

Issue 121 – December 2006

Chatswood Meetings

81 Greville Street

Dialogue – 21 January 2007

18 February 2007

Harding – 3 February 2007

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Editor's Note,

We start this month with hang-gliding and then continue with reader input to the enquiry into questions arising from previous contributions on matters to do with creation and our part in it. We close with a summary of the talk Dr. Alex Reichel gave to The Scientific and Medical Network at Plymouth University earlier this year. A reminder that the Nowletter was instituted to provide an opportunity for the readership to participate in the subjects we cover. So, please consider sending in a contribution from time to time and my thanks to this month's contributors.

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 (Next 3 February 07)

Flying with Eagles from Geoffrey Martin

Beautiful sentient beings! Wedgetail eagles are one of the largest species of eagles on the planet, wingspans up to 9 feet. They strike from so high because their eyesight is ten times as good as ours, not to mention their airmanship. As many times as I've been attacked by them, I've also been saved by them. They always know where the best lift is. To see them eye to eye up in the air, up close and personal, is quite gob-smacking.

First time I was attacked by one, I felt my wing judder, and was looking round, close to panic, reaching for my parachute. Then I heard the battle-cry. I looked around again, and above and behind was a huge ball of feathers, with two huge claws sticking out hurtling down towards me.....fortunately they only seem to attack the wing, and I've seen many a rip and tear in gliders. So far, I've escaped damage with my superior airmanship.....:-).

One time I was cruising, and this real big battle-axe was cruising next to me, one of his wings tucked under mine. He was massive, and he was looking me directly in the eye, no more than ten feet away. Even though he was not attacking, after maybe ten seconds of looking at him I lost my nerve and broke off. Truly awesome!

A pilot friend of mine once showed me the eagle shit on his sail. Usually when they attack, if you leave the thermal, they leave you alone. They seem to know we rely on air that's going up as much as they do. If you are going down, they know you're beat. It pisses you off, because leaving that ever-elusive lift means you might end up on the deck, but that's better than having rips in your sail. Well this friend of mine once decided not to put up with being intimidated. He had the usual attack from above and behind, and when he judged the eagle to be real close he did a sudden surge up. The eagle hit him and shat on his glider. Apparently this is a calculated battle tactic, and wasn't a result of fear or shock. Fortunately, neither pilot was hurt.

I read an article about two sailplane pilots who decided to co-ordinate their efforts in outsmarting a bothersome attacking Wedgie. One of the sailplanes hit the Wedgie, resulting in its death. They were very remorseful. They hadn't really expected to out-smart it, let alone kill it. Goes to show, even the best aren't infallible.

On a rural train a fellow traveller once told me a very entertaining and almost convincing tall one about a bunch of drought-starved Wedgies teaming up to bring down a fully grown roo. Rural myth, I suppose, and an Oz author, who I can't remember, wrote one about another drought-starved Wedgie taking a cat, and the consequent air-borne battle between eagle and cat. Great story! Sadly, the cat won.

Geoffrey Martin

After Reading Rudi Anders from Michael Potts

After reading Rudi Anders' response to my essay in the September Nowletter I would just like to try and clarify my position. The troublesome nature of defining religion is that there are no clear boundaries. It is not difficult to offer a definition but it is difficult to find agreement. This is where the trouble arises. I have a broad view of what is religion, religious belief or the religious impulse. It does not necessarily mean a church or gods, for example, Theravada Buddhism is a religion, as there is at its core a goal, or destination, and some form of order such as karma, that makes sense of life. For me, therefore, religion is the belief or suspicion that there is a meaningful cosmos.

In my view the core aspect of religion is the countering of the sense of anomie, utter and absolute aloneness, of being without any significance whatsoever. The consequence is social solidarity, whether family, clan, tribe, nation, cult or sect. Therefore, boundaries are created against the other. One alternative to this social structure is anarchy or Hobbes' all against all. Another is communism, "the riddle of history solved", to quote Marx, where conflict caused by difference is resolved. Whatever is the preferred path it relies upon an application of a meaning of human being(ness). I'll try and clarify what I mean. Life has no intrinsic value. Any value it has is provided by us, for example, my life only has significance to those who know me or are affected by the ripples of my actions, my value is relative, not intrinsic. I do not say that we should not value life, only that the value, and therefore identity, is of our own creation, and does not hold outside our human existence. I believe that life has no meaning or purpose, other than what we create. If caring for people and the planet provides meaning then good. We all need meaning in order to live, otherwise anomie threatens. But all meanings and values are socially constructed; none are divine or exist without human authorship. When life on this planet is extinguished, whether it is from our own actions or the sun's collapse, it only matters to those

affected. You may regard my view as detached, devoid of compassion, and perhaps assume I feel there is no point to saving the planet or helping others. But that is not necessarily so, I am only arguing about the source of our values and meanings not their substance.

One can prove the power of one's beliefs but not the beliefs themselves, which are founded upon faith. To see this planet as one among billions of billions and to see one's life as less than an unregistered speck in eternity is a troubling vision without the antidote of some form of ordering concept. The religious impulse is the need to connect ourselves to something 'beyond'. The search for meaning or spiritual fulfilment is the asking of questions to which there is no right or true answer. Truth is whatever you want it to be. Ultimately nothing matters unless you want it to. You decide. All is darkness. We are the source of the light that provides definition. One searches for the light that is in one's own hands.

