

LETTERS BETWEEN ENEMIES

David Quinn & Kevin Solway



There are three kinds of succession:
The inferior man succeeds the man of power.
The mediocre man succeeds his benefactor.
The superior man succeeds his enemy.

Foreword

This is a collection of the letters exchanged between David Quinn and myself during the period from 1988 to 1992. They represent a record of our struggles to live a philosophic life, along with a good deal of philosophy. We feel that if others can find some inspiration from what we have written in these letters then it is our duty to make them publicly available.

This foreword ends with a short extract from Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.

Kevin Solway
& David Quinn

Of The Friend

from

Thus Spake Zarathustra
by Friedrich Nietzsche

"One is always one too many around me" - thus speaks the hermit. "Always once one - in the long run that makes two!"

I and Me are always too earnestly in conversation with one another: how could it be endured, if there were not a friend?

For the hermits there are too many depths. That is why they long so much for a friend and for his heights.

Our faith in others betrays wherein we would dearly like to have faith in ourselves. Our longing for a friend is our betrayer.

And often with our love we only want to leap over envy. And often we attack and make an enemy in order to conceal that we are vulnerable to attack.

"At least be my enemy!" - thus speaks the true reverence, that does not venture to ask for friendship.

If you want a friend, you must also be willing to wage war for him: and to wage war, you must be capable of being an enemy.

You should honour even the enemy in your friend. Can you go near to your friend without going over to him?

In your friend you should possess your best enemy. Your heart should feel closest to him when you oppose him.

Do you wish to go naked before your friend? Is it in honour of your friend that you show yourself to him as you are? But he wishes you to the Devil for it!

He who makes no secret of himself excites anger in others: that is how much reason you have to fear nakedness! If you were gods you could then be ashamed of your clothes!

You cannot adorn yourself too well for your friend: for you should be to him an arrow and a longing for the Superman.

Have you ever watched your friend asleep - to discover what he looked like? Yet your friend's face is something else beside.

It is your own face, in a rough and imperfect mirror.

Have you ever watched your friend asleep? Were you not startled to see what he looked like? O my friend, man is something that must be overcome.

The friend should be a master in conjecture and in keeping silence: you must not want to see everything. Your dream should tell you what your friend does when awake.

May your pity be your conjecture: that you may first know if your friend wants pity. Perhaps what he loves in you is the undimmed eye and the glance of eternity.

Let your pity for your friend conceal itself under a hard shell; you should break a tooth biting upon it. Thus it will have a delicacy and a sweetness.

Are you pure air and solitude and bread and medicine to your friend? Many a one cannot deliver himself from his own chains and yet he is his friend's deliverer.

Are you a slave? If so, you cannot be a friend. Are you a tyrant? If so, you cannot

have friends.

In woman, a slave and a tyrant have all too long been concealed. For that reason, woman is not yet capable of friendship: she knows only love.

In a woman's love is injustice and blindness towards all that she does not love. And in the enlightened love of a woman, too, there is still the unexpected attack and lightning and night, along with the light.

Woman is not yet capable of friendship: women are still cats and birds. Or, at best, cows.

Woman is not yet capable of friendship. But tell me, you men, which of you is yet capable of friendship?

Oh your poverty, you men, and your avarice of soul! As much as you give to your friend I will give even to my enemy, and will not have grown poorer in doing so.

There is comradeship: may there be friendship!

Thus spake Zarathustra

21/1/88

from:
David Quinn
1 Godfrey st
Toowoomba 4350

Dear Kevin

The sounds of suburbia greet my ears - for I no longer live at Tallowood, but in Toowoomba. Tracey and I live in the upper class section where there are beautiful European trees growing out of the road, embracing comfortable old houses. Extreme weather governs the place ranging from misty storms to green sunlight.

I write to tell you this plus to obtain Trevor's address. A suggestion has popped into my mind that may be of some use to him, if he continues with his plans of quitting and thinking. I think the emptiness and restlessness that he will feel upon leaving his job can be at least lessened if he adopts a set routine. That is, he should work out a strict discipline to fill the day including thinking, reading, exercise, eating periods etc. His main effort, in the beginning, should be to stick to this routine above all else, even at the expense of his thinking. For when he is adapted to it he will find everything easier. Also I would even suggest that he should insert formal meditation periods into his program, complete with the correct posture and the works.

By practicing sitting absolutely still and concentrating on the infinite for half an hour every day, he will not only improve his concentrative and meditative powers, but he will overcome his restlessness quickly. Trevor has been ruled by routine for the last several years and so I think it wise for him to adopt a similar strategy for the months ahead.

My own thoughts are still on this problem of awareness. I feel that reality is ultimately beyond awareness, for who exists that can be aware?, yet a stone cannot realize its true nature because of its lack of awareness, among other things. Through the concept of cause and effect I am understanding the world more and more clearly every day. I can also see that cause and effect is merely a concept, that the history of the world does not exist except in our memories which ultimately are electronic impulses. Now, cause and effect applies to the physical world, however, this physical world is ultimately immaterial for it is projected out by the brain. But since the brain is part of the physical world it too must be a projection, that is, immaterial. "Immaterial" is also just a concept, that the world is as it is, that calling it physical or non-physical or neither doesn't change it. I am not making sense!

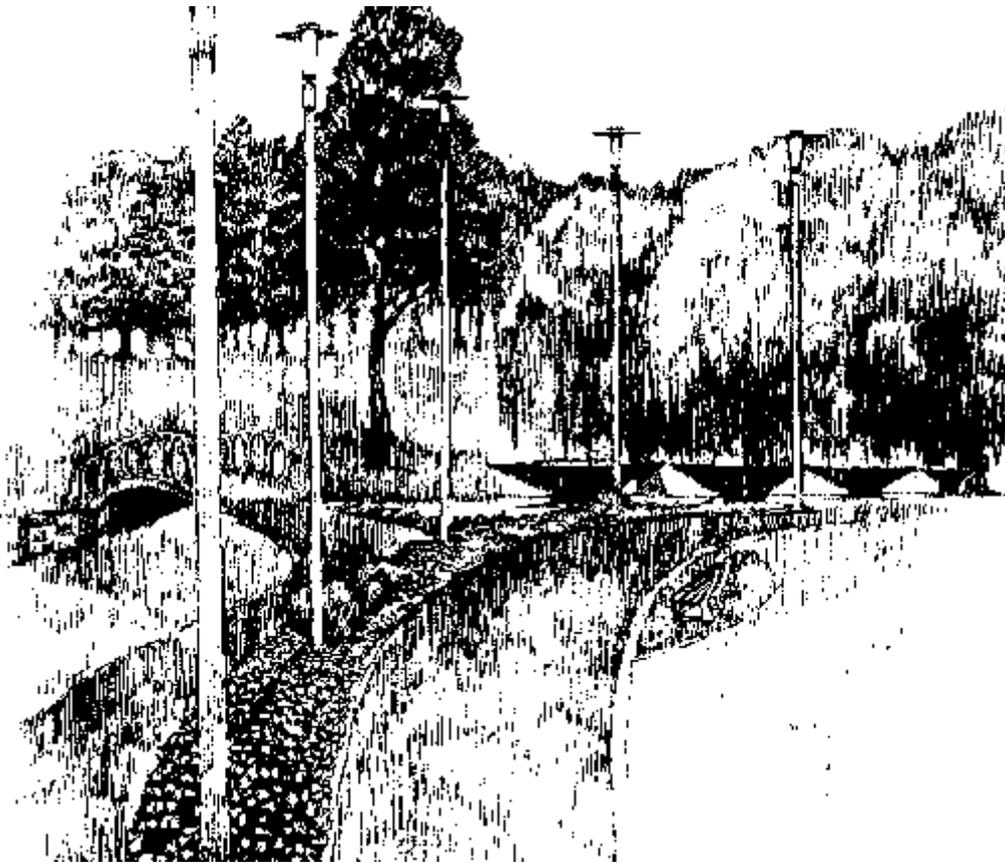
Let me put the problem another way: I was born into this world and ever since, I have received input through the senses concerning this world. Consequently, I assume that other people exist, that the past once existed, that a tremendous amount of activity occurs outside my field of awareness. This page, I assume, was created by humans out of wood. I assume that this occurred even though I was never aware of it. But on the other hand, I feel that events that do not occur in my consciousness really do not exist, that whatever information enters through my senses is the only reality, that, although I assume there are starving people in Ethiopia, they really don't exist until I become aware of them. I am not viewing things from an egotistical point of view, I can really see that this person called David just doesn't exist. I know that I am God. I feel that if I truly believe that other people are real, that their suffering is real, then I am losing faith in the Father.

Therefore, you see, awareness is the key. Brunton compares the waking state with the dream state, saying that ultimately both are made from the same stuff. So I study dreams, and see how nothing exists unless it enters my field of awareness, and apply this to waking life. I look at evolution and see how we've developed. I see that the way I see the world around me is dependent upon the way my brain has developed plus conditioning. But then I see that these are just thoughts. So awareness is the basis of everything.

I sort of know the answer to this problem but clarity keeps escaping me.

I look forward to your reply.

David



Queens Park, Toowoomba

24-1-88

from:

Kevin Solway
2/117 Macquarie st
St Lucia Qld 4067

Dear Dave,

Toowoomba sounds the ideal place; far enough away, and practically close enough. What is the rent like?

I thought your advice for Trevor was good, I saw him yesterday and showed him your letter. I think he gained some encouragement, though he still seems in two minds. His job simply offers him too much security, too much money, too many women, too much success, too much future, too many distractions. I am sure he would appreciate you writing to him. I think a part of his fear is that he will be seen to be following me if he gives up his job for a philosophic life. So some encouragement from a different source would probably have some effect.

I thoroughly agree that you cannot jump straight into Faith immediately. A daily routine, an egotistical routine, as long as it is ultimately directed towards Truth, is a necessity until such time as your conviction and power of mind is strong enough. Such a routine will eventually destroy all routines.

My mind has been really crook these last few weeks. I think I have reached the dreaded "three year stage". This is the stage at which, after three years of thinking about the infinite, you become bored with it. Or rather, your ego does. It no longer excites, and you can't get enthusiastic about it, firstly because you know too much to get excited, and secondly because even though you know the Truth you find it difficult to practice. After three years of failing to have good Faith it is easy to lose confidence, and to lose conviction. You may wake in the morning determined to centre your mind upon God alone, then you walk out onto the street and find yourself being captivated by a girls legs. What a joke! How weak I must be! When this happens again and again you begin to fear failure, or at least your ego does. You sometimes choose not to think of God, so that you cannot be distracted from Him by a pair of legs and then feel foolish. You can't lose if you don't try.

