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Editor's Note,

Alex Reichel's report records his recent visit to the Scientific and Medical Network conference in Plymouth where he gave a paper. I am hoping to include it in a future issue. Coincidentally, we were both in the UK and reading Alistair McGrath's [The Twilight of Atheism](#) at the same time. I bought our copy after reading another McGrath book called Dawkin's God which is also relevant to the case Alex makes against Robyn Williams in the review of Williams's [Unintelligent Design](#). The October Friday forum meetings at the Blavatsky Lodge are dedicated to the work of David Bohm and I am introducing the sessions on three of the Friday evenings. The other, the third Friday on 20 Oct, will be led by Dr Hugh Murdoch, an astro-physicist. This relieves me of having to cope with the quantum component, which is a bit beyond my reach. Ted Myers responded to my request for travellers to share their adventures with his report on how he has been affected by his visit to our far north. I appreciate your feedback on recent articles and thanks to all of this month's contributors.

P.S. Mystic visions or brain circuits at work? <http://www.cognitiveliberty.org/neuro/neuronewswk.htm> an interesting contribution to the headless conference, extracted with thanks to Brian Kay.

Greville Street Dialogue Meetings – Third Sunday of every month

For Melbourne and other Sydney Meetings, see page 12

Harding Meetings – usually first Saturday of every second month but: (Next meeting Saturday 21 October)

Reaction to Michael's "Meaning Theory" essay from Rudi Anders

I struggled through Michael Potts's wordy essay with great interest. Why is defining religion "troublesome" rather than difficult? Could it be that religion is not a flattering part of human endeavor? Religion is implicated in millennia of persecution, violence, bigotry and war. The essay states, "it (religion) relates to fundamental aspects of human existence." Does it? I know many people without religion who live fulfilling lives. Later it states, "The function of religion is to provide social solidarity, necessary as humans are social animals." Yes, we have tribal instinct, which possibly was herd instinct before that. So, religion is based on primitive tribal behavior. A strong and loyal tribe has more chance of survival, at the expense of other tribes. I am glad I am not religious. To call religion "truth" is clever spin. Later on I read, "humans are the authors and product of a culturally created reality." Well put! Humans invented a rich tapestry of religions from their imagination and then started to believe them. So, religion is fiction, like science fiction, which is enjoyable story-telling. But unfortunately, the psychology of "social solidarity," which includes belonging, identification, ownership, power and security comes in. With identification comes fear of losing and defensiveness, disharmony and conflict - which is the history of humanity. The very thing that is meant to bring harmony causes war. Religion does not work. All of the above equally applies to non-religious ideology.

It seems to me that until we humans have the strength to stand-alone without "social solidarity" humanity will have conflict, which is a huge problem in the age of weapons of mass destruction.

If I got it right (on page 5 near the top), socialization is supposed to prevent meaninglessness and utter aloneness. The natural compassion that most people feel for all the human and animal world is plenty to give meaning to life. How can anyone be lonely when they are caring for each other and the earth? The problem is that ideology, religion and national pride get in the way.

After reading the essay twice, I still don't know what Michael believes.

Rudi Anders

The Colour Purple from Halcyon Evans

Dear Alan, I enjoyed reading your description of the Traherne Festival and was interested in the opening address by Revd. Richard Birt. This brought to mind one of my favourite quotes, namely – *'Theres's lots of things I can do that I speck God likes. I can just lay back and admire stuff. Be happy. Have a good time. I think it pisses God right off if you walk by the colour purple in a field somewhere and don't notice it!* From The Colour Purple by A. Walker

Regards, Halcyon

Robyn Williams: 'Unintelligent Design' from Alex Reichel

Robyn Williams: "Unintelligent Design: Why God is not as smart as she thinks she is" Random House.\$17.95.

Have you noticed that the Darwinian atheists are in panic mode! It seems that the Intelligent Design theorists are making too much headway, threatening the most cherished vision of nineteenth century atheistic ideologues that materialistic science would eventually triumph over God and religious superstition. This would leave the world free for hedonism, eroticism and mud in the eye for the restraining institutions of Christendom.

However this cherished dream is now under serious challenge, not only from Intelligent Design, but also from an upsurge in spiritual renewal world-wide. In Christian terms it means that the creative Holy Spirit continues to hover over the waters of chaos, producing many observable phenomena which blatantly escape the mechanistic nets which adolescent skeptics lay for them. Perhaps there is also a panic reaction to the recent book by Alister McGrath, Professor of Historical Theology at Oxford, called "The Twilight of Atheism: The rise and fall of Unbelief in the Modern World".

McGrath chronicles the rise and fall of all the nineteenth and twentieth centuries schools of atheism. Only neo-modified Darwinism hangs on tenuously. To call it a science is more than many scientists can stomach and philosophically it is in a mess. If so-called scientific rationalism, mechanism, is stressed to the exclusion of many other strands of human need like ethics, creativity, intuition, visionary consciousness, faith in the transcendent, tradition, personal experience and just plain common sense, the human spirit will rebel and is doing so.