Michael Potts

Replies to Carien McGuin & Rudi Anders from Alex Reichel

Dear Carien, I agree wholeheartedly with those who can see the moral disaster of Darwinism in all of its reincarnations. One of the Huxley family (Aldous) said it all, apropos the Darwinian system:

“ For myself as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom; we objected to the political and economic system because it was unjust. There was one admirably simple method of confuting these people and at the same time justifying ourselves in our political and erotic revolt: we could deny the world had any meaning whatsoever”

(‘Ends and Means’.) I would agree with Robert Wright that the ethos of Victorian times had its effect on Darwin's thinking (especially Malthusianism and dog-eat-dog Capitalism). Your espousal of the Tao is beguiling for anyone brought up on a Natural Law ethic. It is very attractive until you realise that one contingent being can't depend on other contingent beings for validation of its existence. The very early Chinese philosophers saw that there must be an IS or a BE before an ex-is can manifest. But Lao-Tse made the mistake that the totality of existing things could give such validation to his very enticing system. Indeed his system had harmony, balance and symmetry. No need for rational causality- things just are and that's it! This explains why Chinese science never continued unabated despite promising beginnings. The philosophy of ‘we *are* it’ and ‘that's all’ means you have brought down, for example, the science of cosmetics. Where would we be without glamorous women? I agree that the amazing coherence of existing things is exciting, but to me they bespeak a Giver who could have made it otherwise. By the way, Christianity is not an ‘-ism’. God knows what damage was done to a guy who, from his religious self-righteousness, used to chide the sailors on the ‘Beagle’ for swearing and who was constrained to write down all his sins in preparation for Whitsunday! That is an ‘-ism’. We are not in a position to judge but surely sham humility is a sin against the Holy Spirit.

Dear Rudi, The burden of the Intelligent Design theorists is simply to show that there exist biological structures that, because of their irreducible complexity, cannot be explained on the basis of blind chance mutations and natural selections. If selections are possible intelligence must be operative. Intelligence comes from Latin roots meaning ‘to make choices’. As far as the science goes, the question of intelligent agency is an open one. It is true, of course, that the Intelligent Design Movement, in its modern form has arisen from a Christian background. A Christian background involves both Nature and Grace, both Natural Theology and Holy Writ. There is no Natural Theologian who would argue as you do of an infinite regress of intelligent designers (like turtles all the way down) It is a matter of SEEING that every contingent presupposes the necessary; that in a causal chain of things Moved to Move there can be no infinite regress and so on. As Dostoyevsky saw, if there is no God then Man is king on earth and anything goes. As St. Paul, in Holy Writ saw, ‘Ever since God created the world his everlasting power and deity—however invisible—have been there for the mind to see in the things he has made’ Rudi, your acute observation of the poor record of Christians is really no

different from the poor record of *homo sapiens*. Holy Writ explains this best. However there does exist a unique reality called the Christian Life and it is the experience of phenomena in this context which makes the Design Theorists so confident that they are on a good thing. I don't think anyone is denying that evolution happens, although I prefer a different word because of the opprobrium attached to the e-word. We only deny that it happens through blind chance and mechanistic natural selection. Our experience shows that there is a Divine Artist at work. It is our healthy scepticism which prompts our questioning of Darwinism. I tend to doubt that your parents were true atheists. They clearly had a grasp on the Good in their service of their children. Did you learn from them to do better? The Cross of Christ belongs to the whole world.

Alex Reichel

God or Not-God from Alan Mann

Who knows the truth? Who can tell how and from where this universe came into existence? If the gods themselves came after its creation, then who can know from where it all began? Perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not. The highest god who looks down from the highest heaven, only he knows, or perhaps he does not know.

This quote from the Vedas has provided a background to my enquiries into questions about God for many years. I am attracted by its cheerful uncertainty and because it raises the question of whether truth can be grasped by the intellect, thereby underlining the distinction between truth and belief. So, what do I make of the intelligent design debate?

I lost a crown of a front tooth a couple of Saturday's ago and had to whistle through the gap whilst contributing to our November dialogue meeting. I managed to get a dental appointment the following Monday and while I was waiting I skimmed through a recent issue of Time magazine where I found an interesting interview of Richard Dawkins, arch-priest of atheism (most recent book *The God Delusion*) and Francis Collins, chief of the genome project and author of the book *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*.

I am an admirer of Dawkins and enjoy his books. He is a very eloquent proponent of hard Darwinism and his strong belief in atheism that this has engendered. However, I am irritated by what I see as a most unscientific denial of religious experience. I am equally irritated by his opponents' preparedness to fight their battle with Dawkins on Dawkins' own terms. That is, they usually adopt an objective, scientific approach and try to 'prove' the reality of their God, which is as impossible a task for them as it is for Dawkins to prove God's non-existence.