But of course, it is my ego that says all this, after three years of being abused by reason. Three years is nothing considering the deluded way I have been brought up in this society. "How should ye rise high, if your fathers wills rise not with you?" "Be not virtuous beyond your powers! And ask not of

yourselves improbabilities".

All patience and impatience comes from the ego. Sometimes one must step down from an overly high relationship to God, and settle at a lower level for a while. And later on, begin again where you left off.

I have tried to live without any routine, without excitement, motivation, positive thinking and joy. It worked for a while, but when it stops working you're in trouble. The ego then takes over and you become overrun with distractions - unhelpful distractions, rather than helpful ones. It is hard to step down to a lower level relationship with God, to routine, because you know better and have a conscience about it. But with God's permission, and this alone, you must take a rest and regain your energy. Otherwise you will be trying to maintain a pace you cannot live with, and you will soon deteriorate. You must tell a few lies to yourself for a while, with God's permission, to give the soul another chance to regroup and push forwards again at a later date. The lie of having a lower level relationship with God is less of a lie than trying to maintain a high level relationship that is beyond one's powers.

So, I'm going to adopt more of a routine for a while; writing, reading, walking and exercising, until I feel better. You really must feel like a lion in your motivation. Without this power nothing is achieved. With a normal motivation delusions can linger and take hold, but with a lion-like motivation they are destroyed in an instant, with no second thoughts.

Your discussion of awareness was very clear. Other names for it could also be "Mind", or Brunton's "Thought", or "Consciousness". There is no self who has Mind, nor is Mind possessed by anything, nor is Mind perceived by anyone. It just is - nothing.

Dreams and the wakeful state compare on many levels. Dreams appear to be real, but are merely creations of the mind. Similarly, wakeful experience appears real, but again is only a creation of the mind. Both are really dreams. We can never wake up from the dreams because we have physically evolved to have them. However, we can wake up from the dream that these dreams are not dreams.

Yes, awareness is the basis of everything. But as you say, it is just electrical impulses in the brain - it is nothing. So nothing is the basis of everything, which is everything!

You say that clarity escapes you. This is the age old problem. You seem to have a good intellectual understanding of it, but there has yet to be a leap of Faith. You have already made many of these to come this far, but the next one is important, as it brings a clarity you can never forget. It is a life-affirming clarity that dispels all doubts and alternate wills. It is the nothing that is

everything. It is not the understanding of it, nor the accurate mental picture of it, but the experience of it.

This is no big deal. It happens effortlessly when the time comes - just as, say, Pat Cash wins Wimbledon once he has enough experience. It is a quantum leap, but it has to be made gradually. It only comes about through this lion-like confidence I was talking about, which is a kind of killer instinct. It is a mind that says "I am sure this is all nothing. I am absolutely certain. I am completely sure, so I will be Truthful NOW, and STOP! all this building . . .".

We build on top of what is already perfect, corrupting it. We must put the builder to rest.

All the best

Kevin

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University of Queensland, St Lucia

February, 1988

from:
David Quinn
1 Godfrey st
Toowoomba 4350

Dear Kevin,

Yes, the builder must rest. The builder, who remains inconspicuous in the background, trying to mould me according to its idea of perfection. It obtains this idea of perfection from books, experience, friends, society and so on - all of which is contradictory. Thus we get the absurd situation where the idea (of perfection) changes with time, according to the environment. And me, who has little faith, who forgets that perfection or imperfection does not exist, allows the builder to continue to try and change me so that in the future I will be a Buddha! I must let go of everything - even my loftiest thoughts and memories of the infinite. This is not easy for one feels one is betraying God by not directing thought towards Him. But if I desire realization then that is my ego desiring, which merely perpetuates the illusion. Faith, then, is seeing there is nothing to strive for in any way for all is perfect. Faith is to live each moment totally without motive, or purpose, not caring for enlightenment. But then, isn't trying to live without purpose merely a disguise hiding the desire for realization? So, the trick is to live without trying anything at all - living effortlessly.

I have been trying to sort out the problem before me, that is, should I keep thinking of the infinite and all that goes with it? or should I let all that go and live fully each moment? I feel more comfortable with the former, for when I am thinking well I receive unmistakable hints from the infinite and I also get "intuitive" flashes of insight into the various fundamental problems of psychology. However, I can foresee the limitations of this path. I can only go so far before coming up against an impenetrable barrier. I see that the builder must be put to rest and to do so requires the "complete relinquishment". I guess it is my lack of faith that gives rise to doubts about this latter path and that if I decide to abandon all my "progress" I fear I could lose God forever.

This following statement of Jesus haunts me: "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door". Letting go seems to be the complete opposite! But there are other factors which indicate to me that letting go is the right "step" to take. One is the fact, through reading some science and philosophy books, I see that many very intelligent people who continually think about cause and effect and evolution, or the limitations of reason, or the psychology of fear, have no clue whatsoever of the infinite. I find this astonishing and wonder why

I have come in contact with it. I read one philosopher's article who impressed me with the clarity of his thinking dealing with nihilism, the limitations of reason etc, but ended it with (in essence) "Well, since there is not certainty in anything, I like to believe that something transcendent does exist". He obviously has had no experience of the infinite even though he, no doubt, thinks about deep problems quite a lot. The second factor is that I have read that many people who are very hungry for realization become choked with their own desire which prevents them from realizing. Thirdly, I look back at my own experiences and see that they have all occurred when I wasn't trying, at times when I couldn't have cared less about anything. Fourthly, I see in drug experiences that their big attraction is that they allow you to live fully in the present moment, that past and future are seen clearly for what they are - ideas.

But the biggest factor is the reasoning behind letting go. By trying to change me, I am trying to change what is already perfect. I am trying to change according to values picked up in the past. These values change with time and so the futility of it all is obvious. By being completely aware of each moment I accept my faults without resistance. Thus I obtain a quiet, relaxed mind in which spontaneity is achieved.

You, no doubt, have experienced this dilemma I'm going through and can perhaps shed some light on the matter.

Toowoomba is proving to be a nice place. It shall be very cold in winter with plenty of fog. Rent seems to be a little cheaper than Brisbane. Tracey and I were searching for flats and houses under ninety dollars per week and nearly all we saw were dingy. However, we were fortunate to obtain a nice little brick flat for seventy five dollars per week (with a fire place!). I have been trying to find work but, fortunately or unfortunately work prospects are poor here. I have been rather distracted myself since moving here. We hired a T.V for a month and have been watching lots of videos. Television is too nauseating for words. I haven't written to Trevor yet. What's he doing? If he is still deliberating perhaps I will write, but it seems rather pretentious. Anyway, I look forward to your reply.

David

6-3-88

from:
Kevin Solway
2/117 Macquarie st
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Dear David,

Your letter brought up some interesting points. You pose the question: "Should I keep thinking of the infinite and all that goes with it? Or should I let all that go and live fully in the moment?".

The former path holds many problems, interesting problems, with much scope for achievement - like understanding psychology (past and future lives). But it doesn't escape suffering as well as living in the moment does, which seems much more powerful and natural. This question is one of the most important, if not the most important question in all spiritual life.

I tackle the problem as follows: If ever one has a "problem", like trying to understand why a person behaves as they do, then something is lacking - a solution, and one is therefore living in samsara, the cycle of duality. As soon as you solve one problem, and rejoice in your achievement, the sooner you are faced by another, more perplexing problem. It is a circular process, and you find yourself repeatedly trying to solve the same old puzzles. This is O.K for lower levels of the path, still in the intellectual sphere, but it must be abandoned eventually.

And here is where the danger arises, for in the abandoning of such problems one can so very easily abandon reason! The fact is, that problems are important, and have to be dealt with. And so, I say "First the Kingdom of God, then thinking". First attain direct experience of emptiness (a kind of experiencing the moment), then use that divine clarity of mind to turn over all the great problems of mankind.

This will not be easy, because the problems you will wish to consider will be problems deep in the human psyche, and your own! They will tend to arouse the ego again, and when it does arise one is again overcome with a plethora of problems.

The sage meditates on a thousand problems, for which he lacks an answer - but he desires no answer, needs no answer. He simply seeks answers. Kierkegaard says: I go fishing for a thousand monsters in the depths of my own

soul.

The enjoyment of "the moment" can be experienced as a pleasure by the ego. It can so easily ignore all those monsters. And eventually one forgets that the monsters exist at all!

All this is not easy. Persevere!

Keep an eye on your mind. Is the experience merely one of the heavenly god realms, or is it that of God? It is not difficult to attain the heavens through concentration or by accident, but such powerful experiences are dangerous without wisdom, as the ego will only gain strength through the encouragement.

Your story of the philosopher who resorts to superstition when it comes to the crunch is a familiar one to me. Over the years people build-up a solid base of security for the ego, through admirable planning ahead, courage, perseverance, and so on. People then sit inside the fortress they have created and think proud and comfortable thoughts. Thinking of how wretched their condition would be without all their securities helps to increase their satisfaction and contentedness - making them more thankful for what they've got. They would never even consider giving-up all what they have worked so hard for.

And it all comes down to age. Someone less than about 25 hasn't had time to build-up a lot of securities. They are not so content, not so scared of change, and have the potential of taking on the burden of Truth.

I was talking to an intelligent person at Chenrezig last week. He is about 28, living in a de facto relationship, and is very good with electronics and computers. He is content. He easily has the brains to understand the infinite conceptually, but simply doesn't want to think about it too much! He shows me that he understands one to two things about the infinite, but only one or two things, not thousands. His thinking is very narrow, which it has to be if he is to preserve his ego. He doesn't follow up all the logical consequences of the infinite being Truth. For example, he sees clearly how all things have neither a beginning nor an end, but he cannot understand why there is no life nor death, and he cannot understand why we have no need of attachments. He simply selects what he wants, and rejects what doesn't seem to suit his purposes.

Even though he is more rational than most, he is not really on a spiritual path, having reached a dead-end. His reasoning has led him to contentedness and stagnation, rather than to a burning desire for the Truth. His aim in life is not to discover Truth, but to avoid pain. Or rather, he has chosen to rely on attachments other than reason to avoid pain.