Viable science began in the West as a thoroughly Christian enterprise; to prepare the earthly future of mankind, to eliminate risks and contribute to human freedom. The severance of this link has been a humanitarian disaster.

In January, the high priest of the Darwinian cult, Richard Dawkins, authored a series on BBC television, called "The Root of All Evil?". It was called a polemic against religion. Dawkins had already featured on Robyn Williams Science Show on the ABC, celebrating 30 years since the publication of "The Selfish Gene". No doubt, "The Root of All Evil?" will also appear there. There is a wave of new books by militant atheists who are obviously threatened by the return of spiritual realities. One of these books is by Daniel Dennett, called "Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon". He is most patronising and pompous towards believers. He refers to atheists as "brights". Dennett is a mechanistic philosopher of mind, firmly of the opinion that no spiritual realities exist apart from the brain and this is due to the purposeless process of Darwinism. It is the dogma which has to be believed; forget about the facts. Darwinians are notorious for circular thinking. Dennett tells us that his research for this book was speedy because of "the urgency of the message". I prefer the word "panic".

The latest polemicist of the genre is our own Robyn Williams. This book was drafted at white-hot speed and it shows. Let me say at the outset that Christian thinkers have nothing to fear from Robyn Williams's childish tirade. He is appallingly ignorant of even simple Christian cosmology and relies on name-calling and invective to try and carry the day. He seems never to have outgrown the schoolboy's curly questions with which he made his school headmaster squirm. I half expected to hear the old canard: "Did Adam have a Navel?", but even so, the questions he boasted about were at about this level. He has made one central mistake. He has completely misread what the Intelligent Design theorists have claimed. There are three theses:

1. Specified or irreducible complexity is well-defined and empirically detectable.
2. Undirected natural causes are incapable of explaining specified or irreducible complexity¹.
3. Intelligent causation best explains specified or irreducible complexity.

These theses have been argued on rational grounds, whether or not one agrees with the reasons given is irrelevant to their standing as scientific theses. Personally I think that William Demski's argument employing Information Theory has merit, even if Michael Behe's conception of the bacterial flagellum is conceived rather too much as a mechanical model rather than a vital or holistic one. Nevertheless, its irreducibility is fairly obvious – a matter of common sense. But our atheists are quick to smell danger. To speak of intelligent causation, they say, implies that they are talking about God and Genesis 1. This is a basic error springing from prejudice. The only concession the ID people make to this line of thinking is that the issue cannot be resolved by mechanistic science. Like all issues in speculative science, especially mathematics, resolution can only occur by entering fields of enquiry outside the domain in which they occur. It never occurs to the Darwinians that Nature itself might be alive and imbued with spiritual intelligence. In the mechanistic model Nature is mechanical – dead in other words. Its hard bits can always be manipulated. But brave souls in the scientific establishment are risking their jobs (and I can name many who have lost them) by daring to posit a universe imbued with non-mechanistic realities. Ultimately, theological insights are by far the most satisfying. Take for example, the following quotation from the Book of Wisdom, speaking of Mother Nature:

"For within her is a spirit intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, active, incisive, unsullied, lucid, invulnerable, benevolent, sharp, irresistible, beneficent, loving to man, steadfast, dependable, unperturbed, almighty, all-surveing, penetrating all intelligent, pure and most subtle spirits; for Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion; she is so pure, she pervades and permeates all things". (Ws. 7:22-24)

Robyn Williams, however, remains spooked by the Garden of Eden and *deus ex machina*. The human condition is less than perfect: "Halitosis, farting, vaginal discharge, reflux, snoring, rheumatism, warts, smelly armpits, varicose veins, menopause, brewer's droop...., these are not the marks of a designer at the top of his game". If Williams keeps on this line of thinking he may discover eventually that humanity, and indeed the whole of creation is in need of a Saviour.

It is not clear from Williams's treatise how he manages to scuttle the concept of irreducible complexity. But he does give a couple of examples of Darwinism at work. First assume the theory is true. Then elaborate a complicated Just So story of how we had fish for ancestors or how DNA might have arrived on the scene through the action of viruses "two billion or more years ago" to build a template out of a free-living Lego set based on RNA. The mind tends to boggle a bit until you realise

¹ Michael Behe. By *irreducibly complex* I mean a single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning. An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly (that is, by continuously improving the initial function, which continues to work by the same mechanism) by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional. An irreducibly complex biological system, if there is such a thing, would be a powerful challenge to Darwinian evolution. (p. 39) (This footnote is an editorial intrusion as I wasn't clear about irreducible complexity)

that all of the steps are without evidence and are highly speculative – but the theory has been saved to Darwinian satisfaction.

