he wrote:

"I suggest that we drop the classification of times into past, present, and future, and instead adopt the simple and clear classification used in Classical Hebrew, which draws a distinction between what is already finished (the perfect tense) and what is in readiness and will soon come upon us (the imperfect tense). On this elemental and beautiful view (which I somewhat oversimplify) there are only two tenses: what's already done, and what is still pending, in process of being settled.

"On this view, we have divided the whole world into just two zones. The perfect tense embraces the whole of the past and the left-hand side of the present; and the imperfect tense embraces the right-hand side of the present moment, and the future. The past now becomes 'real': it is the entire present accumulation of the world, as we have together built it up to now. It is relatively closed and settled. As for the future, it is open; it is what we are working on, what we have in hand, what is still to be

determined, what is yet to come.

"This change in the way we think of time has some rather cheerful consequences. The past is real: it is the whole world that is before me. And the dead are still with me. I look through their eyes, and see their world as one constituent of my world."

His distinction between the left-hand and right-hand sides of the present is based on the translation of time to a two-dimensional spatial timeline, which, like our writing, runs from left to right. In other languages it can run from right to left. It runs the same direction as the written language runs.

We have divided the world into just two zones or aspects. Douglas Harding did the same. He distinguished the near zone and the far zone. This distinction reflects three-dimensional visual experience. Think of the paper bag experiment. We can say that the past, which Cupitt says is the world before us, is the far zone, the far end of our perception. Before us, in plain English, means in front of us. By contrast, the future is the near zone, the open zone. Its spatial openness is its temporal openness.

This means that the past, the view before us is the Perfect, that which has already been perfected. The future is the near side, the view within, which is the Imperfect, the yet to be perfected. When we say the world is perfect as it is, could it be that we mean just this? The world before us is what has been perfected so far, the Perfect. The past has a location in the present. Is the past real? That was the original question. Yes, according to this view, it is real. It's everything we're looking at. There's nothing abstract about this. It's visible and obvious and fully accessible to perception. The past exists in space, not in time.

Is the future real? Cupitt says the future is "open; it is what we are working on, what we have in hand, what is still to be determined, what is yet to come." Is this openness real? Does it have a perceptible location in space? Yes. If the past is what we're looking at, the future is what we're looking from, the place where life is actively brewing. We don't know what it will come up with. It has not yet been perfected.

As the no-thing within, I am all I ever will be. As the scene without, I am all that I have ever been. What a design! Wonderful and complete! It's all present right here, right now. Presence is all! Marvelous! Nothing is missing. It's all with us. Present eternally means present now, as it was and is and shall be. Nothing is left to be done. Wu wei (do nothing) means that there's nothing to do to find wholeness except to open your (single) eye to the present.

The past is always with us and always being perfected. The future is always with us as the ground of what is yet to be perfected. All time is in our view all the time. Time is real and fully on display every moment. Nothing is lost or beyond the reach of awareness. Where are the snows of yesteryear? Where are the dear dead days beyond recall? They are right before our eye, present and accounted for. Time is real. It is life as it brings the imperfect to perfection. It only happens now—in our presence. There is no other time.

Well, Alan, I don't know if this view of time will work for you. For me, it fits perfectly with the experiments. The past is real when I can point to it with my finger. I can point to the future too, to the open space from which it is emerging. All time is

real and present right now. It's either imperfect and potential or already perfected and before my eye, the single eye. Thanks again, Jim

23 August—Alan Mann replied:

Thank you Jim, yes, that is an interesting angle, very well put and right on target. It matches my sense of time's reality resulting from an adjustment of perspective, seeing that in which it is. Which, as you point out, is the essence of the headless view. George's claim is often resisted on the grounds that he is proposing that the experiments reveal the end of things as opposed to the purpose of things. To arrive at the point or perspective headlessness where, in your words, *the past exists in space, not in time*, is what he is getting at. And the use of the word perfect is a reminder of "Be ye perfect as your father in heaven is perfect" where I take the intended meaning as being perfect in the sense of complete, the complete picture, the space for time past and of future potential. I'll use your message in the next NOWletter if that's OK. I'll assume it is unless you say otherwise.