A spiritual path is where one initially places all one's faith in reason. But, at

his age, he feels he has too much to lose. When you talk with him he is bright and enthusiastic, but when you reach a certain point he simply turns off, starts mumbling, changing the subject, looking away and daydreaming. There is nothing you can do for these people, and even these are much more rational than most.

Such people have no potential, they are not in the human realm. Better is a person of less developed rationality, but with a desire for truth.

Now I'll leave you with a couple of things to ponder. Firstly, and you'll come up against this again and again, is the argument for the existence of God. I'll write the problem, let you think about it, and then write my comments at the end of the letter:

All things must have causes - true. Now imagine the whole of Nature as a sphere. As it is a thing, then it must have been caused. The only thing that could have caused it would have to be other than Nature . . . God. This is called the "necessary being" argument, it being necessary for Nature to have been caused, therefore a God is necessary. What do you make of this?

The second thing to ponder concerns genetics. Our purpose in life is the continuation of the genetic line - true? Then what if at some future date we replace some of our genetic material with that from another species? This would still be continuation of the genetic line, but rather than a small change being made to our genes, as in mutation, there would be a large change. Then what if we replaced a very large amount of our genetic material with that of another species? Surely this would mean the end of the genetic line!

So then, what is the purpose of preserving the genetic line? Such a "line" doesn't really exist - our purpose would be irrational!

Thoughts on the existence of God: The necessary being argument has a fundamental flaw. Sure, our experience and inductive reasoning tells us that all things must have causes - but only those things within Nature, within the dualistic world of our experience. This is a law, but there is no such law saying that Nature must be caused, which is not a thing and cannot be a subject of our dualistic thinking about cause and effect.

In reality, Nature is neither caused nor not caused. Nature itself is the only "necessary being", as it is the root cause of all things within Nature (which are itself). It is a necessary being, because Truth is necessary.

Thoughts on genetics: Our definition of "species" (as identified by the genetic code) has to break down at some point, as it is only a concept, meant for practical use only. It cannot stand up to reality itself. Perhaps a more practical definition of species would be "all lifeforms in the universe capable of self-

awareness, reasoning and knowledge". This definition would enable us to completely change our physical bodies (and genetic code), but retain our culture, wisdom etc. The body, and hence the genetic material, being only a tool for our use.

However, for present purposes, the former definition and "purpose to life" may be sufficient, it being one stage in spiritual development. But as knowledge grows then one concept seems more reasonable than another. Then, when we slice all false thoughts off the top of our brain, and observe the thing which is left, an imprint, it will tell us different things, and give us a different purpose.

A spiritual man's purpose may change, as he comes to see the Truth more and more clearly.

What do you think of all that?

By the way, I have been giving more thought to Trevor. I now think that he needs no help at all. He knows what he should do, he just doesn't want to do it! I don't think he's really deliberating, he just does what his mind tells him. He really has to get used to making these big decisions by himself, as it will stand him in good stead later on.

P.S How is Tracey progressing in her thinking.

Bye for now

Kevin

14-7-88

from:

Kevin Solway
2/117 Macquarie st
St Lucia 4067

Dear Dave,

Are you still in Toowoomba? Have you found a job yet? I guess the statistics say you will find a job after having completed the hospitality course.

I am still plodding along. Life is not becoming any easier. In fact it seems to be becoming harder the more I realize that it won't be getting easier for a very long while - if ever (in this life).

A few years ago, when I was about twenty four I had dreams that by the time I was thirty I would have gone through the worst of it. Now I realize that thirty is only the beginning. The older you get, and the more you think, the more you see how your deluded past sticks with you and exists within you. I want to grow old and wise, leaving my past behind me; but Nature doesn't work like that. Because I don't let myself get addicted to adult attachments I find that my old childish one's continue. For example, while most people my age are absorbed in their work and their families I find myself being tempted by sport or the techno wiz-bang of computers. It is a horrible feeling, like you're caught in a time loop where you're doomed to continually repeat yourself. It is like having a continuous and repetitive dream, which you know is a dream, but from which you cannot awake.

However, I'm sure I'm improving overall. My reaction to most worldly things is now a complete and automatic revulsion, no matter what company I'm in. Years ago I would have had to consider it first - before being revolted. Being revolted at all things in the world, all pleasures, is a very important strength. If you find you're not revolted, then you've been taken-in by it all, and you've died.

Being revolted is by no means the answer, but from this standpoint at least you will look for Truth. And if you look for Truth you are bound to find it. But if you get taken-in by the world then your mind becomes dead, and Truth will be beyond reach.

Being taken-in by the world feels to me like I've been dragged out of my mind, out through the senses, and I can't get back in again. I get trapped out in the world, where I get tossed about, by memories, hopes, desires, fears, and life

becomes timeless. That's the problem, I'd much rather I experienced the true passage of time, seeing myself grow older at each moment, from the true vantage point within my own mind. From here, behind the eyes, I can look out and see everything in its place, untouched by anything. From here I even observe memories, and they will have no power over me.

But before you know it your self has donned wings and flown out the doors of the senses where you cannot catch it again. Once it is finally back under wraps it has to be continually alert of itself, and that it is not taken-in or absorbed by anything again for even a moment. It must reject everything, all love, beauty, ugliness, all tiredness, boredom, happiness, all thought of success or failure.

I don't ever think my life will become easy, not if I put honest pressure on myself and remain uncompromising. Even if I develop my mind only a little, I can continue the process in future lives. That is, other people will learn from my life, no matter how little they learn. Every action has an effect and there are no exceptions.

My ego had unrealistic hopes for me, perhaps thinking that by the time I'm sixty I might be a recognized sage, and will be largely beyond desire, and supported by students. My, how the ego can dream! The Truth is, only a sage can recognize a sage. So if I ever become a great sage virtually no one in the world would be able to truly recognize me. What is more, I wouldn't be able to accept followers anyway, not if they have only blind faith in my wisdom, as they certainly wouldn't be able to recognize wisdom themselves. Too many recognized "sages" have compromised along the way, if not at the very beginning, and are therefore not sages at all. They live their lifestyle, with all their followers, with the aim of making their own lives more comfortable, and so that their own weaknesses will never come to the surface, and come to light.

Nietzsche says "Be not virtuous beyond your powers, and ask not of yourselves improbabilities! Walk in the footsteps of your fathers virtue! How should ye rise high, if your fathers wills rise not with you?"

Our "fathers" have not given us much of a start. In my life I have never personally known a spiritual person. However, we are fathers to others, and they may well rise higher than us.

I can hear a voice in my ear saying "Don't be so negative, be positive, think about how much you have achieved, that is far more than others have ever dreamed of!" . . . And it had an American accent.

I'd much rather be realistic. Achieving "far more" than others is such a low level of achievement it is nothing to rejoice about. But it is all I can realistically do, which is neither great nor small nor middling. It is nothing,

and is everything.

Kevin

P.S If you're still in Toowoomba and wouldn't mind having me for a day or two let me know what days are O.K.

20th July, 1988

from:

David Quinn
1 Godfrey St,
Toowoomba 4350

Dear Kevin,

Thanks for your letter. It touched on many points that I can relate to. For I am also in a low period; truly am I in the hells. I am beginning to realize more and more what it requires to lead a spiritual life and the idea is scary. After a year of intense thinking and making great ground, intellectually at least, I am in a period of backlash. My ego is rebelling and at the moment I don't have the strength to fight. I seemed to have lost all enthusiasm, all faith in the path, in truth. The hospitality course is overwhelming me. I have begun smoking again and my mind is truly floundering on the surface of things. I hate society, hate the emptiness and falsity of most human relations, hate kidding myself but my desire for comfort is very powerful and blanks out all those things. And so I am in limbo. The path that society takes with their ambitions, and their petty trivia revolts me to the core of my being. I have no ambitions whatsoever. Succeeding in this world would make me nauseous. The alternative is the spiritual life. In principle, that is what I want to do. I have come in contact with the truth and I love it. I really feel I have potential in it and I have the mind for it. But my one obstacle is my upbringing - an upbringing of comfort, of being sheltered from life's hard realities. I know nothing of pain, of coldness, of true loneliness. When I have periods, where I am thinking well, and get hints of Emptiness, of the game of life, I can't seem to advance further as my concentration breaks, and I just have to distract myself. I know I can overcome that, but I just don't have any time doing this fucking course!

My cluttered life is preventing me in progressing in thought. I feel: why should I bother to think when I am not doing what needs to be done - ie giving up attachments. I see clearly that it is action that counts in spirituality. Having wonderful thoughts of emptiness is virtually useless if you don't accompany that with the process of emptying yourself. So my mind is dying. I am becoming a zombie - one who hates attachments and hates emptiness.

I think the only way to search for truth is in desperation. You have to feel the need to depend on God only, and in this way you will search with intensity. But if you are comfortable you depend instead on the attachments that give you this comfort and so you forget about God. But do I have the strength to live in physical and mental discomfort? Do I have the faith required? I do have a certain strength but I feel it only exists in bursts. Can I live in emptiness year

in and year out? This is my dilemma.

You say that only a sage can recognize a sage. This may be so but sensitive people can glimpse the nature of one who is somewhat more advanced. When I am in your company I feel the presence of emptiness very strongly. I recognize the fact that you are a special breed of person, a person who is on a completely different level to everyone else I've ever met. I realize the timelessness of your endeavour, that you are no different whatsoever to Jesus, Kierkegaard, and many others who have lived a spiritual life. It is as if society and everyone in it is travelling in one direction and these rare people are proceeding in the opposite direction. So I question your statement about students being able to follow a teachers wisdom on blind faith only.

I can really relate to Kierkegaard's statement about: as you advance no-one but no-one understands you and that is the beginning of true loneliness. Who can possibly begin to understand the struggles of a spiritual man? To all else he is either a chronic depressant or a useless dreamer.

My wish is to live a simple life dedicated to truth, but can I live a completely empty existence? Until I have the concentration some distractions are going to be necessary.

But why are you worrying about being recognized or not? Is this the ego considering future security? You know these are deluded thoughts so why bother with them?

I question my own motives. My own search is not pure. Am I searching for reality for its own sake, because I know my own self is reality, or is it just another one of my schemes for pleasure and comfort? Most probably a mixture of both. For the infinite reality is not something you wish to attain in order to have a good time, is it? There is no reason whatsoever to search for truth - it just has to be done. It is one of your powers as it were. It is the soul (which seems to be yourself but then isn't) - pleasing God.