Whereby hangs a tale. Professor Antony Flew has carried the flag for philosophical atheism for many years. He is a highly respected British philosopher. He is by no means a Christian and yet he has been convinced by the logic of the Intelligent Design protagonists. He insists that biologists' investigation of DNA has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce life that intelligence must have been involved. Francis Crick, who claimed joint discovery of DNA insists that things that look as if they have been designed are really not – they have really been evolved. Dogma first! Strangely, Crick agrees with Fred Hoyle that there has not been enough time for chance mutations and natural selection to produce living cells on earth; they must have been seeded from outer space -panspermia. Fred Hoyle expressed this colourfully: The odds against life occurring on earth were about the same as those of a tornado blowing through a junk yard and producing a Boeing 747. Professor Antony Flew is famous for noting a peculiarity of nineteenth century Marxism. He saw that anything that could possibly occur in sociology or political theory could be explained by Marxism, whether or not the propositions were contradictory.. Some aspect of the theory could be produced to accommodate any contingency. The same applies to Darwinist biological observations. Darwinists can cheerfully claim that so far no experiment or observation has shown the Darwinian mechanism of evolution is incorrect (although a flood of anomalies are causing quite a few headaches). The simple reason is that no observation or experiment can prove it either. Karl Popper's criterion of falsification cannot possibly apply to it..

The history of Darwinism is remarkable for two reasons – fakery and humanitarian disaster.

There have been several attempts to foster its cause by direct fakery, eg. The Piltdown Hoax, Ernst Haeckel's misleading drawings of embryos, illustrations of trees of life in countless textbooks without any vestige of evidence, the fabrication of Huxley's supposed rebuke of the Bishop of Oxford in that famous debate in which the good bishop is reputed to have questioned Huxley's ancestry. This old hoary was trotted out again by Williams notwithstanding that its falsity has been known since 1976. Ernst Haeckel's German Monist League was based on the premise that "evolution has now pressed on to its final victory" and "the eternal iron laws that rule the evolution of the whole cosmos control our own life". With a little help from Nietzsche he saw that Germans were a superior race, and had to ensure that their genetic superiority was not polluted by alien species, such as the Jews, who had migrated from Russia. Nor was there to be any pollution from the weak, the malformed or the handicapped or those with an hereditary bias towards mysticism. Dan Dennett is a modern reincarnation. Haeckel's efforts found their consummation in fascism and Hitler. Haeckel plus Hitler equals Holocaust. A perusal of Mein Kampf and Hitler's Table Talk is enough to establish this. Darwinism has played a significant role in the eugenic programmes which were taken up by many countries. It is certainly lurking behind the current push for embryonic stem cell research and cloning for so-called therapeutic purposes--once again without any demonstration of fact but a misdirected hope in the efficacy of science. Science as Salvation!

Given Robyn Williams's fixation with suppurating anatomical orifices, I know precisely what he can do with his Darwinism.

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Report on August Meeting of the Scientific and Medical Network from Alex Reichel

The Scientific and Medical Network sets up a challenge to the adequacy of scientific materialism as a basis for understanding reality. It draws attention to phenomena which go beyond materialism. I attended the Annual Gathering of SMN at Plymouth University. Some will recall Dr. Rupert Sheldrake who was ostracised by the scientific establishment for his heretical ideas on non-material phenomena. For many years he has lived by his writing and kept challenging the established order by experimental methods. He has recently accepted a fellowship at Trinity College Cambridge in a post traditionally occupied by a sceptic, an indication of the progress which has been made by groups like SMN. Rupert has set up an anti-sceptic website: [www. Scepticalinvestigations.org](http://www.Scepticalinvestigations.org). Rupert drew my attention to a recent book by Alister McGrath, Professor of Historical Theology at Oxford, called *The Twilight of Atheism*. The fond dream of the materialist scientists that their 'truth' would eventually triumph over religious superstition etc. has not occurred. The atheists are clearly in panic mode since intelligent design has made such immense inroads. The SMN Network has branched out into internet programmes of education and a programme devised by David Lorimer, the editor of the *SMN Journal*, has been widely appreciated in Scotland. It is a programme on values and ethical education. Another speaker, John Kapp, was concerned to integrate Complementary Therapy into the National Health Scheme. Apparently the very costly NHS (£4,000 pounds per household) is not working, with one person in 20 off sick due to stress. Conventional medicine is crippled by the paradigm of materialism, reductionism, mechanicism, which lets people off the hook to take responsibility for themselves. John could see hope in the new financial arrangements. A truly challenging paper, called

‘The New Knowledge’ by Robert Ginsburg (USA) and based on the highly speculative schema of Academician Nicolai Levashov, left people wondering. It is a visionary healing modality whereby the practitioner can create physiological sensation without touching, can scan the organism with his mind, and using his thoughts, can attract, direct and program the energetic forces of nature to heal. More info at www.drbgkoopman.com. There were papers on Kirlian photography and Gardening. There was much, much more. There were important emphases on the need for direct experience in being properly human

Alex Reichel

“Harking Back” (For the Warrantdyte Arts Association newsletter) from Louise Joy

I’m always Harking back
 “Those were the days my friend. We thought they’d never end”
 And then I saw him *Fred Astaire*, “*Singin’ in the Rain*”
 Swinging around the verandah posts of the Victoria Market
 Bright midday, he danced, one leg lifted as he swooped across
 The footpath, his eyes dancing, his laugh involuntary as he
 Clutched his mobile phone.