I went to a Sea of Faith gathering in Perth W.A a few years ago to hear Cupitt as guest speaker. I was disappointed to find that he himself came across as rather disappointed that his endless ponderings and writings, he produces a book a year or thereabouts, had not provided him with any resolution to the issues that deeply concern him. His replies to questions were often dismissive of the questioner. He gave one of the talks at evensong in Perth cathedral notwithstanding his views. The Anglican Church obviously regards him as one of their leading atheists. He had known John Wren-Lewis in his early days in UK when they'd shared the views expressed in Bishop Robinson's *Honest to God* but Cupitt had no time for John's later perspective, following the NDE, which allowed John to finally see what Douglas was pointing to. Many thanks for your interest and continued input, Alan

24 August—Jim Clatfelter wrote:

Hi Alan, I first came across Don Cupitt in a book discussion group sponsored by the Canadian Center for Progressive Christianity. I Googled John Shelby Spong, and they had discussed one of his books. They were kind enough to let a foreigner join the discussion. I stayed with them through several books, one of which was Don Cupitt's book. That was in 2007. I talked about it on LFY and with Jan Hamer's group back then. I'm not sure if anyone thought it the important "headless" discovery I found it to be. Anyway, the August Nowletter reminded me of it again. I don't save very many books after I have read them. This is one I saved. I'll have to go back and read it again.

Your saying that he was sometimes dismissive of questioners at the Perth meeting surprises me a little, but it wouldn't surprise me at all if he were dismissive of the questions themselves. In *The Great Questions of Life* he tries to show why some of the questions are not good ones. Why are we here? He calls that question misleading and irritating. It assumes too much. Well, I said I saved the book. I suppose it's time to read it again. I don't remember it as having any great insights (for me) besides the perfect/imperfect division of present time. I like that this distinction turns things upside down just as headless seeing so often does. What I'm looking at is perfect(ed)! What I'm looking from is imperfect(ed). I like that switch. We tend to say that the aware space here is Perfect. There's nothing here to have a flaw. I don't think Perfect works very well in that sense. Now I can see it in the active sense of perfecting. It has a job and intention. It's doing its best, through us. For me perfect is a loaded word. Some people like to say that everything is perfect just as it is. That seems to imply that there really are no defects, and those who find them are delusional. I'd rather

think that everything is being perfect(ed). I see no problem with that view. I don't know what Douglas or George would make of this view of time. For me, it fits with what they both say. Best always, Jim

27 August—Alan Mann wrote:

Hello Jim, We've been away for a few days. I've only just stumbled on our version of the Canadian Center for Progressive Christianity. I intend to look more closely and perhaps recycle some of their work in the NOWletter. I'll get hold of the Cupitt book you mention as it sounds very interesting. I might have met him on an off day. His wife seemed a more approachable soul and tried to compensate for what we both interpreted as a rather gruff disinterest in our brief exchange at a breakfast table. Should have known better than to interfere with an Englishman at his breakfast! Coincidentally, he was born within weeks of me and only four miles away. However, he hated the dreary North and hotfooted it to Cambridge (I think) as soon as he could. Your observations on perfection prompted a memory which is highly relevant in the light of your comment "Now I can see it in the active sense of perfecting." When I started out on my search to discover what is really going on, I developed a meditation technique for dealing with thorny problems. I tried to maintain attention on breathing by counting 100 breaths and going back to the beginning if attention strayed. When I made the 100 mark I was then free to put the question to the universe. On one occasion, (I was in my the Indian phase of my search and puzzled by the Atman/Brahman dichotomy). So, I put the question 'why if we all have a spark of the divine fire, is there any problem?' I hope I haven't told all this before. The answers were often interesting and made more convincing in that they were sometimes phrased in archaic language I would not have used myself, rather like the language dreams sometimes present. Anyway, on this occasion the answer came "it is in the perfection of creation that we are engaged". I took that to mean, stop trying to perfect yourself, there is something far more important to concern yourself about. I think it is interesting that it was offered as a collective enterprise. I read your comments as very much in line with this perception, *an active perfecting*. I am planning to send the Cupitt piece on the Hebrew approach to my Jewish friend who is also a Krishnamurtiite. He is very protective of the Jewish tradition and any hint of a misreading results in immediate correction. I'll let you know if he responds. I think I mentioned I'm wrestling with Karl Jaspers, never came across him before. He's a perfect example of what George was on about. I can't find any reference to Jaspers in George's work but he is a perfect example of the struggle, which as George explains, is resolved in the experiments. All the best, Alan

1 September—Jim Clatfelter wrote:

Hi Alan, No, you haven't told it all before. "It is in the perfection of creation that we are engaged." I agree that that is what Don Cupitt is pointing to. I'm not a linguist, but I wouldn't be surprised if many languages make the same distinction that Classical Hebrew does. English too has only two basic tenses: past and present. The future is a modification of the present, and it's always expressed in present tense forms. I don't think it's too much of a stretch to say that the imperfect/perfect distinction works in English too.