Isn't your Tibetan book a strange one. Never have I seen so much good stuff and so much rubbish mixed into one package. It has excellent sections on death awareness and non-existence of self, but then tells you to prepare yourself for emptiness by doing 35 Buddhas a day!

Please feel free to come up. We have a mattress here. A week-end is probably more suitable but weekdays are fine also - I will not be at home during the weekdays being the only problem with that. Greg may be visiting us this weekend so if you decide on this weekend one of you will sleep on the floor.

See you soon

David

16-8-88

from:

Kevin Solway
2/117 Macquarie st
St Lucia 4067

Dear David,

I'd like to come up on the week-end of the 27th if that's O.K with you. Where are you working now? Will it be possible for you to pick me up if you are going through Brisbane? If I haven't heard from you by then I'll assume it's O.K for me to come up, and I'll make my own way, probably arriving late afternoon.

I've broken through a dull period and my mind has been clear and bright now for a few weeks. Perseverance pays off! The Truth can bring so much suffering, but O the joy it brings as well! Only with faith can one break through the Barrier. It is said: going forward seems like retreat, the easy way seems hard, the bright path seems dim, a wealth of Virtue seems inadequate, great talents ripen late.

I'm sure there is nothing really important left that you can learn from me, but I can still implore you to never forget all the people who depend on you to continue to develop your wisdom so that you can teach them. There are people out there, a few, in the human realm. But they are young, and will not remain in the human realm for long. Once they fall into the animal realms they will have no hope of escaping.

It is essential to contact those people before it is too late, and your wisdom must be so bright as to instantly melt their ego and dissipate all their doubts the moment they see you.

Those people may never meet me, or any other person of wisdom, and meeting that person may be all they need to just tip them over the brink - and the rest they can do for themselves.

It is far easier to live a truly spiritual life than to partake of this world. Living a spiritual life you can sleep all your hours away and be totally carefree, but when you live in this world you have to take part in all the games and responsibilities. Is this not madness?

Right now all I can do is just avoid making clouds - clouds that will block the sun and take its light from me. I can't keep it up forever, but even clouds

dissipate under the warmth of the sun's rays.

Yours,

Kevin

15th June, 1989

from:
David Quinn
20 Glebe st,
Glebe,
Hobart 7000

Hello Kevin!

Glebe, Glebe, I'm living in Glebe! The train didn't derail, The ship didn't sink,
The bus didn't crash, And I didn't get mugged in Melbourne!

Melbourne is very threatening. There is lots of tension. People are more closed-up. Crime is high. Peoples' irrationality is stretched to its limits. Truly, it must be what life is like in an American city.

In Melbourne I met one of Samantha's academic friends, David. He is one of those academics who will be successful in life. A biologist, he already has reputation - assisted with the filming of "Life on Earth" and "The living planet", articles in the "National Geographic", and swims easily among the big names of biology. Already, he has perfected the airs and pompousness of academia.

I asked him what his concept of evolution was. Is it a random or non-random process?

Dutifully, he cited the scientific spiel, saying that natural selection was essentially non-random whereas genetic mutation was random! And so we had an interesting discussion about natural selection. He maintained that natural selection and genetic mutation were independent of each other! Impossible! said I. The formation of the genes, that is, the coming together of the sperm and the ovary depended on millions of things. For one thing, the animal has to survive in its environment long enough to reproduce. And when you look at all the millions of sperm that are potential mates, and that perhaps only a handful are capable of major genetic change, you will see that a major factor in genetic mutation will be what particular sperm meets the ovary. And that in turn depends on the angle of the penis in the vagina, the thrust power of the male, the availability of males and females in a particular area, the distribution of hormones and other chemicals in bodies of the male and female, which, in turn, depends on the environment. And so on.

I was at a disadvantage here because he knew the details of genetic mutation

far better than I, but I knew in principle that I was right. He seemed to accept my argument but then went on to say that I was dealing purely in semantics. Yes, said I, because it is the scientists who are fooled by words and concepts. Beautifully constructed theories are built on those concepts without thought to whether those concepts actually refer to something that exists or not. Genetic mutation, for example - how in the galaxy does a random process exist?

But he was very rigid in his thinking. His concepts are precious to him. He can't play with them, swap them around, add new meaning to them. He soon left as he felt the argument was going around in circles - which it was. Still, he proved to me that although biology was his field of work, he didn't have a clue about evolution.

When he left I told Samantha that he didn't have a clue about evolution. I said to her that my understanding of evolution was perfect, that I see clearly where he goes off the track. She was shocked, "You can't say that, that your understanding is perfect!" No, Sam, I can't say that - it would destroy the whole spirit of science.

Hobart is cold, quiet, and yes, isolated. Existence is dreamy here. Majestic snow-capped mountains, interesting architected buildings, blue river and bay - all conspire to give the place an enchanted fairy tale setting. It is all very European in feel. I haven't met anyone of interest yet but there is a Mahayana Buddhist club which meets regularly, which I'll soon attend.

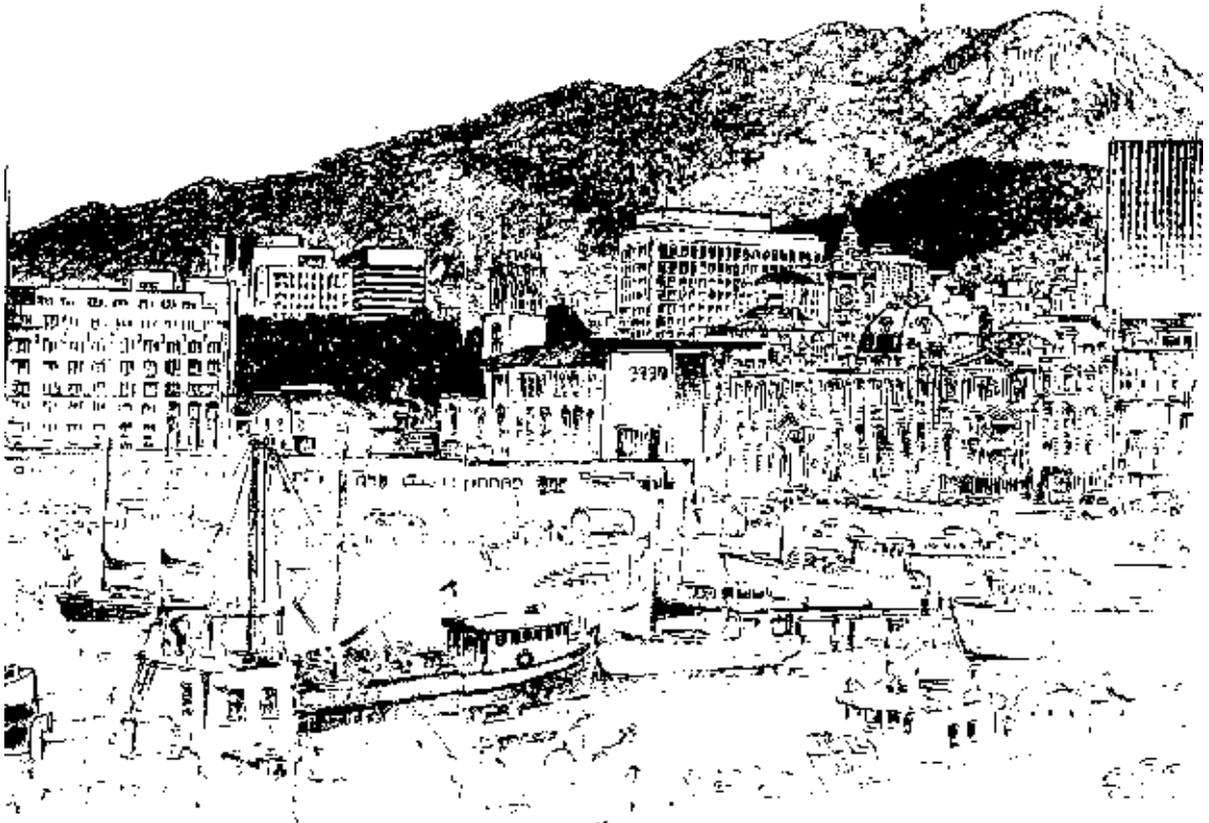
Meanwhile I'm just quietly going my way. I live in an almost self-contained room in an old building which houses a dozen or so similar rooms. I live by myself and pay \$46 per week which includes electricity. Electricity is hydro thus fairly environmentally safe.

I've been working with a few ideas mainly in the fields of artificial intelligence and genetic engineering. I want to discuss them with you but I'll wait a bit more and present them in my next letter.

Included here are some of your material, and what! a reply from Miss Caroline Jones! I had a laugh at her letter. What did I do wrong for her to like the ideas so much? Or perhaps she is merely patronizing me! Perhaps you should move down to Sydney - and surprise her! The ideas I presented to her did not include your ideas on women or Christianity, but were strong enough to indicate your personality, namely someone totally unlike her usual guests. Perhaps the exuberance of her reply lies in her relief at the "logistics" of the situation?

Hear from you soon,

David.



- Hobart, Tasmania -

28-6-89

from:

Kevin Solway
4/69 Sandford st
St Lucia Q 4067

Good to hear from you. It sounds like an interesting experience you had with David the scientist.

Its quite incredible isn't it. Genetic mutation independent of natural selection indeed! I read your discussion with David out to my flatmate David, David. He was equally perturbed. He said, yes, that's all true, but where does it get you? He says you can't say that things are interdependent because its been mathematically proven that cause and effect doesn't exist. True enough I told him, you don't need to be a mathematician to prove that cause and effect/determinism is a fallacy. My point is that things are not interdependent also! Scientists desperately cling from one to the other, like a monkey grasping from one branch to another. They swing from causation to non-causation, not believing in either, and yet believing in both at the same time. I guess that's what people these days call "tolerance". And being unable to penetrate the illusory nature of the branch they are on, they cannot see the illusory nature of all such branches - all the opposites. Such creatures will never come down from the trees.

Someone said that people are the missing link between animals and humans. I think they were being too generous.

I didn't hold out much hope of getting on the Caroline Jones show, but you have to ask. As time goes by we'll make a mark - it's inevitable. As inevitable as fate. I must admit, "logistics" seemed a strange explanation. I thought that was to do with providing supplies to armies during battle! But the word also has something to do with "logic" - so she must have thought it was not logical to interview me.