And through the verandah posts I saw *Casablanca*
 The smartest suit and tie in town, the hair somehow
 Both spiky and dreadlocked; with his African charm
 He peeled the cigarette packet, not addiction here,
 Sophistication for her Mediterranean allure, they
 Coalesced in elegance, sharing a sausage roll from
 A paper bag and a pink drink, walking away entwined.

It used to be in Warrantdyte, I’m saying,
 Irving Reid and Tim Sherwood in
 Rosencrantz and Guidernstern Are Dead
 Yvonne Reid and Jo Lawrence
 Creating Creative Dancing.
 And then I saw them, Katrina and Owen Halliday,
 Newly minted in Warrantdyte, musicians,
 Phoning the Warrantdyte Arts Association
 Recreating the Music Group and playing
 Gloriously for the 50th Anniversary celebrations.

Louise Joy 4 June 2006

The George Schloss Letters – from Alan Mann

George Schloss has been writing letters to Carl Cooper for several years This correspondence is the result of their shared interest in the work of Douglas Harding. The letters are an extension and confirmation of their phone conversations. I don’t have Carl’s contribution as his input involves telephone discussions with George but readers can get the gist of his contribution from George’s written responses. The letters are added to the Schloss page of the Capacitie website as they become available and are a work in progress about the consequences and meaning of experiments developed by Douglas Harding to provide access to the Holy Grail of philosophical, theological and spiritual enquiry. This end, generally considered to be remote and inaccessible, is revealed by the Harding experiments to be ‘at hand’. A claim regularly made throughout history but never previously demonstrated to be the case. The Schloss letters are now so extensive that I thought this brief introduction would help intending readers to get an idea of the theme before they set out to read the letters themselves.

Background

Spiritual teachings, East and West, point to a more comprehensive apprehension of our condition than our everyday consciousness makes plain. The series of experiments developed by Douglas Harding provide an immediate experience of this wider view, sometimes described as our true nature, essence, etc. Not everybody who does the experiments finds the revelation meaningful, in fact, the proportion of people who do so is limited to a single figure percentage of those who try the experiments.

The most likely explanation of why people, who are otherwise committed to the enquiry, don't find the experiments work for them is simply that the meaning escapes them or is not immediately apparent. Thus, for most people it is necessary to address both the meaning and the experience of the experiments.

The heavy emphasis on experience (via the experiments) tends to overlook their meaning aspect, which I think is equally important. In letter 75 George points out: "*They simply feel no need for it after the Fact (of the experimental revelation) And, of course, at bottom which is where we (and they) are coming from, they're quite right*".

Quite so, but the danger of this approach is that the third-person perspective is totally dismissed as irrelevant. An example of this unhealthy one-sidedness is the extreme views of neo-Advaitists with their claims that 'it is all a dream, nothing exists, you and I are figments of a free-floating, impersonal imagination'. My view is that a provisional conceptual framework is necessary; it is not enough simply to toss out the current notion of myself as an entity existing in a context of time and space. The basis for this new life-outlook is exactly what George supplies. This is not to suggest that Douglas Harding has left meaning out of the equation. On the contrary, his writing, particularly *The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth*, constantly draws our attention to the need to cover both aspects. However, the results of the experiments can be so shattering that there is a tendency to focus on the experience alone.

The Approach

Taking Alpha and Omega of human experience, both in terms of human history and individual experience, as his framework, George signposts the journey from Alpha at the outset where we move from wholeness into separation, through the evolution of consciousness in a history which ultimately creates the conditions for reintegration at Omega. Thus we return to wholeness enhanced by the experience and fruits, not simply of the individual life, but of the history of mankind: the means of the reintegration and conversion are the experiments. The result of the experiments is so ordinary, so natural, so everyday – that any attempt to accord them the status of 'solution to the quest' is considered by most people to be absurd; likewise, George's own claim that they constitute 'the end of history'. He takes Douglas Harding's double injunction as the guiding principle of his work:

"To realize this instantaneous Now, to live in the present moment, taking no thought for tomorrow or yesterday must be my first concern. And my second must be to find in this Now all my tomorrows and yesterdays".