In any case, I see the imperfect and imperfect as two sides of the famous eternal present or eternal presence. Here's a quote on the eternal present from page 173 of Andre Comte-Sponville's *The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality*:

"While we are living it, it is neither a concept, a reflection nor a comprehension. It

is an experience. It is a fact. It is a bedazzlement. The present is here, and it is all there is. It never vanishes; it continues. It changes ceaselessly; therefore it is unceasing. All is present; the present is all. All is true. All is eternal, here and now."

I like that he called it a fact. George called it The Fact. To me, the grammar fits the Fact. Jim

2 September— Alan Mann wrote:

Good Morning Jim, I have been illuminated by this exchange. It has underlined familiar themes whilst somehow widening the perspective and clarifying perception. Your note of the Cupitt/Harding comparison and about George on 'The Fact' for example. I'm aware of George's approach of course but in spite of all my editing, etc., I hadn't seen, or can't recall his reference to its crystallization as THE FACT. Well, that's perfect! I was telling Antoinette I often think I got too close to the words in editing George's writing and sometimes lost the spirit. I thought I might re-read and do a third volume *The Sayings of George*. And now I see it is you I must thank for recommending *The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality*. I'd forgotten who had told me about it. I bought a copy and thought it very good. I was tickled to discover that the author, after explaining what he didn't believe in, went on to describe at some length what he did believe in which is what I refer to as God. When I told our son Simon, an atheist, about this he pricked up his ears and I lent him the book, so I can't include the section here but it was much the same, and might well have been the very same as the extract you sent. I have just finished Filiz Peach's book on Jaspers in which she and/or Jaspers talks about eternity as 'non-temporal duration'. Alan

The Augenblick again from Alan Mann

In the last issue (No. 142) I referred to a review of Filiz Peach's book *Death, Deathlessness and Existenz in Karl Jaspers* by Professor Kurt Salamun. I have since read the book which I found a very clear and readable presentation of a particularly difficult subject to communicate. In her introduction Filiz Peach writes:

When I first read Jaspers' Philosophy, I was inspired but at the same time puzzled by the concept of 'eternity in time' in his analysis of death. In Jaspers' view, one is able to experience a sense of 'deathlessness' in an existential moment, the Augenblick, while one is alive. For Jaspers this moment is eternal. Philosophically this is an interesting view, but gives rise to a number of problems that Jaspers seeks to resolve by relating human experience to the eternal realm. The philosophy of time and eternity, however, is a complex issue that Jaspers does not deal with in an entirely satisfactory manner. When I wanted to discover more about his existential perspective on death, particularly about his concept of 'eternity in time', I could not find adequate sources. What does Jaspers mean by eternity? What does it mean to say that 'eternity cuts across objective time' (i.e. quer zur Zeit)? What does it mean to say that Existenz, one's inner self, 'knows no death', that is, that it is deathless? Although the subject of death is discussed in different contexts in various publications about Jaspers' philosophy, there is no in-depth analysis of 'deathlessness' in relation to 'eternity in time'.

That was Filiz Peach's response. I thought I'd put a note together about my response to Jaspers Augenblick, in the light of my reading and experience.

From time to time during his monologues, Krishnamurti enquired of himself whether ‘time could come to a stop’. It was quite a while before I understood what he meant by this and, true to form, he never gave a direct answer to his own question. However, the implication of his teaching is that it can come to a stop and that it *should* come to a stop because the ending of time is an essential prerequisite for awakening.

John Wren-Lewis found himself dumped by his NDE into what he described as ‘Eternity consciousness’ on a more or less permanent basis so it was not a matter of a fleeting Augenblick for him. And although John felt, in agreement with Krishnamurti, that anything that the objective ‘me’ does to achieve Eternity consciousness is, by definition, bound to fail, it was his experience of enduring awareness that provides one of the reasons I question the Jaspers claim that all we can experience of eternity is a fleeting flash.¹ (And, as we are reminded in the latest TAT Forum, Richard Rose said, “Enlightenment is always an accident, but there’s ways to become more accident prone.”)