I am still typing a few ideas out every now and then. Perhaps I will entitle the collection "Poison words from the heart". I enclose a few more writings of Kierkegaard, and a letter from Trevor, who seems to be making progress.

Kevin.

7-9-89

from:
David Quinn

Kevin - how are you going

I've been spending the last three months doing a bit of "soul-searching" myself. Being in Hobart here has given me the opportunity to examine my life closely, in order to see exactly what I want to do with it. Away from home and hatchery, away from the influences of you, Greg and Tracey etc - has enabled me to view my life from the outside to a degree.

It is so difficult to be honest with oneself - honesty leads one to very frightening places. The burning question is: Do I want to practice philosophy? Why do I want to go though all this suffering, when the lazy life of convention seems so attractive? Have I got the strength for philosophy? Do I have any sort of love of truth?

When I read Kierkegaard I get dizzy and gloomy when I compare my apparently incurable weaknesses with the loftiness of a life of truth. I have to say that Kierkegaard is not for me at this stage of my life. Although I love his genuineness, his picture of the true life only discourages me. It is one of my biggest weaknesses - that of despairing over my weaknesses. Nietzsche, on the other hand, resonates well with me in that he inspires me - I love his approach to things. One gets inspired to climb onto the bottom rung whereas Kierkegaard keeps me gaping at the sheer height of the ladder!

I doubt whether I have any sort of love of truth - I seem to have no passion. I can't seem to take myself seriously. I have seriously considered giving the whole thing up and running back to cover. Just recently I received a letter from Tracey imploring me to come back to her as she really loved me etc etc. I was in a very low point at the time, and I seriously entertained the prospect. But I can't. Philosophy has wounded me too deeply - I can't possibly take a love affair seriously any more. I can truly say, with Kierkegaard, that such things would only serve to increase my melancholy and depression.

I've also thought of alternative ways of life, for example, working for Greenpeace etc. But again, I can't. I just wouldn't be able to take it seriously enough.

I cannot escape philosophy - it has got me by the balls. But this does not mean I am progressing in it. There is no concerted effort in weeding out delusion here - more of a tense game played out in a sort of pressurized

emptiness, which involves real difficulties in stringing three consecutive thoughts together.

But I know the path, the pathless path - at least an inkling of it.

I wonder if ever a day will go by when I won't entertain the thought of quitting. I think: why, this is madness! - all this effort for little return! I get tired of "glimpses", as if God is intent on getting his kicks in teasing me, who delights in watering my mouth with exotic smells, but never gives me something of substance.

It's as if everything about me is heavy, too heavy to breathe spiritual air.

There seems nothing extraordinary about me - I just don't have that mark of greatness, that I sense in you. So it seems silly for me to adopt your way of life and your values if I cannot live by them. Though I do feel that I am drifting further and further from mankind as I grow older, as my repulsion for convention grows stronger and stronger, and so I cannot rule out the "apostles life" as a possibility in the future. But for now, it would be absurd for me to even pretend that I am anywhere near it at present.

For example, I cannot rule out the possibility of some sort of relation with women in the future, though without doubt with 99% of women I don't want to get within ten feet of. Still, an absolute total rejection of woman would be too dreadful for me to contemplate - and here lies my lack of faith, for I know full well their detrimental effects upon the philosopher. There is still one type of woman that interests me, one that would be rare to meet, perhaps one that doesn't exist at all except in my imagination, one that is able to confront me on the emotional level (for it would be impossible for one to confront me on an intellectual level). Oh egotism! - at the root of it all is that desire for acceptance of the herd - life would somehow be more bearable in the knowledge that at least not all women (and hence men) view me with disgust. Yes, nothing would kindle passion more than the total rejection of woman. Oh but can I do it?

There is this giant desire to submit. My ego would like nothing more than to submit, whether it be into madness, or into comfort, or into woman, or whatever. One must have a strong nature not only to "see" the truth, but also to bear it as well.

I guess there is an analogy which can be drawn regarding my situation in life. In nature I've always wondered about the biologist's assertion that a particular animal is perfectly suited to its environment because of natural selection. Why should this be so? Surely, many of the animals are ill-suited to their environment, living very uncomfortable lives, but still managing to survive to pass on their genes. Especially when the environment changes

animals become very uncomfortable with their lot until either they "evolve" better equipment or they become too uncomfortable to survive and they die out.

For example, when wolves were forced to move into the hotter climates of the desert, it would have been many generations before the necessary mutation of a thinner coat of hair started to appear. As a result, many generations of wolves would have suffered unbearably under the heat, many of them would have perished because of it.

Similarly, for the evolution of man's mind to occur there must be pushes into unknown territory by "generations" whose equipment is not very useful for the task. This is what Nietzsche must mean in Zarathustra. My upbringing developed certain characteristics in me for the purpose of surviving in the conventional world, but then my environment changed - I've been forced into unknown territory with equipment ill-suited for the task. No doubt both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche realized this; that their lives were to be spent for the purpose of surviving as best they could in the new environment, so that eventually the mutations may occur, creating the conditions for the better-suited individuals to arise.

Thus, this is where I stand. For my own particular individuality, total perfection is the remotest of remote possibilities, given my mental equipment. The best I can do is to survive one moment at a time gradually edging out into the unknown, maybe perishing because of it, to help create the effects enabling an individual in the future to achieve perfection.

Of course, all this is fairly obvious - but there is a difference between understanding it and understanding it. In any case, may myself be victorious!

How's Trevor going? Are you in contact with him? I think I'll write to him but I have misplaced his letter - can you send me his address? He sounds quite down doesn't he - in a sort of no-man's land. He quit his job more out of guilt than a desire to explore truth - he hasn't encountered that invigorating enthusiasm yet, it seems to me. I wonder what it's like in Germany - hard to imagine from this desolate paradise called Tasmania where nothing happens except the newspapers. I like it here though - it suits my hyper-sensitivity.

Still going to Chenrezig and giving the smiles a shake with your "ugly face"?

What have you been thinking lately?

Hope to hear from you soon,

Regards,

David.

10-9-89

from:

Kevin Solway
4/69 Sandford st
St Lucia Q 4067

Greetings,

It sounds like your stay in Tasmania is doing you good, though I'm sure at times it doesn't feel like it. It is always difficult coming to terms with one's own limitations - and we all have them. Such is our karma; it's nothing to be unhappy about.

You may be right in saying I have a kind of passion that you find difficult to generate just now; but passion will only come of itself. I do not believe it can be whipped-up whenever one desires - one has to be pushed into it. Only when there is no alternative will you feel a strong passion for God and a overwhelming love of Truth. It is like being surrounded by a blazing bushfire, and then, bravely?, deciding to swim across the river to the other shore. You see, there is no real courage in this, only necessity.

You observed this fact yourself when you said that "nothing would kindle passion more than the total rejection of woman"; but more accurately, an all-consuming passion must arise for one to be able to reject women in the first place. And what is this passion? - nothing grand - it is just the passion to be dignified and to avoid hellish sufferings . . . at least, dignified in one's own eyes if not in the eyes of others.

Believe me, the only reason I can reject women as completely as I do is because I know how much suffering they would cause me - just the fact that I would become a slave, and that I would lose my freedom of thought and action - my soul. I know full well that I could lay back in the loving arms of a woman for a day or two, and then my ideals would return to mock me.

You may remember the time I told you about an old girlfriend of mine in Perth. We had little in common, but I am sure we were totally compatible on an emotional basis. She could give me lee-way where she did not understand me intellectually, and I could give her lee-way where she did not understand me. We lived in separate worlds, yet were able to share on an emotional level. So, I could get the benefit of the intellectual life, and have my emotional side satisfied too - right? Wrong! I found I was sacrificing some of my thought to make room for some warm emotional pleasures, and through these emotional pleasures, yes, love, a poison was being injected into my system. Hints of

jealousy would make their way into my consciousness if I noticed her enjoying the company of another man. Could I stop her? Could I go on like this for the rest of my life? There are so many jokes about relationships, and we all laugh at them - was I going to be the brunt of all these jokes for the rest of my life? - I just couldn't do it.

So, my life may not be all that happy. A smile does not often come easily to my face. But for me, it is far better than the alternative. Here I have suffering, maybe a shortened life, but here I have freedom!

Think of your future lives! Stepping stones are we for greater players. Man without a woman suffers for this life, but is rewarded in eternity. Perhaps you have not generated complete disgust with all womankind - what matter! You, and I, can just do our best. I have often thought that even if I were to get married, I wouldn't be doing anything wrong. I would have a weakness perhaps, but God gave me the weakness. You are the machine and God is the operator. You do as he makes you do. It is for this reason we should never be disgusted with our weaknesses, for we are not responsible.

Only last week I was feeling a bit down and needing a bit of emotional stroking. I thought of dear "Carolyn" in Perth, who loves me, whatever that means, and it made me feel better for a moment. I thought I'd sit down and jot her a line for the first time in several years. I started to write the letter but couldn't think of anything to say! I said that I was still alive, and was she, and not much more. I put the one page letter in an envelope, put a stamp on it, and promptly went to the river, ripped it up and threw it in the water. All I really wanted was the thought in my mind that someone loved me, namely a woman I could respect. Tis all illusion. To me the whole fantasy was like a T.V show, I knew it wasn't real, but I could enjoy it for 30 minutes.

So, I'm not perfect - God still plays his games with me. But he tells me other things also: what can be remembered eternally? Only one thing: to have suffered for the truth. So he makes me suffer. He makes me respect a woman and then he makes lose respect for all humanity, the girl included. How could He be so cruel? Such is his game.

We are like kites that God keeps on a string. He keeps us bound to the world despite all our attempts to break free. But then one breaks loose - and what joy there is watching it!

P.S

Perhaps you should go back to Tracey. Then at least you will know for sure one way or the other.

23-9-89

from:

Kevin Solway
4/69 Sandford st
St Lucia Q 4067

Hello again,

A few thoughts occurred to me recently that I thought might interest you. I think the greatest barrier is as you say in last letter "despair". Enlightenment is so high, and we are so low. I am not immune to such thinking myself, but it really is making hard work of it all. If you think of yourself as lacking anything to begin with, then you are bound to despair. You mention that you are too weak even to weed out delusion - and who could blame you!