The first concern is met in the experience of the experiments, the second involves an inversion of the customary world outlook and, as a consequence, it is deeply resisted. So, whilst the vision is plain its import is denied as long as the significance and value of the experiments continue to be overlooked. George attempts to overcome this resistance by revealing the meaning of the vision in a series of letters, which define an approach to the revelation of the experiments, through its history. In my case, whilst the experiments take me beyond concept, I find that the everyday world and the established concepts and assumptions, which constitute my world-view, quickly re-establish their primacy. Thus, it is not necessarily sufficient for the experiments to work. It is necessary for them to remodel the world-view, which continues to provide the context of my everyday action. For this to happen I have found that a new conceptual framework is required, a working hypothesis as it were, as a transition between the old and the new.

The Method

The revelation of that which is traditionally considered to be remote and/or inaccessible, is revealed by the experiments to 'be at hand', a claim regularly made throughout history but never previously shown to be the case. George provides many examples of the brightest minds reaching the limit of intellectual revelation but usually failing to make the necessary shift from concept to direct perception. Consequently, the idea that 'truth' is inaccessible is thereby constantly reinforced and the notion that it is, after all, immediate, obvious and always the case, regarded as absurd. The second concern, identified by Douglas, is "*...to find in this Now all my tomorrows and yesterdays*". This is the harder of the two concerns in my opinion and the one which George has chosen to tackle in his letters to Carl. The letters identify the point at which the work of key thinkers, on the edge of a transformative realization, come to an apparently insurmountable obstacle, as if there is a boundary at the limits of thought where, it seems, there arises the need for a shift from knowing into being, a shift which the writer is unable to make in the absence of suitable means. George shows that, in many cases, the necessary instrument has arrived in the form of the Harding experiments. The letters provide details of such cases but I have attached an appendix to this introduction with a few brief notes by way of examples. (*In preparation this will be added to the website but, in the meantime, there is the Schopenhauer example in this issue*).

A Personal Response

I was overwhelmed by the experience offered by my first taste of the experiments – that was sometime in 1991. They delivered a sense of connection and wholeness, which had previously been available only as brief glimpses. Nevertheless, I was aware that, in spite of their effectiveness in delivering the ‘goods’, my world outlook quickly re-established itself. Sometime later I had an inversion experience where my view of myself as an entity existing along a very strongly ‘experienced’ line of time was suddenly supplanted by a sense that past and future existed, not exactly in me, but in a wholeness from which, whatever I am, I was not separate. I later came upon Douglas’s second injunction which seemed to be describing that experience most accurately, “...to find in this Now all my tomorrows and yesterdays”; time revealed as a tool of the imagination and not the context in which I live.

Consequently, I have been very interested in getting to the bottom of the Harding story not merely in terms of the experience, for which as a Traherne enthusiast, I am extremely grateful, but also in terms of its meaning without which I think it is incomplete. In this respect, I have found the contribution of George Schloss to be invaluable.

Conclusion

The revelation of the first person perspective is made plain by the experiments. That is the ‘end’ which George constantly affirms. However, unless the full implications are made plain to our third person perspective, Harding’s work will be pigeon-holed as an interesting, innovatory approach to the perennial philosophy rather than the foundation for a revolutionary shift in consciousness. The experiments open a window on meaning. They offer a primary, first-person perspective on meaning in the sense of primary meaning; not the meaning we ascribe to things and events but the meaning which gives rise to things and events; that meaning which stands under the various combinations of energy and matter that make up our world.

Alan Mann

The letters are filed on the Schloss page of the website at www.capacitie.org .

Schopenhauer & Harding from Alan Mann

Warwick Wakefield sent me a copy of Confessions of a Philosopher by Bryan Magee. I wasn’t able to read it immediately owing to a backlog of books and our recent trip but, when I did I found it very interesting and, as a special bonus, discovered an excellent example of what George Schloss is on about. (See above) I have pulled out a few extracts from the book as I think this is the simplest and clearest way of demonstrating my point. The italics are Magee’s original emphasis. Where the Magee text is underlined, that is my way of marking the parts which are particularly relevant to this issue.

P 197 Chapter entitled: THE DISCOVERY OF KANT

Magee speaking:

If there are forms of apprehension other than those that are accessible to human beings, then for as long as we are human beings we shall not know what they are. If there is any sense, other than the indestructibility of the matter that constitutes our bodies, in which we shall continue to exist after we have ceased to be human, then perhaps it may be possible that we shall apprehend in some way other than the ways now available to us; but if there is no such sense then it will never be possible.