Marc Howe observed, in response to our musings in NOWletter 142, *“Personally, of everything that I've read, Dogen's theory of time - that each moment is a discrete, independent and imperishable object, and for this reason none of them can co-exist and time does not flow - is the most sane that I've read - the solution to St. Augustine's perplexity.*

(I insert here a reminder of Augustine’s problem, as stated in this extract from Alex Reichel’s article *Stephen Hawking and the Manufacture of Time* from NOWletter 67 in October 2000. <http://www.capacitie.org/now/Now67.pdf>

Alex wrote: The writer of Ecclesiastes is talking about the time we live in; a time we see within ourselves. St. Augustine said something to the effect that "When you ask me what time is I do not know but when you don't ask me I know". He also knew that without a created universe there would be no time. Intimations of mystery were also expressed by T.S. Eliot: "Time present and time past/Are both perhaps present In time future/And time future contained in time past/If all time is eternally present...".)

Shortly after receiving Marc’s email I picked up Heinz Rahn’s copy of Masao Abe’s *Zen & Western Thought* and skimming through I came upon Abe recording that Nishitani refers to what I understand as the Augenblick experience in these words, ‘the immediate experience of the Self in totality’. But best of all, in my view is Masao Abe’s version expressed in a dialogue comparing Hegel’s view with that of Dogen:

...despite his emphasis on time and history, Hegel’s speculative dialectic, which is often called panlogicism, ultimately turns them into motionless eternity. In Dogen, time is being and being is time. Becoming as “impermanence Buddha-nature” involves the paradoxical unity of time and eternity at each moment.

Jaspers seems to agree with this as he ends up with a description of the fundamental reality or eternity as ‘non-temporal duration’. His extensive analysis and attempts to

¹ A collection of articles by John Wren-Lewis is available on the John Wren-Lewis page of the capacitie website at <http://www.capacitie.org/wren/index.htm>

give expression to his understanding provide a perfect example of the problem, which as George Schloss explained, is readily dealt with by the Harding experiments. That is, the apparent paradox of eternity in time is untangled by making plain both sides of the paradoxical coin, the objective me busy along the line of time and the essential transparency, the eternal 'whateveritis' in which or rather, as which, everything happens. To which can now be added Jim Clatfelter's 'perfect' and 'imperfect' approach.

My experience indicates that the limited, fleeting glimpse, offered by Jaspers, compared with examples of more entrenched manifestations of eternity consciousness such as the case of John Wren-Lewis, is explained by the fact that a consciousness embedded in the consensus world view would respond to the *Augenblick* with delighted surprise and immediately bring it to an end by claiming it as a piece of knowledge or enlightenment; an attempt to drag it into time. And a possible explanation of the apparent rarity of the experience is its omnipresence. The fact that eternity is at hand continues to escape us. It is so familiar that we habitually overlook it. In reply to Jan Kerschott's question about his 'Headless' Himalayan and, by implication, all such experiences, Douglas Harding said: *Well, it is not something special at all, but rather something natural. This is something that—when you see it—connects with everything. It is the revelation of the obvious not the achievement of the extraordinary.*

Speaking of our 'souls' (in the sense of capital 'S' Self), Traherne says they are like the eye, mirrors with lids, lids of ignorance, which we have the free power to either hold open or keep shut. Cent. 4/86. Jaspers, in limiting realization of eternity to his *Augenblick*, blink of the eye, seems to be groping for the Trahernian insight although his notion of transcendence-thinking seems to be an opening to the possibility of a more enduring awareness of eternity consciousness.

Back to Filiz Peach, to whom I'm extremely grateful for providing me with such a comprehensive introduction to Karl Jaspers. She points out that "*for Jaspers, philosophy is philosophia perennis (timeless philosophy), meaning eternal philosophy which provides the secure grounds for philosophical thinking' and reveals her difficulties as someone working in an Anglo-American environment when one's line of thinking is more attuned to the continental approach adds an interesting perspective to one's work, though not surprisingly can take one down a lonely path. In the elucidation of Jaspers' concept of death and 'deathlessness' I have given a detailed critical analysis which might be regarded by continental philosophers as 'splitting hairs or 'pseudo-linguistics'. On the other hand, some readers, particularly analytic philosophers, may find this study too sympathetic to Jaspers. I do not believe, however, that an apology is due in respect of either stance*".

I don't think there is any justification for complaints of hair-splitting or otherwise in what I found to be her very interesting example of what we are on about here in the NOWletter. Jaspers strikes me as a fine representative of those European philosophers who recognize the possibility and even need for an integration of eastern and western thought. In this regard, I wonder why we hear so little of the Kyoto school. If any readers can throw light on this subject I'd welcome a contribution.