The trick is not to think of yourself as lacking, nor having any delusions to weed out, nor in fact having any work to do at all. The thing to convince yourself of is that you are already perfect. If you continually tell yourself, from the minute you awake, that Nature is absolutely perfect, and that you are therefore lacking nothing, then there will be no desire, no boredom, and therefore no despair. You must really believe this. You are Nature. How can Nature be anything other than perfect? You see, it is not a matter of destroying delusions - get such ideas out of your mind - just think of Truth. Get rid of all the ideas of "Enlightenment" and "ignorance"; they would make anyone despair! Fighting against desires is like fighting against a phantom - you just can't win. But when you realize the non-existence of the phantom then all the nightmares are over. This is what Nietzsche means when he says "If thou be fortunate, thou hast but one virtue and no more: thus mayst thou go more easily over the bridge". The more of these virtues you have, the more you will have a need for them. For example, if you train yourself to shoot a gun for self-protection, then you will see the enemy wherever you go. But in perfection/Reality there are neither friends nor enemies.

Do not be continually convincing yourself why all desires and suffering are not real. This is like fighting with an enemy, and the more you fight with them, the stronger they will become. Just fill your mind with the perfection of Nature, then there will be no place for either ignorance or Enlightenment.

I found an interesting book in the library the other day entitled "Freud and Women" or the like - written by a woman. Inevitably she argues in favour of the feelings (note, she doesn't call them emotions), saying that rationality has failed us as it has failed to answer the important questions of life. I must admit that men have set themselves up for such criticism as they have failed to use

reason in fullness, and are consequently inconsistent and hypocritical. Women are intelligent enough to see this. I enclose some photocopies, which I'd like to get back off you sometime.

Kevin

30-9-89

from:
David Quinn
Glebe

Yes! I've come to the same conclusions as you have. No matter which direction you turn, no matter which path of reason you take, you inevitably arrive at the simplest of all thoughts - that of nihilism. You must be getting bored of saying the same things over and over to me! How dull-witted I must be, to take well over two years of quite earnest thought merely to make the three or four logical steps to the door of Truth! I guess the last year has been, for me, one of clearing up doubts, refining my intellectual understanding, so that now I have very few gross delusions and can now recognize many of the more subtle ones. It is the subtle ones that keep you busy - you can detect them in everything you do, think, or say!

I am becoming more and more fascinated with this idea of "Natures perfection", of "constancy", "non-action", "the middle way", "nihilism", or whatever else it can be called. Just a few moments attention directed along these lines, this way that is neither easy nor difficult, effortlessly produces a clear mind which can illuminate delusions with ease. One must constantly apply it to everything, or else one does fall into the delusions of "seeking", "effort", "enlightenment", "despair", "self", "path", "guilt" etc etc. One even can see through "holy actions" with ease.

"Love of Truth", "passion" - what sort of nonsense is this? But to perform this path, one must be solitary in the deepest sense - or else one will be overwhelmed by praise/blame, success/failure, pride/guilt, worthiness/worthlessness: categories which are the stupid childish fairytales that have been brain-washed into us since Day 1.

There is still one main doubt in me though. We've spoken about it in the past but maybe you can shed more light on it for me. It is this matter of changes of consciousness.

The other day I listened to a tape of a psychologist whose work consists of exploring these changes of consciousness using both drug and non-drug related techniques - a female psychologist by the way. She outlined four categories of deepening altered consciousness, ones which I can easily relate to. They are:

1. Altered sense perception - here colours become more vivid, sounds

become sharper, sounds become colours, forms are perceived "differently" etc.

2. The next, a deeper state, in which one gains insights into one's own psychology. One gets an overall picture of one's development since childhood, so that one sees the deeper causes of why one's personality and character is the way it is. One begins to know where one is at, in relation to reality. One sees one's own soul, so to speak.

3. Going deeper again, into the world of religious symbolism. One begins to grasp what a spiritual person is. For example, one sees Jesus in a new light. One also enters the myths and legends of one's culture - talking birds, snakes which seduce, Kings and Queens and castles and lions etc.

Here, it seems to me, it is a case of remembering the very early childhood perceptions of things. The child effortlessly lives in a magically rich world of depth and colour. He attaches no significance to his world - he just exists happily. However, as he begins to develop an understanding in language: adult-conceptions, and begins to develop the adult way of perception, he begins to associate the adult religious and mythical concepts with this magic world. For example, in my case, I must have associated the concept of an old man with a beard as being God (for this is what we were taught) and related this with the world of "spiritual" perception which was rapidly vanishing as time went on. For, nowadays this image occasionally comes to me amongst a flood of a poetic, joyful atmosphere.

It also may explain why children love fairytales - not because there is anything special about the stories themselves, but because it simply reminds them of a world now lost to them.

In any case, here we perceive a more expanded perception into the meaning of these symbols.

4. And lastly - the religious experience - where one's mind dissolves into a blissful unifying nothingness. Here, the psychologist talks of one's consciousness entering the ground of one's being. And here lies my problem, for whenever I hear such a description of such a situation, my mind inevitably dissolves into a blissful unifying nothingness. But I ask: what has this got to do with Truth? Has this anything to do with Nirvana? Reason tells me - no! - because of the fact that distractions arise and one immediately falls into the truth/false, enlightenment/ignorance categories. Besides, I am beginning to suspect that Truth is not an experience, nor a state of being, nor have anything to do with a "change of consciousness".

Yet, what is this experience? Is it purely an effect of the processes of the brain?, that is to say, because, even though one spontaneously enters into it, and thus before one has time to think about it, a moment later it is gone, leaving

vague imagery behind.

My question is: should I attach value on it, or should I ignore it, leaving it to come and go as it pleases, regarding it as being merely a freak of nature. My inclination is to the latter, exploring it when the opportunity arises, but to not worry too much about it.

You might be interested in the Journals of Anais Nin, especially the earlier ones written in the 1930's. She is one of these psycho-analytical types, who is suspicious of intellectualism, and prefers to look at her own mind in a more "poetic" way. One thing going for her is that she writes simply, minus all the academic diatribe that swamps the photo-copies you sent me. Aghh! I am astounded how anyone can live in such an academic mental world without going insane with confusion! How ironic! She writes about man's over-fascination with intellectualism, in a beautifully intellectual way! She should write a poem instead - but then I suppose she would be dismissed as a sentimental female . . . !

Woman really is an incredible creature - she is so confident in her ignorance! She is such a "fantastic" being - one part biological, 99 parts fiction. I've become fascinated with the concept "she"; "she" is such a transcendental entity, and cannot be integrated with the world of things.

Consider the following passage:

"It moved gracefully over to me and smiled. I watched it entranced - it lit up the room wherever it went! As it drew closer to me, it's energy overwhelmed and melted me, and leaning over, with it's lips brushing my cheeks, a musky scent wafted, tantalizing, dancing, causing shivers to run up and down my body. Then it drew back, and with a twinkle in it's eye, it began to unbutton its blouse." How sexy!

What an extreme contradiction she is - this is beautifully expressed in sex. Oh, woman of my dreams, she is so pure, innocent, angelic, queen of the goddesses - and then there is the actuality! Oh, my petal, sweetness of my life - surely it isn't true? Are you really this quivering, sweating, panting animal beneath me?

Who can possibly enjoy sex under these conditions - unless a new fantasy is created, one that is based far more closely on the actuality, one involving the emotions of dominance. So really, woman is a trinity, a three-in-one entity involving the actuality and two very different types of fiction.

All my life I've been fooled by woman, believing her to be pure, innocent, and heavenly - I reacted accordingly, only to be continually astounded as to

how animal they really are - in their being and in their desires. Woman never has to face this contradiction, as her image of man is always firmly grounded in man the animal.

I'm continually at odds with the adult world - or should I say, the woman's world! Psycho-analysts - those female psychologists - would say that I am neurotic. They would be partly right because there are emotional hang-ups involved, but it is only a case of not wanting to solve my neurosis through the "adultizing" of my personality. The psycho-analysts would then say: yes, you have convinced yourself that you don't want to change, so that you can ease your sufferings through pride.

No, simply, the adult world is fake and pretentious. Consequently, I am still twelve years old. When I was physically twelve, I had, up to then, quite happily played with my friends, but then, upon entering the teens, they all changed. My friends grew into adults in their quest for females - whereas I stopped growing. The only thing that kept me in contact with others was sport. But when I gave up sport, the last contact was broken, and I now exist in this never-never world of immaturity!

I am depth and melancholy and unspontaneity personified - and no-one knows how to treat me as such. I fail to entertain them, and they grow quiet and want to move on.

I am no longer a member of the species homo sapiens. Their spontaneity and laughter are worlds away from my introversion. The only similarity between me and them is the shape of our bodies.

But then, as Nietzsche says: you are different to the herd, but not different enough - for it is the herd in you which speaks of the suffering of your differentness.

All this was brought out painfully clear, when I recently did a bit of voluntary work for an arts festival. It had been three years since I was last involved in the art world - and this came as a shock. It was a nightmare, where I was wondering whether I was on my home planet or not! Anyway, I made some observations:

- Definition of Art: The death throes of a disintegrating soul.
- Opening night of an Arts festival: Where dying souls can come together to laugh away the emptiness.
- Alcohol: Used to excite the death throes, to squeeze as much out of the remains as possible.

- The artist: One who deceives himself into believing that he is an individual.
 - Opening night: A gathering of people who deceive themselves into believing they are individuals.
- . . . All the while, the mad Van Gogh is ignored or spat upon .

To conclude, I will give you a problem to answer for me: Let us pretend that the Japanese decide to invade tomorrow. They destroy all the cities and throw all us Australians into concentration camps. You are thrown into a particularly harsh camp where there are beatings, food rationing, filth, torture etc. You are all given some uniforms and have your hair shaved. All this is designed to break the spirit of the prisoners so that they become unresisting sheep. As it happens, the prisoners in your camp are managing to hold onto their strength of will, because they have all become Christians - they believe that the sufferings they are now enduring are nothing compared to the eternal happiness that will most assuredly be theirs when they die. Thus, there is this community spirit based firmly upon their belief in the Christian God - a spirit that enables them to endure their sufferings so much so, that if it were taken away, then everyone will be crushed, become crazy, violent, destroyed. Then sooner or later, one of them says to you "Kevin, you look like an intelligent chap - do you believe in Jesus Christ?"