It is essential for the reader to be clear about the fact that whenever Kant draws a line of demarcation between what is and is not possible for us to know he is never, never saying, or in any way at all implying, that nothing exists outside the realm of our possible knowledge. On the contrary, he thought that there had to be something, but that what that something was could never be an object of knowledge for us. Although we know that there is a part of total reality which is not contained within the empirical world, *the very fact that it is not so contained* means that we are permanently unable to have direct knowledge of its contents. This is a built-in part of the human condition, not something that just happens to be so and might one day change, a barrier we might one day break through. We shall never break through it as long as we are human. This has been the most historically influential of all the conclusions reached by Kant’s philosophy.

Alan speaking:

Yet he goes on to point out that this inaccessible dimension (noumenon) is (fundamentally) what we are, so I find that a very odd contradiction – the notion that we can never ever access what we are. We cannot know it, I’ll grant him that, but maybe we can apprehend it and if it is what we are then we must be apprehending this supposedly inaccessible dimension all the time. Magee says so himself in as many words in the following extract.

P294 Chapter entitled: THE SEARCH FOR MEANING

Magee speaking:

There were certain assumptions which I knew from the beginning I was making but found it psychologically impossible not to make. One was that I am a part of whatever there is. No matter what the truth may be about the nature of reality, I must be a part of it, and therefore I must have a place in that account. I am not a detached observer looking at reality from outside, as something existing separately from myself. I am, whether in part of my nature or the whole of it, one of the material objects that inhabit the world, and it seems self-evident to me that if there is a spiritual dimension to reality I partake of that too. Because of this I had a deep conviction from the beginning that self-understanding and the understanding of the world and total reality are related parts of the same enterprise.

Alan speaking:

I feel he's right about that. The sense of looking from the inside reminds me of John Wren-Lewis explaining the perspective he was delivered into following his poisoning.

P453 THE DISCOVERY OF SCHOPENHAUER

Magee speaking:

His (Schopenhauer's) psychological penetration: 'In order to deceive themselves, men pre-arrange seeming instances of precipitancy, which are really secretly considered actions.' His profound images, as deep as those of Shakespeare: 'We find our selves like a hollow glass globe, from whose vacancy a voice speaks.' His analogies: 'The man of talent is like the marksman who hits a mark the others cannot hit, the man of genius like the marksman who hits a mark they cannot even see.' His invective, for example against imitative artists: 'They suck their nourishment, like parasite plants, from the works of others, and like polyps they become the colour of their food.' 'These things lit up the sky for me, and I rushed out to get Schopenhauer's works; and the moment I had finished Gardiner I plunged into them.

Alan speaking:

So, he has actually been at the right point (see reference to 'right point' below), and the glass globe space he refers to is reminiscent of Shakespeare's 'glassy essence' of which, Shakespeare claimed, proud man is both most assured and most ignorant and which, I believe, is indistinguishable from the nothingness-transparency-space revealed in the Harding experiments. The question then becomes why did such a mind as Schopenhauer's not see what it had uncovered? How did he not realize he had revealed the means of resolving the Kant predicament defined in the quote from page 197 above, a predicament Schopenhauer seems to have endorsed as impossible to resolve.

Page 579 LEFT WONDERING

Magee speaking:

At the heart of the mystery, it seems to me, must lie the relationship between the self and the empirical world in which it is not an object. In fact I am tempted to believe that the ultimate mystery is the relationship between the self and the empirical world. With his usual acumen Schopenhauer thought this. 'The solution of the riddle of the world is only possible through the proper connexion of outer with inner experience, effected at the right point.' The first time I read those words I got gooseflesh all over my body, my scalp prickled and tingled, and I knew I was going to read every word written by Schopenhauer. In his masterpiece he spells out what he thinks the solution is. It strikes me as being, on the whole - and with the usual plenitude of qualifications - as plausible a large-scale view of the way things are as I have come across; and yet I remain agnostic with regard to it, it could indeed be that something like that is true. But it could also be that the truth is nothing like that at all. The trouble is not just that I do not know but that I do not know how to go about 'finding out. Although I am sure there is an immaterial self I am far from being sure that it has any existence except in relation to body. My own particular self may have come into existence when or after my body did, and may cease to exist when my body dies. It may be something that has evolved over millions of years in disentangleable relationship with brains, and may have no way of existing apart from my brain. This was, for example Popper's view. He was persuaded of its truth and untroubled. I am unpersuaded of its truth, and am deeply troubled by it.

Alan speaking:

That last statement is an example of what I meant about his fear of ending. I can understand his concern, because what is the point of all his philosophy if his fear of not being remains so great. I'm not familiar with Popper but I stand with him on this.

The above notes are part of an ongoing dialogue with Warwick on this question and, if more comes to light, I will include in future issues. I'd welcome any comment from readers in agreement or disagreement plus especially any further examples of 'dithering on the edge'.

Alan Mann

Nature and the Numinous from Ted Myers

Our 'SAD' (See Australia and Die) trip is now more than two months long and at Broome, our ever-faithful camper-trailer home has uncomplainingly swallowed the Nissan's dust for almost 12,000 kilometres. Now at our most westerly point on the Kimberley coastline, we're soon to turn southeast back towards home.