The Nowletter contributions on this debate have made me try to clarify my own views on the question. Michael Potts gets to the heart of what I find hardest to digest. His view of Religion as an antidote to anomie, arising from the sense of being alone in a meaningless universe it quite the opposite of mine. I claim that anomie arises from the failure to see the all-oneness of a meaning-full universe. I agree with him that the demand for meaning creates a market for a variety of options to suit cultural conditions and meaning, conferred in this way, results in a range of religious traditions each with its sub-group denominations. I liked his quotation:

Rather than social solidarity being universal within a society, it fragments as different group locations adopt religious forms suited to their own requirements. New groups form their own solidarity and different theodicies emerge to explain the changing circumstances.

I thought that might also apply to the dialogue and other groups operating in Sydney and as a description of the Nowletter readership. The assumption underlying this approach is a rather limited interpretation of the word 'meaning' as I enlarge on below. Alex Reichel says, "Intelligence comes from Latin roots meaning 'to make choices'." However, I have a definition which says it derives from the Latin *inter* between and *legere* to pick out or choose. (And here I assume we pick out the meaning behind & between the words, we read between the lines). Which is exactly what Lao Tse is pointing to with his "The Tao that can be spoken is not the true Tao".

Dara Tatro comes close to my understanding of what is going on. I can't really comment on the Eastern scholarship she draws on other than to acknowledge the motivation it provided to seek similar insights in my own cultural background. I have difficulty with the notion of 'pure consciousness' as, for me, it is an idea rather than an experience – consciousness always shows up here as inseparable

from what it reveals; what it is conscious of. I imagine pure consciousness would at least be conscious of purity. However, her linking of this with the Bohm approach is enough to get me over that low hurdle. Carien's comments on Robert Wright's *The Moral Animal* made me wonder about whether the next step in evolutionary consciousness might be the dropping of egoic identity in favour of a more intelligent identification with humanity or even being. I don't think there is much hope of that if the word meaning is confined to whatever we humans confer on what happens rather than the underlying source of all. For me, meaning is primary. So, rather than a mere giver of meaning, I am an expression of it. The meaning I accord to life is secondary level meaning; primary level meaning is the intelligence of being. I would be happy to call that God if the word had not suffered so much damage through its misapplication to the personal choices or cultural conditioning of the writers of various 'holy' books. I think the attempt to formalise the teachings of inspired spiritual leaders like Christ, the Buddha, Mahomet etc is what is truly intended by "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,..." etc; don't try to contain me by scriptures and creeds.

As I said, my position in all this is closest to Dara who described what appears to me to be an undeniable intelligence at work and which prompts the question 'why do we have to add the notion of *designer*'? If I am asked the question "Do you believe in God" I have to find out which God my questioners have in mind. Are they deists, theists, atheists, pantheists panentheists or what? What I mean by the word God is not a matter of belief, it is a response to being. You might as well ask whether I believe in life! I don't believe in Gods that have to be believed in.

Dawkins himself is very eloquent about the wonder and awe involved in his awareness of the vastness, beauty and complexity of the universe and I feel this is a genuinely religious response; religious in the sense of connectedness to the wholeness of life rather than to some tired and dishonoured creed. Experience rather than belief leads me in the path of natural rather than revealed religion. Alex indicates that both are necessary but, in my view, revealed religion has accumulated so many crass associations (including, at the fundamentalist end of the religious spectrum, the rejection of evolution) as to lose all credibility. Its value remains only as far as it continues to offer a pointer to what 'inspired' its founders—what I regard as the meaning which underpins the teaching, not the teachings themselves—but too often it turns out, in Michael Pott's words that:

These meanings are adopted and the created reality becomes perceived as an external fact. The creation becomes the master of the creator through the process of socialisation where socially assigned identities locate the individual in the world.

My background is Christian and I find the language of Christianity to be helpful in speaking of matters of the spirit though fewer and fewer seem to speak it in my 'dialect' and I have little or no connection with those who read their bibles for fact rather than mythic metaphor. Nevertheless, I am surprised from time to time, here is a quote from a talk Brian Kay recently sent to the LookforYourself conference.

Fr. Yves Raguin <http://www.monasticdialog.com/a.php?id=493> Extract:

On October 15, 1978, I gave a conference at Notre-Dame in Paris with the title: "The Ways of Contemplation—Encounter of East and West." After the conference in the crypt, I was assailed with many questions. One of those in attendance stated: ". . . but, Father, it is necessary that we center on Christ and make Him the object of our meditations and contemplation." Suddenly there came to me the words of Christ: "It is expedient that I go away. If I do not depart, the Holy Spirit will not come to you" (John 16:7). This is the "departure" of Christ. We no longer see Him before us as an object of thought. Henceforth it is He Himself who through His Holy Spirit turns our regard toward the Father and makes us cry: "Abba, Father." In departing from us, Christ invited us to an attentiveness to the divine presence within us, to an awareness of what we truly are. "Meditation without an object" is not a meditation. It is a pure attention which becomes awareness of what we are, children of God, made in His image.

Awareness of what we truly are is the point of natural religion, revealed religion seems to be about the history of specific revelations and thereby, by definition, one step away from reality. The protection of Revealed Religion against the 'heresies' of Natural Religion becomes one of the main jobs of

religious institutions and we had an interesting exchange in Nowletters 64 to 65 dealing with the inability of the church to honour its mystical traditions. Natural religion makes nonsense of exclusiveness and reveals the commonality of all religious inspiration. I regard any claim for exclusiveness as a sure sign of godlessness, a denial of the wholeness of life. I would go further and claim that the hallmark of 'God' is inclusiveness. And this claim can be readily tested by serious attention to the Harding experiments.