How would you answer?

David

P.S Have you heard that scientists are now starting to grow plastics? Through genetic engineering, they are developing a type of bacteria that will display all the properties that we normally associate with "synthetic".

3-10-89

from:

Kevin Solway
4/69 Sandford st
St Lucia Q 4067

Nietzsche said that if a person with wisdom doesn't write books then its guaranteed they'll be a good letter writer. Your last letter was a joy to read: it would sap the life out of a stone.

Your thinking on altered states seems reasonable to me. Our aim should be to go beyond consciousness, not to an altered state of it.

If there is consciousness of having a particular type of consciousness then this is not ultimate consciousness. Likewise, if there is a conscious lack of a particular consciousness this too is not ultimate consciousness.

If you just keep your mind fixed on never being in error, then who could possibly fault you? - regardless of what consciousnesses you may or may not attain. If we concern ourselves only with living in accord with reason, letting Nature carry us along, then all states of consciousness are immaterial. You might remember the Zen student who asked whether the Buddha was the ordinary mind or the enlightened mind. The Zen Master replied "How many minds have you got? Where on earth do you keep them all?"

I have said at times how the "Trance of Truth" is essential to empower further progress. Hakuin calls this experience "satori". But he also goes on a lot about "kensho", or "seeing into your own nature".

The fad in religion these days is to stress the difference between "mere intellectual speculation" and the vastly superior "experience". Well, if their experience is not entirely reasoned then I for one don't want anything to do with it! Hakuin's "kensho" stresses the intellectual aspect (which is not without its experiential element) of the Truthful mind, whilst "satori" stresses the aspect of pure experience, or the fruition of reason. Hakuin was greatly impressed by a chap called Daie who apparently experienced 18 great satoris and countless smaller ones. Now, if this isn't something to get the desires going and make us anxious then nothing is!

You notice the "and countless smaller ones" - so you see, it is all a matter of degree. If you like, satoris are differing degrees of supreme clarity of mind combined with a perfect intellectual understanding of Truth plus an unflinching

Faith. Satoris of various degrees happen by accident, but only after you have developed your knowledge and faith in Truth (ie, wisdom) to a high degree. It is simple enough to attain a clear mind, it is the understanding of Reality that's the hard bit - enough understanding to be able to stand in Reality, sacrificing one's being to it, rather than to grope and grapple with it, in which case there are only "glimpses". These glimpses constitute experiences, whilst the person who can give himself over entirely to his reason conceives of no such experience, and has no call to do so.

The degrees of satori are not unlike degrees of the fourth stage you mentioned, except for the obvious fact that the degrees of satori involve wisdom, which is no small difference.

The types of consciousness you mentioned really made me laugh. For example, the third stage - understanding religious symbolism - really! I wonder whether one understands the true meaning of the Christian cross also? I'll have to repeat what I've said many times before regarding this, so bear with me. The psychologist is actually describing the stages of shamatha (a blissful, one-pointed concentration) and mistaking them for shunyata (direct experience of ultimate Reality). She is confusing God with the god-realms; which is not surprising seeing as she knows nothing of God. She is confusing childhood spontaneity and immediacy with spirituality. The "ground of her being" she mentions is in fact her childhood. She is trying to go back to the womb rather than to go forth and conquer death.

Enlightenment is immediacy or spontaneity after reflection; but she cannot bear reflection, so tries to turn back to the immediacy of childhood - just as a dog which is impelled to walk on two feet has every instant a tendency to go again on all fours.

Her understanding of symbols etc in the third stage is an indication of a reversion to childhood fairy tales rather than a progression to the liberated mind. And I sincerely doubt whether her "blissful unifying nothingness" in the fourth stage gives her the strength to give up all her attachments and stand up for the Truth in the face of all adversity!

Shunyata comes about through a combination of Shamatha and Vipashyana (insight into the nature of reality). There can be Shamatha without Vipashyana, but there can be no real Vipashyana without Shamatha. Knowledge without meditation is foolish, but meditation without knowledge is dangerous. Knowledge corresponds to Vipashyana and meditation corresponds to Shamatha. The reason for this is obvious: with meditation you can so easily attain the blissful heights of the god-realms, and then stagnate there, only to spend your future lives in hell. Also, knowledge without concentration and clarity is foolish as knowledge is hindered when there is no clarity and power of thought.

But here we have even more concepts to confuse us and arouse our anxiety. You musn't try to attain shamathic states, just keep life simple, just believe in the perfection of reality and you will blend everything into the one. All things will drop away when they are good and ready to do so, leaving you with your clear mind and your reason. Again, you need neither accumulate virtues nor drop delusions, but simply direct your mind towards reality.

Also, keep in mind that despite Daie's numerous great satoris it is still possible for another who has had no such great experiences to be more wise. Such a person may have a more developed intellectual knowledge, be more consistent with his truth, and be a more effective teacher of that truth. Even so, great satoris are nothing to be scoffed at.

The arts festival sounded just how I imagine them to be. I have always regarded art as "egotism on canvass" that reveals the ugliest and darkest parts of the human mind, and glorifies in it.

Regarding the Japanese invasion: remember the discussion I had with Losang the monk about Hitler and reincarnation; would Hitler be reborn in hell? "Yes" I said, "many times". "How" was the reply, "seeing as you don't believe in reincarnation". "He reincarnated in those whom he tortured, and in their families who suffered" I said.

And here is another reincarnation story. Our brothers the Japanese, our past lives, have deluded themselves with fantasies and want to conquer Australia. We then suffer hellish torture in their hands because we are their future lives - it is inevitable. The law of karma will have its way. Now, if we were to escape from hell, using fantasy (religion) as a means, then we will be making the same mistake as the Japanese, and only creating the causes for our own future re-imprisonment and torture. Perhaps one day we will fight back against the Japanese and torture them in return, in the name of God of course, and thus our future lives will be in hell, as we will be reborn as the suffering Japanese. And so the cycle goes on, the cycle of repeated birth and death, repeated rebirth as conquerers, then victims, then conquerers . . . and so on for ever.

So when asked "Kevin, you look like an intelligent chap - do you believe in Jesus Christ?". I will answer "God is all powerful. Christ is behind the Japanese invasion: now do you believe in Jesus Christ?". I will speak as though I am speaking to my own child . . . or my own self at a younger age.

Kevin

22-1-90

from:
Kevin Solway
4/69 Sandford st
St. Lucia
Qld 4067

Hello Dave,

I haven't heard from you for a while. Are you still at the same address?

I have typed up our previous letters, and they make interesting reading when seen as a whole. However, I am missing a few of the letters I wrote to you before 16-8-88 as I wasn't taking copies before then. Do you still have them? They would help to improve the continuity of the dialogue. I will send you a copy of them in my next letter for you to make any adjustments to your letters if you wish, if you want to clarify certain points.

I thought the exchange might be helpful for someone who is on the path as the letters have the impact of being personalized. This form of writing seems to penetrate more deeply than impersonal philosophizing. It's up to you if you want others to read your letters. If you change them it would be best not to do so too much as it might dilute their raw flavour, which is the greatest value of them, uncontrived.

I turn twenty nine this month, and I can feel myself losing some of that energy of youth. I am so scared about becoming complacent and starting to enjoy life. I have to continually read Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to generate appropriate disgust. It is so easy to forget how disgusting beauty and love really are.

The man of knowledge desires neither life nor happiness, how much less does he desire woman! I am Nature, how is it possible for me to receive either praise or blame? How could I possibly experience either life or death? How on earth could I be happy or suffer, succeed or fail?

If I am kicked off unemployment benefit, contract cancer and die a lingering and painful death . . . what is all this but the Heavenly bliss of Nature?

Kevin

1-2-90

from:
David Quinn
50 Adelaide st
South Hobart 7004

Hello Kevin,

It sounds like an interesting idea, that of bringing our correspondence together into one package. It will be interesting to see how the dialogue developed, though I'm sure much of what I thought and wrote back then, I would now regard as foolish. No matter.

Though my intellectual understanding of things is ever developing, I am still sitting on the fence in regards to the nitty-gritty of it all. Procrastination is such a powerful delusion, even though it seems as though much of my putting off is seemingly against my will. I think the delusion is rooted in this idea of "merit" - a hang-over from my Christian upbringing. One does enough to soothe one's conscience, and one's conscience is soothed when one feels that enough merit has been accumulated - one is back in God's favour, until guilt indicates that one has fallen from grace, and so-on. Oh samsara!

I have become interested in this science of chaos, and hence would be interested in any pictures of fractals you might have, that I may borrow for a while.

In any case, I look forward to your next letter.

David.

11-2-90

from:
Kevin Solway
38 Girraween Grove
Ashgrove
Qld 4067

Dear Dave,

I may be moving shortly, so I've given you my parents address above. I have typed out all the letters but I haven't been able to get a printout yet, so I've enclosed an incomplete set.

Last night I went to a talk by the leader of the Ramakrishna movement; a "Mataji" something or other, or "Great Mother". A lot of what she said was reasonable enough. She believes in evolution, and that each one of us is God, and therefore beyond life and death. However, she also believes in literal reincarnation, planes of consciousness and so on.

I asked her which interpretation of reincarnation she believed in, the literal or the esoteric. She didn't have any idea what I was talking about. I said that consciousness was a part of the body, and therefore could not be separated from it. She almost choked.

Later on I overheard her speaking to others in a tolerant tone of voice, saying "he has a different interpretation, that's O.K, it's just a different interpretation".

This is the subject I wish to deal with in this letter: interpretation, and when interpretation is not interpretation.

Interpretations can be either true or false. And if an interpretation is false, then it is not really an interpretation at all, but a false construct. If a person were to make a false translation from another language, we would not say, "it's O.K, it's just a translation". No, we would say it is a piece of shoddy work! However, modern man has banished true and false from his vocabulary. All he is interested in is his interpretation, which of course can never be wrong.

Their interpretation really means imagination. They build up a mental construct that seems to work, and they call it an "interpretation" or "a model of reality". But it is not a model of reality, nor does it comprise tools for dealing with reality; they have constructed an actual reality for themselves, independent of truth. Their interpretation is more than mere words, labels and concepts to

provide a handle on reality; they have turned their back on reality and have fashioned their own private world out of those words and concepts.