Despite the attractions of Broome, with its gleaming white beaches and clear turquoise water, its cosmopolitan feel with good coffee, food, art galleries, movies and even theatre, thoughts of home start to hold increasing sway.

Questions like, 'Why are we still 'on the road?' and 'Did we make the trip too long?' start bubbling around. Others begin surfacing like, 'Let's cut the trip short and start the homeward trek right now.' Then there's, 'We have two weeks to fill before our next deadline at Yuendumu. What will we do in the meantime?'

'Can we handle yet another gorge, no matter how impressive?' 'What will we do in Broome for two weeks?' Maybe we should be on the move again?'

It's when these questions arise I start to question myself and my internal resources.

A trip like this might seem to some to be all peaches and cream. Every day stimulating, one of life's dreams come true. And it's yes to all the above, but not always.

In my normal city and home life down south, filling time is a foreign concept. Time fills me with so much to do. 'Too little time and so much to do' is my clichéd mantra.

Out here, on some days, I saw time yawning ahead with great dollops of it to be filled. "What's wrong with me?" I thought, until I realised I'd fallen into the trap of thinking, planning and plotting ahead and not appreciating the moment.

When I'm there in the moment, even if it's a quiet contemplative time simply doing nothing but gazing across glassy waters at a rocky gorge wall and observing a kingfisher diving for its lunch, I feel satisfied ... somehow complete. All's fine with my world.

In contrast, thinking ahead about home, work, or where we'll go next and what we might do there and then, I feel small amounts of angst – a vague untouchable discomfort inside. When I catch myself doing this, my rational self says, "Don't I trust myself enough to be doing new things in new places and discovering new aspects of myself?"

I know better, but sometimes forget how resilient and fulfilled I can be in the moment with all that surrounds and is within me. This is particularly so in the natural environment.

I realise how foolish and self-defeating it is to bring the city 'man-made' world out here, invading each precious moment with its timelines, routines, busy-ness, commercial agendas, noise, pollution and endless tiring distraction.

While I've known about the nourishing powers of the natural world on my being for some time (particularly in my later years and more recently at home at Brogers Creek), this trip has reinforced those benefits tenfold.

How privileged I am to be able to immerse myself in nature for all this time with the distractions (and attractions) of urban life a vague memory.

But I wouldn't have always felt that way.

In a book I read recently, (Prochownik's Dream, Alex Mitchell, 2005), I was struck by the following quote from a major character, Marina, an artist in her 40s.

“I love feeling lost and alone in the city. The city is our natural place. We need it. I fear more than anything being lost and alone in the bush. Out there, we are confronted by ourselves. In the bush, there is no escape from who we are or from each other. We pretend to love the wilderness, but we hate the thought of it, really.”

For much of my life, well into my 40s, I was only attracted to the bush superficially – as an occasional R & R from city life. I loved the anonymity to be had in the city, of being unknown and alone if I wished, yet surrounded by attractions 24/7 that could be indulged at will.

As a young man in my 20s, I blindly regarded the Australian bush as bland, undifferentiated and boring. The wilderness was something I experienced driving quickly through it, flying over it, or in an occasional flick through a nature magazine.

“This bush stuff is good to have around, even impressive at times, but not in my backyard!” was more or less my attitude.

Now in my 60s, the city is no longer my natural place. The cultural milieu that only a city can support is still a major pull, but it’s increasingly from nature that I draw sustenance for my spirit. As an atheist, dare I say soul?

I can now relate to the statement, *“Out there, we are confronted by ourselves. In the bush, there is no escape from who we are or from each other.”* I’ve come to relish this confrontation and need it more. The main escape I want now is from my city life conditioning and the habits it has ingrained.

There are many ways I experience this spirit of the land – the numinous in nature.

In a diary note about the power of untrammelled nature, I spoke of an exhilaration that enfolds me at first and then settles into a steady, firm resting-place within.

“I feel at one with all around me, not separate. The ego ‘Ted’ is diminished, so puny in the face of nature. The overall feeling is of inclusion and connection with something unseen, somehow powerful, nurturing, awe inspiring, quiet and calm. It feels right,” I wrote.

“Sitting in Cathedral Gorge at Purnululu today – a womb-shaped, water-carved canyon with a sandy floor exposed to cloudless skies hundreds of metres above, I noticed the calming effect it had on the steady stream of tourists who’d trudged through the heat behind their uniformed guides expounding facts.

“In most cases, as they entered the gorge the chattering stilled to be replaced with oohs and ahs. Then like a Pavlovian response, they drew their digitals and started clicking away, the flash barely penetrating the cavernous interior.

“Gradually, the group stilled, as the calming forces of the landscape did their work – seeping out of the rocks and from a two-eyed Wandjina-like rock sentinel that guarded the entrance.