Rudi Anders (119/120) makes the case against the belief systems of Revealed Religion in a very convincing manner but I think he is dealing with the aspect of religion Dawkins and Robyn Williams are focusing on. They set up the obsolete, transcendent 'God up there' as a straw man and then congratulate themselves on their successful demolition job. Why don't they see it as too easy and why does this angle get so much attention? It's a sign of the level of journalistic interest in the question. That is what makes the news as far as religious matters are concerned, the peripheral aspects of religion, the area represented by what is labelled religious fundamentalism.

Returning from this ramble to the dentist's waiting room and the battle between Dawkins and Collins I find I can agree with neither. Collins talks of some common ground in which religion and science might join forces. This overlooks their existing common ground, which is that both are systems of belief, both sustained by dogma not by seeing-being. They both have an irreligious dedication to their particular belief about what is going on rather than experiencing, and being what is going on. It is interesting to apply Bohmian principles to this issue. Bohm describes the major cause of these clashes of deeply held belief systems as the conviction of both parties that they, and they alone, are the foot soldiers of truth. Thus, both sides hold their views as being absolutely necessary. Unless both are prepared to release their commitment to absolute necessity then there is stalemate. Witness Israel/Palestine, etc. If both sides were able to see the absolute necessity of abandoning their absolute necessities we might get to the point where intelligence arises. That is the point that Schopenhauer talks of, the position of right-position prior to explanation and subsequent identification with our explanations. And that is what I mean by intelligence – the designer label is superfluous. This seems to be the point or source where, for want of a better word, God is made plain.

My experience has shown that this primary point is accessible and that our problems arise from an irrational commitment to the various theories which spring up from these insights. That is, we translate our insight into a body of secondary meaning, i.e., traditional stories, Christianity, Islam, etc., and into which we are born, indoctrinated or from which we rebel in favour of one of the alternatives. Identification with the belief of our conditioning or choice is so complete that we fail to see the provisional nature of any belief—we fail to see - full stop. Surrender of our direct experiencing to indirect conceiving is our malaise.

I have been spent a lot of time in recent weeks combining the writing of George Schloss into a format suitable for making it available as a package for printing or publishing as an ebook. George has some very unfashionable views about the end of history but provides an exhaustive account of how philosophy, theology and now, it seems science, reach an impasse where the means and methods that brought them to the limit are no longer adequate. This is where the 'right-point' mentioned in the Heinz Rahn contribution below and revealed in the Harding experiments, Gebser's aperspectival, Wilber's integral, etc., becomes necessary. The Kingdom of God is at hand, it is simply that in which we live, move and have our being—it is not something we *think* up—notwithstanding the various religious traditions and their explanations. We can argue about the existence of a creator but there can be no argument about creation, about Being, isn't that enough?

Alan Mann

PS. For a commentary on Natural and Revealed religion, see *Religion and Consciousness* by Neville Symington reprinted in Nowletter 85.

(Terry O'Brien tells me he can supply copies of Dara's talk on CD for \$10. Blavatsky Lodge of The Theosophical Society Level 2, 484 Kent St., Sydney. – 02 9267 6955)

Left Wondering About Schopenhauer from Heinz Rahm

Schopenhauer's, "The solution of the riddle of the world is only possible through the proper connection of outer with inner experience, effected at the right point", seems to be pointing to something or some-field beyond or encompassing the duality of subject and object, of self and other.

Perhaps what the Buddhists refer to as sunyata. As Magee notes, in, *The Philosophy of Schopenhauer*, "Because each event is empty of 'own essence' in the sense that its nature arises from the conditions which bring it into being, every event is, considered in itself, empty.' Absolute emptiness, emptied even of representations of emptiness, where emptiness is being, being is emptiness. For, as Nishitani in *Religion and Nothingness* says, " ...the field of emptiness stands opened at the very point that things emerge into being."

Kant made a distinction between phenomena (appearances or representations) and noumena (things-in- themselves). Both could be viewed as abstractions from something greater.

Being, like beauty, cannot be pointed out but may be pointed to, to help people experience it for themselves.

"You have to go against everything your brain is telling you" a radio announcer states, referring to anorexic people who believe they are overweight and in fact see in a mirror, that they are overweight. Something in the brain stops them from seeing reality.

Seeing has boundaries and is open to interpretations. The sky is a dome sometimes blue, sometimes cloudy or sprinkled with stars and sometimes dark and flat.

How our mind reacts to or interprets seeing is boundary-less yet conditioned by past experiences, beliefs and so on and influenced by emotions. The blue sky is the blue sky though its quality, its spaciousness will be influenced by my emotional state which effects my seeing.

The space revealed by the Harding experiments is interpreted by the mind that sees. Why do we not see with the mind of Schopenhauer?

Freud showed that an infant thinks and feels that its mother becomes non-existent when the mother leaves the visual field of the infant long enough. As the infant matures it develops the capacity for what psychoanalysts call 'object constancy.'