Peach says that Jaspers sometimes varies the meaning of words and this makes it difficult to get a firm grip on his philosophy but there is a certain familiarity to it. If I

am correct in taking his use of *Dasein* to represent the third person perspective and *Existenz* as a first person view then there is a clear correspondence. And, although on occasions he seems to be saying that our only access to eternity consciousness is the fleeting *Augenblick*, on others he implies that *Existenz* is accessible by way of what he describes as 'transcendent-thinking'.

“Through such awareness, Jaspers claims, one is capable of examining one's inner self and inner attitude. This inner activity in turn may lead to transcending-thinking and to the realisation of one's true self, namely Existenz”.

What he means exactly by this is also open to question but it sounds similar to what we mean by an apprehension beyond words—George's language of silence.

There were some interesting footnotes in the Peach book and I include one of them below.

Alan Mann

Koestler, *The Invisible Writing*, p. 353

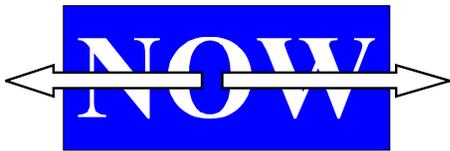
From *Death, 'Deathlessness' and Existenz* in Karl Jasper's *Philosophy* Page 143, endnote 103. It is appropriate to quote Arthur Koestler here. Koestler, who is considered by Heywood as 'fiercely logical', finds it difficult to admit that he has had what he calls a 'mystical experience' that cannot logically be explained and writes about it as follows:

It is extremely embarrassing to write down a phrase like that when one has read *The Meaning of Meaning* and nibbled at logical positivism and aims at verbal precision and dislikes nebulous gushings. Yet mystical experiences, as we dubiously call them, are not nebulous, vague or maudlin; they only become so when we debase them by verbalisation. However, to communicate what is incommunicable by its nature one must somehow put it in words, and so one moves in a vicious circle. When I say the 'I' had ceased to exist I refer to a concrete experience that is verbally as incommunicable as the feeling aroused by a piano concerto, yet just as real only much more real. In fact its primary mark is the sensation that this state is more real than any other one has experienced before, for the first time the veil has fallen and one is in touch with 'real reality' the hidden order of things, normally obscured by layers of irrelevancy. ...The 'I' ceases to exist because it has by a kind of mental osmosis established communication with and been dissolved in the universal pool.

The Strange Case of Thomas Traherne

For those of you interested in Traherne I found a great article by Forrest Gander in which he eloquently expresses my long-held view of Traherne as a forerunner of Phenomenology.

<http://jacketmagazine.com/32/k-gander.shtml>



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Academy of the Word Seminar Programme Dr Alex Reichel (02) 9310 4504 – 2nd & 4th Tuesdays– Polding Centre, Level UB, 133 Liverpool St., SYDNEY. 00 - The New Phone Number is (02) 9268 0635. Second Tuesday 6.15pm - *Healing & Well-being* - Fourth Tuesday 6pm - *State of the World*

Blavatsky Lodge of The Theosophical Society Level 2, 484 Kent St., Sydney (near Town Hall Station) Talks Programme Every Wednesday at 2.30pm and 7pm – Printed programme available 02 9267 6955 and at – www.TSsydney.org.au Email: contact@TSsydney.org.au

LookforYourself (Harding) Meetings - Approximately bi-monthly, by email notification of date and programme. See upcoming dates at top of page 1.

Krishnamurti DVD Screenings followed by Dialogue – First Friday of the Month at 6.30pm for a 7pm screening at the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts 280 Pitt Street, near corner of Bathurst St and close to Town Hall in the City. (contact Terry O'Brien 0431605374). Also on the first Saturday at 2pm at Blavatsky Lodge, address above (for details - contact Stephen McDonald 0417283951). Melbourne. 1st Sunday, 2 to 5pm, Room MR B311 Level 3, CAE Bldg. 253 Flinders Lane, Joan Deerson (03) 93862237

Andrew Cohen Discussion groups – Sydney 1st Tuesday in the month-3rd Tuesday in the month - Andrew Cohen teachings. Enquiries: Graeme Burn 0416 177 012 or Christopher Liddle 0406 755 758

Eckhart Tolle Group – Enquiries: Marion Northcott 9967 8067