“I heard one man (probably early 60s, moustachioed, khaki shorts and garish rubber sneakers overhung by an expansive belly) tone his loud voice down and whisper to himself, ‘This is the most incredible place I’ve ever seen!’”

“From then on, he wandered quietly about by himself as if in some kind of trance, reverently experiencing whatever forces were present. I saw similar reactions from many others, as I myself sat motionless and transfixed.

It’s as if the tourist hordes (me included) are all jolting about corrugated dirt tracks in their 4WDs on some kind of religious pilgrimage – attracted by the spectacular natural icons found up here in the Top End – the gorges, waterfalls, plunge pools, mountains, cliffs and beaches.

Is it the particular and powerful spiritual dimension found here that drives these odysseys?

For myself, increasingly I’m find I’m being more observant and connected to elements of the landscape about me – not just the spectacular, but the ordinary – a flat plain of savannah grassland of pale wind-swept grasses, a particular yellow flower on a kapok bush, the soft spongy texture of paper bark, fractured rocks bent in tortured waves.

I also find myself craving time that is simply silent, still. I observe details more and spend time taking long looks around. There's a silent sense of deep satisfaction in simply sitting and being. It is becoming part of me.

Out in the bush, I find time registers differently. For a start, I'm in touch with the natural cycles of sun and moon and tend to go to bed early and rise with the sun.

Then there's the geological aspect that confounds me with its breadth of time. I gaze at a pothole in rock, perfectly round and deep that has been formed by the action of pebbles abrading its sides after rare torrential rains and realise that it has taken eons to create this small indentation.

The me who observes has only been breathing the planet's air for a mere 60 years. Realisations like this are good for deflating my ego, puncturing my hubris.

The traditional indigenous people understand the timelessness of landscape. It's devastating to see such ancient wisdom bulldozed by European notions of efficiency and productivity - the new Gods fuelled by money, greed, competitiveness and progress.

The experience of the Australian bush is making me feel that our gorges are greater repositories of spirit than the Cathedrals in our cities. Here I can feel, and sometimes touch the forces of creation, the numinous, God in pure form?

Being *confronted* by myself out here is okay. That there's *no escape* from who I am, is no bother to me, and I don't pretend to love the wilderness any more. It's the place where I can grow and start knowing myself.

Ted Myers

On tour - Completed at Cape Leveque, Dampier Peninsula, WA. - 12 September 2006.

The Liberation of Consciousness in the 21st Century

Alex Goncalves has sent us details of a five-week introductory course on Evolutionary Enlightenment he is leading on Wednesday evenings from **25 October to 22 November 2006**, in the Pilone Room at the Crows Nest Centre. The sessions are from 7:30 to 9:30pm and the course is

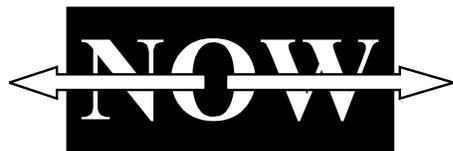
- Class 1: What Is Enlightenment?
- Class 2: Context Is Everything
- Class 3: Meditation and the Ground of Being
- Class 4: The Ego and the Authentic Self
- Class 5: The Five Fundamental Tenets of Enlightenment

Details of course content at: <http://eecourse.org/classes.html?ecp=EE-Course-Fall06>

Register: <https://www.enlightennext.org/register/?id=ee1-syd1006>

Phone enquiries: Alex 0418646159

Regular Dialogue Meetings				
LOCATION	DAY	MEETING PLACE	TIME & CONTACT	Phone Nos.
Sydney City	Third Saturday	Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society - Level 2, 484 Kent St., City	2.30pm Terry O'Brien	0431605374
Chatswood	Third Sunday	81 Greville St. (off Fullers Rd) Chatswood	10.30 am Alan & Margot Mann	02 9419 7394
Nowra	First Saturday	Bridge Tavern	4-6pm –Riche du Plessis	4423 4774
Melbourne	Third Saturday	Bells Hotel, 157 Moray Street Sth Melbourne	11am-1pm Gary Hipworth	0416 121 142
Melbourne	First Saturday	Room 205, 2nd floor 253, Flinders Lane, Melbourne	2pm – Joan Deerson	(03) 93862237



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If unable to deliver please return to:
81 Greville Street, Chatswood 2067

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

Mountain Heart Retreat – Meditation retreats of two or four days offered in a peaceful bush valley in the southern tablelands close to Braidwood, NSW. Phone Maria Bakas on 02 4842 8122 or 0421 5476 65

Look for Yourself (Harding) Meetings - Approximately bi-monthly, by email notification of date and programme.

Krishnamurti Fellowship – Every Monday 6.30pm at Blavatsky Lodge see address above.

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

Eckhart Tolle Group – Enquiries: Marion Northcott 9967 8067