The infant internalises representations of the mother so that eventually when the mother leaves the visual field, the infant still contains her presence and no longer displays signs of loss. The healthy ego begins.

Enlightenment = Emptiness + Compassion

There is conventional and ultimate truth. Conventional and ultimate reality.

'There is a surface and a deeper level about everything, including mind, and both exist, But neither exists on its own. Just as there is no independently existing conventional level, likewise there is no independently existing deepest level. Although we can only focus on both levels simultaneously if we have first focused on each individually, one at a time, we must remember that it is incomplete to focus just on either of the two by itself. What is to be gone beyond, then, is not our seeing of the conventional nature of the mind, but our seeing of that conventional nature divorced from seeing simultaneously mind's deepest nature. This is a crucial point'. *The Gelug/Kagyü Tradition of Mahamudra*.by H.H. the Dalai Lama and Alexander Berzin. p78, 1997).

Sunyata cannot be experienced with the six senses.
 The prophet Shakyamuni.
 The poet Nagarjuna
 Viewed a hollow glassy globe
 From whence a voice did probe.
 Delighted both they spoke at once
 Why is this Schopenhauer a dunce?
 Glass is glass and a word is a word
 Both bearing imperfection in a sense
 They point toward what cannot be heard
 Abstracted from the whole existence and essence.
 Even God abandoned his son
 So why does this attempt go on
 The reason why he did not see
 Was because he got stuck in eternity.

We need to distinguish between the psychological self and the ontological self, between psychological 'emptiness' and ontological 'emptiness'.

Heinz Rahn

Melbourne News from Gary Hipworth

Some news with our group - it has become a mobile dialogue group - 'have pun, will travel' - mobile location/ mobile times - and so could you please put something in the newsletter to the effect that coming to our sacred cows group is by appointment ie need to call me on mobile and see when/ where the next meeting will be held. The next one by the way is not until third week in January.

Another interesting development is that some people have recently left the group because things got too personal and we should let anyone that might be interested in coming along to expect the unexpected. We tackle anything!

I and other remaining members of this group don't understand this notion of keeping everything impersonal. Unless we want to keep everything safe and unchanged. No reactions to observe in a vacuum!

Well, it's time to take a real stand and begin to challenge all these sacred cows that are piling up on top of one another - terrorist under every bed, can't trust anyone, we need draconian laws in every aspect of society, life is a bitch, that other culture is evil to the core, look at how they treat their women, animals, trees, whatever. I am unhappy and someone else is to blame. I can't do anything about the state of the world because....

My point is folks that no individual is helpless or an island and we can only change things for the better if we get together and do something about the growing level of insanity in our world.

The first Sacred Cows dialogue meeting is to take place at Bells Hotel, 157 Moray Street Sth Melbourne, Saturday, February 10th, between 11am and 1pm. We will order a light lunch and sit around a table and...perhaps achieve a state of incredible bliss. See attachment for all the details. Everyone/ anyone is welcome - if you are not interested then pass the attachment on to someone who might be. This could be your chance to make the world a better place. Let me know if you are coming within 7 days so that we can make sure we have a big enough table! Ring me on 0416 121 142.

Gary Hipworth

Talking Zen by Alan Watts

(Thanks to Beryl Starke for drawing my attention to a chapter of the above book called 'Swimming Headlessly'. It is both a postscript to the recent exchange of views on the contribution of Alan Watts and a relevant contribution to the current controversy about whether the results of the Harding experiments are as obvious as we often claim. I have added the footnotes. Ed.)

The Taoists propose to help people get back to Tao and the state of *te*,¹ so that they will not get in their own way.² The key, they say, is the idea of being empty. Emptiness, being vacant, is the secret of all things. The highest kind of knowledge is not "know how" but "no how" – to be able to achieve things with "no how," that is, without any method. This is done through something called "fasting the heart." The Chinese word I translate as "heart" does not mean heart in the physiological sense. Pronounced *hsin*, it is in fact a part of the character *te*, and its meaning is closer to "heart-mind" or "psychic center." *Hsin* is also frequently translated as "mind," and in all the Zen texts where the term "no mind" is used, the actual word is *hsin* (Japanese, *mushin*). The most desirable kind of heart, then, is absence of heart. In English, "heartless" has very bad connotations, as does "mindless." A heartless person is an inconsiderate and unfeeling person, and a mindless person is an idiot, but in Chinese Buddhism and Taoism, a person who has *mushin*, no mind or no heart, is a person of a very high order. His psychic center does not get in its own way, and it operates as if it was not there.

Lao-tzu, said that "the highest form of man uses his *hsin* like a mirror – it grasps nothing, it refuses nothing, it receives but does not keep." And the poem says, "When the geese fly over the water and they are reflected in the water, the geese do not intend to cast their reflection and the water has no mind to retain their image." The art of living is to operate in the world as if you were absent. As a matter of fact this is built into us physiologically. Let me ask you simply. What is the color of your head from the standpoint of your eyes? You feel that your head is black³, or that it has not any color at all. Outside you see your field of vision as an oval because your two eyes act as two centers of an ellipse. But what is beyond the field of vision? What color is it where you can't see? It is not black, and this is an important point; there is no color at all beyond your field of vision. This little mental exercise gives us an idea of what is meant by the character *hsuan*. Although its dictionary definition is "dark, deep, obscure," actually refers to this kind of no color that is the colour of your head – as far as your eyes are concerned. Perhaps we could say that the invisibility of one's head, in a certain sense the lack of a head, is the secret of being alive. To be headless (to have no head in just the sense I am talking about) is our way of talking about the Chinese expression – *wu hsin*, or "no mind."⁴

As a matter of fact, if you want to see the inside of your own head all you have to do is keep your eyes open, because all that you are experiencing in the external, visual field is a state of your brain. All the colors and shapes you see are the way in which the brain nerves translate the electrical impulses in the external world outside the envelope of the skin. They translate all of what is going on outside into impulses which, are to us shape and color. However, shape and color are states of the nerves, so that what you see when your eyes are open is how it feels inside your head. You do not see your brain as an internal undulating structure, as everything outside. In this way the emptiness of one's head is the condition of seeing and the transparency of the eye lens is the condition of seeing colors. The thirteenth century mystic Meister Eckhart said, "because my eye has no color it is able to discern color"; this is a restatement of the fundamental Taoist idea of being absent as a condition of being present, being not there so as to be there. Lao-tzu says "When your belt is comfortable you don't feel it, when your shoes are comfortable it is as if you were not wearing any." The more aware you are of these things the less well they are made or the less well they fit.

Alan Watts

¹ *Te* is a kind of intelligence that creates cooperation, so that the desired end is accomplished without unnecessary effort.

² This is exactly what the experiments are designed to do. To get me out of the way.

³ I can't imagine that – colourless or transparent, yes but where does he get the black from? Eyes shut?

⁴ This whole piece strikes me as an evasion of the seeing itself and the consequences of seeing; a preference for explanation and/or the meaning of the seeing, rather than the direct experiencing of it. Not to say that the explanatory side, the meaning is unimportant, but the two aspects need one another.

The Absolute Speaking

I am the Absolute. I am birthless, deathless, eternal;
 The baseless base of beginnings, the sure foundation unmeasured,
 The causeless cause of causation, the root of illusion.
 All these am I, and other things unmentioned;
 The sum total of reality expressed in naught;
 Unmoved, unquestioned, undefined: I am omnipotent
 Veiled by the robes of empty space, I dream
 The troubled nightmare of creation's plan, to wake
 And find creation's plan dissolved again in me....
 Of me you little know and yet am I the sum
 Of all that has been, is or yet to come –
 The plan, the planner and the planned – for all in one.....
 I am the absolute; I, the one before the beginning...
 The word unspoken is my name; I am the all-pervading.

Nada Bates

The Heart of the Matter from George Schloss

(This extract is taken from Letter to Anne currently being converted to a format suitable for downloading as an Ebook and which I will add to the Schloss page of the Capacitie website. Ed.)

..... However genuine a reflection of reality Paul's vision and his subsequent evaluation of it, however authentic Blake's reply, when asked his opinion concerning Christ's divinity, that "He is the only God, sir. And so am I. And so are you"- though delivered as statements of fact, they're still only assertions which, however we slice them, you, I and the world are at liberty to take or leave, always of course with the understanding that, either way, we do so at our peril. Not so with the experiments which, above suspicion, offer us the absolute certainty that God or rather, knowledge of God (or Awareness or Consciousness or Emptiness or Nothingness - call Him/Her/It *anything* you like) is no longer a fiduciary option but an intellectual given. And by "intellectual" I mean something far removed from what passes for that dirty word today (especially when applied to the self-styled camp-followers of the same name who, like the poor always with us, make up our current "herd of independent minds"), something much closer to what the Medieval Schoolmen meant by "in-tuition", literally a "seeing into." But even here the gap between everything that's gone before and Headlessness is virtually infinite, as different as the *speculative* search for truth is from the *visible* finding of it. One has only to compare the attempts of an Anselm or Aquinas to prove the existence of God with the least experiment to see that the answer to that Question - one might easily say *the* Question - has been returned from the speculative to the visible where it not only belongs but, thank you very much, has been "living" happily in the ever-after all along anyway. Think of it, as I'm sure you have: the Invisible now made visible in Its Invisibility. I'd say that's both new and original.

George Schloss

SOME THOUGHTS ON NEW DIRECTIONS – SOULISH, SOILISH AND OTHERWISE. Alex Reichel. (Summary of paper to the Scientific and Medical Network, Plymouth University, July, 2006)

INTELLIGENCE AND THE INSIGHTS OF THOMAS DE VIO.

I note that the Continental Meeting of the Network was to have been devoted to a re-visitation of Erasmus, a famous Dutch theologian at the time of the Reformation. Had Luther listened to Erasmus there would have been no Reformation, but Luther was beyond calling back from the brink. This is very sad, since Luther led us to Calvin and Calvin, when he was fully blown, gave rise to Richard Dawkins. But this is another story. Had Erasmus been listened to we would not have had to wait till now for his thought to take effect. In Australia we have already had one session on Erasmus. The famous woman philosopher Raissa Maritain has said that *man is an animal who feeds on*

transcendentals. Another famous woman philosopher, Simone Weil, has noted that the Gospels present an anthropology of man before they present a theology of God. It was the reversal of this observation which has landed Western civilisation into its current abyssal state. To establish the centrality of human transcendental dignity is the first step in leading the way out of the abyss.

Thomas de Vio (the famous Cajetan) was an advocate of the immense heights, depths, lengths and breadths of human intelligence. He was not concerned with piddling thoughts about consciousness, which seem to beset those involved in the cult of scientism, who want to boil down complexity into simple models that can be studied by computer.

I am in the habit of reading the Network Journal (*The Network Review*) from cover to cover and I owe an immense gratitude to David Lorimer for his inspired editorship. I notice that we members of the Network are exposed to an immense number of abstract concepts which we hope are drawn from the real world. Cajetan noted that this is characteristic of the human condition. We need thousands of concepts to try and grasp the real world; and yet, when we grasp the implications of a created universe we are aware of its essential unity and the interrelatedness of all its parts. Otherwise science would be impossible. To avoid our monumental fragmentary understanding we need to conceptualise relationships into an ever smaller number of concepts.

This is a work of intelligence. Cajetan has a principle:

The more efficacious an intellect the more from few (concepts) does it gather many (concepts.). Cajetan reduced his own philosophy to three concepts which are.

- (i) God alone is his own BE.
- (ii) Acts, habits and powers are distinguished on the basis of their formal objects.
- (iii) Being is analogous according to the analogy of proper proportionality.

Without going into detail, each of these concepts have far reaching consequences.

From (i) it follows that God is utterly simple and has only one concept which has the force of universally true knowledge and wisdom (ie it is not really a concept) God does not exist-everything else does because God IS. There are theological resonances with Moses at the burning bush, and a very significant basis for dialogue with Buddhism.

From (ii) for example we can never say what science is (or any other discipline for that matter) but we can only distinguish between them on the score of what they do. Disciplines without purpose are travesties.

From (iii), the analogy of proper proportionality is opposed to the metaphorical, which is a lesser form of analogy. Eg. *Good* is analogous and can be applied to all good things with a difference of meaning, eg, good food, good weather, good health, etc. But the same applies to almost any term based on human experience. Cajetan was concerned with the logic of using analogous terms validly in arguments. He wanted to show that there is a proper proportionality between some equivocal terms and univocal terms.

For example in speaking of mystical or transcendent realities we are constrained to terms applying to the senses, To *see* is an analogous term meaning to *understand* and here understand is proportional to vision (understanding :soul : : seeing : body) Read: Understanding is to Soul just as Seeing is to Body. Likewise we use expressions like taste and see that the Lord is sweet; *He that has ears to hear let him hear;—to get a touch from the Lord is so real* and so on. Scientists who are also mystics use this kind of language often. Such analogous concepts (meaning realities) are like seeing say, but they are not seeing and are much more than seeing. Metaphors, on the other hand, often show proportionality but such proportionality is not proper. For example:

Smile : Field : : Smile : Face.

The smile on the field might be due to a show of golden daffodils. The smile on the face might be due to a wry joke. This metaphor, although exhibiting a kind of proportionality is not proper in the same sense that seeing and inward seeing are properly proportional. The Latin roots for wisdom sees wisdom as a seeing. Nevertheless, from Cajetan's second principle we cannot say what Seeing is but only what it does. There is an essential mystery in a created universe.

I suspect that much scientific theorising is metaphorical rather than analogical; poetry rather than reality. We need something like Cajetan's parsimony in the project of humanising science.

2) THE ROLE OF THE HUMANITIES, PARTICULARLY LITERATURE IN SCIENCE CRITICISM.

Easily the most fruitful advance in interdisciplinary studies has come from the research programme initiated by René Girard, now retired as Professor of French Language, Literature and Culture at Stamford University.

His work arose from Literary Criticism, involving the canon of Western literature, eg. Shakespeare, Cervantes, Flaubert, Dostoyevsky, etc., a genre of literature which Girard calls romanesque rather than romantic.

Essentially his programme has three concepts which we might explain as follows:

(i) The existential human condition is characterised by mimetic desire, a covetousness for the goods and even the metaphysical being of others.

(ii) Mimetic desire leads to a violence in human societies of all against all, which results in the unconscious convergence on a scapegoat, which, being sacrificed results in the temporary return of societal peace and veneration of the sacred.

(iii) The anthropological handbook on human violence is specifically the Judeo-Christian scriptures, which uncover for all time the hidden structures of violence and contribute to its ultimate, apocalyptic demise. It also bespeaks the end of the notion of the sacred based on blood sacrifice and originary murder. Girard's impetus has spread to almost every human discipline including science. The web site of pre-eminence is COV&R (Colloquium on Violence and Religion).

Girard's simple observation seems to have bridged the gap between the Two Cultures

(3) THE UNREALITY OF MATHEMATICS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SHOWING THE INTELLIGENT STRUCTURE OF NATURE.

In 1960, Eugene Wigner published a paper called *The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences*. [Eugene P. Wigner, *Comm. on Pure and Applied Math.* XIII, 1-14, 1960] which begins with the quotation from the philosopher of science, C.S. Pierce, to the effect that it is probable that there is some secret here which remains to be discovered. Wigner pointed out, as I do, that the enormous usefulness of mathematics in the natural sciences is something bordering on the mysterious. There is no rational explanation for it.

Mathematical concepts spring from an abstract realm. They are imaginary Othoughty¹ beings, an invention of the human intellect and as such do not really exist. Mathematics does not exist in the natural world apart from the human intellect, although the Pythagoreans among us would claim at least that it is realised approximately.

In his poem *To Walter de la Mare*, T.S. Eliot describes an existential moment:

*When the familiar scene is suddenly strange,
And what you know is what you have yet to learn,
When two worlds meet and intersect and change.*

After teaching the implications of Newton's Laws for many years., I had an experience of seeing them as if for the first time. The familiar scene had suddenly become strange. It occurred to me that to equate mathematics to physics as Newton seemed to have done was certainly not logical. Whatever steps Newton had followed had certainly involved some non-rational elements more akin to art than the usual conception of science. A partially adequate treatment of them must involve their historical development. But what is really puzzling is the incredible accuracy of the predictions of them in measured experiments. Why does Newton's inverse square law, which gave one of the differential equations which he could solve, give such accurate results in comparison to observations of planets, We know now, of course, that it is not absolutely true, but we have enough confidence in our mathematical structures on reality to be able to say that nature is redolent with mathematical wisdom and we can capitalise on this through technology. In the Book of Wisdom, God is said to have ordered all things by measure, number and weight (Ws.11:21) Science, as presently understood (and the metaphors arising from it) is far from being completely human since it limits its explanations to

quantifiable matters (Eg. measurability, homogeneity, uniformity etc.) Think of the absurdity of the Galileian metaphor whereby man is said to be displaced from the centre of the universe because the ball he is travelling on is found to go around the Sun. Human metaphors based on quantum physics are of the same ilk. I refer to the absurd claim that not only global but human entanglement is entailed by Bell's Theorem and experiment. Physical theories are embedded in greatly diverse mathematical concepts, and yet each one manages to tell us something about the natural world. However this free-soaring mathematical creativity can only be accepted provisionally as knowledge when experimental verification gives some form of emotional reassurance. This is clearly a non-rational element and it raises a host of considerations as to the relationship between theory and experiment. It seems indeed paradoxical that the imaginative development of pure mathematical structure, which seems to skate around unreality in such an amazing manner should resonate in the physical world. I cannot accept that such activity can be explained on the basis of natural selection in the species *Ohomo-sapiens*¹. I prefer, as well, that superabundant anthropological text in which we find the feminine principle of Wisdom who is an inexhaustible treasure to men (Ws.7:14) and redolent throughout 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-surveying, 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.¹ (Ws.7:22-24)

(4) THE HERMENEUTIC CIRCLE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO POSITIVISM AND SCIENTIFIC NATURALISM OR MATERIALISM.

The hermeneutic circle is a dynamic to and fro gambit for effecting cognitive unity between knower and known, a demolition of the barrier between subject and object. I feel its basic insights are embodied in the following Sufi parable:

Once a learned stranger happened to stray into the Land of Fools, where he found a group of villagers spellbound with fear at the sight of a monster which they had come across in a field in which they were harvesting wheat. The stranger saw immediately that the monster was a watermelon, and he offered to slay it for them. He took out his trusty knife and plunged it into the monster, which he cut up and began to eat. The villagers scattered in panic, crying out that the stranger will kill and eat us next—the end of the world has come! A year or so later a much more learned stranger happened upon the villagers wheat field and saw the villagers cringing in fear near several huge monsters who had come back to attack them—watermelons. The stranger joined the villagers and crept stealthily away from the monsters with them. He stayed with the villagers in their houses and they learned to trust him as a true friend. Bit by bit he engaged in dialogue with his friends and eventually, as if they had discovered it for themselves, they saw the value of watermelons, and experimented with the seeds, finally adopting watermelons into their food supply.

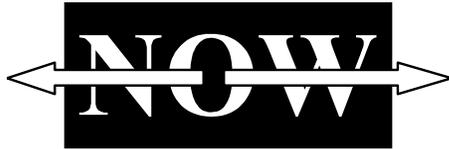
The contrast is between the scientific and technological mode of consciousness on the one hand and the emergent mode of consciousness on the other.

5) HISTORY AS A SCIENTIFIC TOOL AND A REBUKE TO THE BANDWAGGON EFFECT.

Andrew Farquharson has a profound interest in studying ancient history texts, annals of various countries, churches etc. looking for clues as to weather patterns and other curious events. Andrew has a dictum: The more you hear about some theory, the less likely it is to be true. He is convinced that global warming and global cooling do not depend definitively on atmospheric pollutants. There have been many instances of both phenomena in history. His work is an analysis of literary accounts of atmospheric and climatic phenomena. What he finds more interesting are reports of strange events, eg. the curious visionary projections which occur in the event of plagues. This is an ongoing research project.

Alex Reichel

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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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 - Andrew Cohen teachings. **Enquiries: Graeme Burn 0416 177 012 or Christopher Liddle 0406 755 758**

Eckhart Tolle Group – Enquiries: **Marion Northcott 9967 8067**