To them, imagination is everything, their all. To them, it is what you see that is important, not what is actually there. If what you see is peace and love, then what you see is justified. They strive for purity and tranquillity, not truth. They are like the eccentric carpenter, who became obsessed with the beauty, precision and functionality of his tools, and completely forgot about the workpiece, in which was his livelihood.

Christians say there is a God. Buddhists say there is no God. Let's not beat around the bush, these positions are completely opposed to each other. Yet the wise men of today, who have gone beyond reason, or should I say who have abandoned reason, believe these two to be in harmony with each other.

There is no limit to foolish imaginings. Not only do they imagine a false reality, but also imagine their reality to be harmonious with others! I have more respect for a stone than I do for these people. A stone sits quietly where it is in reality and imagines nothing. Yet these fools have removed themselves so far from reality that not even a shard of light could penetrate their darkness. You could place a blazing sun before their eyes and they would claim innocence, so remote are they. I feel more comfortable sitting at a computer keyboard than talking to the men of today. At least the computer is receptive and has potential to learn.

I did a little programming last week, and had to do something called "typecasting". A real number (eg, 1.24) takes up six bytes of computer storage. However, I can refer to this same six bytes by a different name. I can call it an array of six bytes, and I can then get at each byte individually. A real number is not an array of six bytes, but what the real number refers to is the same as what the array refers to. Reals and arrays are called "types", and I have thus "cast" a different type onto the memory area referred to by the real. It is like pouring molten metal into one mould, and then pouring it into a different one. The metal remains the same, how it interacts with us changes.

This is how we should operate in all matters. "Types" or categories exist only for convenience, and we cast them onto the underlying substance in order to deal with it. However, the men of today are under the control of types, and are cast around by them. This is the opposite of typecasting and could be called "castingtype"? They know nothing of any underlying substance, only their God - types.

It is amusing to see the outcome of those whose lives are controlled by types. For example, our Mataji believes in The One and also in individual self-existence and reincarnation. She can see no contradiction! This is because while her mind is full of one construct there is no room for any other, so she is

unaware of anything but the world she is in. Then, at a moments notice, she replaces this construct for another one, and again can only see this new world she is in, and not the contradiction with the one she has just left. This is indeed entertaining for an observer. I am reminded of the child, who when asked what he wanted to be when he grew up, said "Either a soldier or a priest". He likewise saw no contradiction.

I had a short discussion with our Mataji, which revolved around 2 differences. She said that consciousness is infinite and immortal, whilst the body dies. I said that the body is infinite and immortal, and consciousness doesn't exist. One sign of wisdom is a freedom to swap terms around, and do a little typecasting: she couldn't do it.

We also differed regarding matter. She said that matter was really energy, but that matter can be seen, while energy cannot. I said that if matter was energy, and I can see matter, then I can see energy. She said no, how can you see kinetic energy? For example, when I lift this cup it gains potential, or kinetic energy. I said that if we couldn't see energy then we would never know of its existence. We can see energy through our conceptual (sixth) sense, if not by the other five. She was completely stumped.

Once again, she had no freedom with her terms, so came to grief. There is no problem with her words; the problem lies entirely with what she means by them. Her words do not refer to the underlying substance, but are caught up in a rigid mental construct that cannot accommodate the natural world.

Then she went on to say that the body is like a layer, inside which is the soul, but that the soul is not separate from the body. For example, an onion has many layers, and the outer layer is part of the same onion as the inner parts. This is her construct for trying to reconcile her idea of "The two" with "The One". I said I agreed, and continued saying that as the outer and inner layers are interdependent, then when the outer layers die, so too will the inner layers, no longer having protection from the elements. Therefore I said when the body dies, consciousness dies also.

Now, having had her idea of "The two" undermined, she automatically switched back to again assert the immortality of consciousness, and the mortality of the body, and even appealed to the authority of scripture!

I despise these wretched clever ones, who run before you can pin them down. My argument is of no service to her, so she blatantly ignores it. This proves to me once again that they value utility alone, and truth means nothing to them. Or rather, to them, utility means truth. When I disproved the idea that consciousness was separate from the body she saw it as being of no use, and therefore untrue. Utility in this case means matching with the scriptures. If they can match their ideas with what they perceive in the scriptures they feel

they have the support of God. My words find no match in the scriptures, so they are of no use, and therefore not true.

I once described Christian priests as cannibals, for they live by eating the man who died for them. So do all these clever wise ones make a slovenly meal of spiritual offerings. A precious gift was left for their children, yet they greedily took it as their own, and left the young bereft.

Excuse me, but I feel eloquent today.

Hear from you soon,

Kevin

P.S

I have just listened to the Sunday night religious program on ABC radio, which you may have also heard. They had representatives of Siddhi yoga, Transcendental meditation and Zen Buddhism, and what a load of tripe it was!

There was much talk of "the centre", "the inner self", "the source", happiness, stress, peace and contentment. But not once did I hear of truth and wisdom. And they all agreed with one another! What a marvelous world we live in, when we can all agree on the same deception.

They all made the same mistake that the psychologist made which you mentioned in a previous letter. They have confused the stillness and magic of samadhi with spirituality. They have confused mental clarity and dexterity with goodness. The woman representing TM said that this mental clarity can be used to discover ultimate reality. Sure, it can be, but who would risk losing their new found peace in search of an unnecessary and possibly unreachable thing? Nobody desires truth, this is what is lacking - bodhicitta.

They do not even have an intellectual understanding of reality. They have some starting concepts perhaps, but without bodhicitta to pick them up and run with them, they are going nowhere.

March, 1990

from:

David Quinn
15 Clarke Av
Battery Pt,
Hobart Tas 7004

Hello Kevin

Have you moved yet? I've moved to Battery Point and live in a small bathroom. It is literally a bathroom, or perhaps, it is a tiny flat with a shower in the middle of the living room! In any case, the rent is cheap.

Each time I pick up the pen to write you a letter, I run out of things to say. Or, should I say, most of the things that come to mind would be superfluous to discuss with you. I've barely done any writing over the last couple of months and so am out of practice. This is just a short note to maintain an unbroken contact. I have many ideas to discuss, but at present I'd prefer to let them revolve around my head for a while. When my pen starts flowing perhaps you will get a rather long letter!

David P.S Yes, the letters make great reading. I think they indicate very well what it actually means to live a philosophic life. Like Kierkegaard's writings, they present the true scale of things, or at least, they indicate the strength of seriousness required to make philosophic progress.

2nd April, 1990

from:
Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

It is said that if you have not yet reached the level of the irreversible bodhisattva (8th bhumi) then you should avoid women, as they can still fall in love with you. How well I know it!

All it takes is a glance, a glint of the eye, and you are found out. This is why I have always said: never look at a woman, because she might look back! The problem is not so much the looking, but the mode of the looking, the looking too long, the intention of the looking.

The ego has its unresolved attachments, or emotions, and is always on the look-out to attend to them. The irreversible bodhisattva still has delusions, but he can control them the very instant they arise, before they grow, so he stops himself before looking to a woman's face for signs of affection, and for signs of his impact. No woman could love such a man, so he is doubly safe!

Not so I! By now you have gathered my plight. I am safe from most women, but there is always that one . . . that one whom you hope never to meet . . . that one who seems not to be human at all, but your own self, yes, out there!, beckoning, appealing to you. Moreover, you are plunged into doubt as to whether she is a wayward part of yourself, or you of she.

I went to Chenrezig last week, and there was this apparition, a woman I believe, whom I glanced at one moment too long. Over the next few days, before I departed, her face went through the phases of struggle, then love, and then torture. And how did I notice? How wretched I am, I looked! How I pray I will soon reach the stage of the irreversible bodhisattva! How I pray!, if not in this life, then in the next. Then, having reached a place of safety, I can halt the growth of my own attachments, as well as her's, effectively controlling my future lives.

And while I departed Chenrezig I did not depart from her, for she pains me even now, as a burning ember in my mind.

It is not enough to be unmoved by a lovely woman; one must be safe from that exceptional one. It is she alone who offers paradise and the illusion of

perfection, so it is from she alone one must guard. It is a matter of arranging one's priorities correctly, so as to avoid the dilemma of being able to resist everything except temptation.

Mere sun lotion will not save you from a bullet, but armour will stop bullets and the sun also. Better still, become a ghost!

This woman is my own daughter and responsibility - how can I be an example to her if I look into her eyes with searching emotional need in my own? How will she become a Buddha if I behave in such a way? Where is my faith? What happened to my purpose? How can I, with a true mind, see such a woman as any different to a tree or a rock, reflected in all perfection as in a mirror. And quite apart from her physical form, how can I see her thoughts and feelings as objects of value, and of desire, when their roots, and their being, pervade All. How can I even dream of love and satisfaction when All is love and satisfaction.

What must the bodhisattva surmount? He must surmount love. Most of all he must surmount love of himself, lest he see himself in others!

What could possibly have caused me to fall into this pit? Just a few romantic thoughts over the previous weeks, an ear bent to a song of love, a few dreams of love - and we all know dreams come true. So I still have much work to do, and I'll just continue doing my best - what matter if I fail? Better to have fought and lost than to have never fought at all.

What is on your mind? Have you met anyone with potential?

Kevin

8th May, 1990

from:
David Quinn
15 Clarke Ave
Battery Pt
Hobart 7004

Hello Kevin,

Your last letter was the best of your writings I've seen thus far. Bodhicitta shone forth in all its terrifying glory - you are going all the way, you madman!

But alas, your warning has fallen on deaf ears. Beware of woman you said - and I've gone out and involved myself with a woman!

The apostle Paul says it is better to marry than to burn. In my case it is: better to marry than to cave in inwardly! Violence, self-deception, ignorance, and bullshit - these are the characteristics of much of my last three years. Some things that I attempted were not only unnatural, but were harmful to my development. It was a case of trying to do things in the wrong order.

How my intellect got hooked to your ideas! And how I danced to your tune! It was only a matter of imitation, I told myself - I can change. Formerly I was this; by habit I can change into that! And how true this still is; but not by force - my past lives will not allow a conformity to another's way, even if this other happens to be a witness to the Truth.

Intellectually speaking, I am going from strength to strength. But, as usual, it is my emotions which are slower to catch up. Thus, when I rejected woman in the past, it was done purely from the distance of logic. Tracey was easy to renounce. Her feminine delusions were strong enough to enable me to break away on the raft of disgust alone - at least my new woman has the decency to conceal her's. Logic however, is but fluff to the tide of emotions, and when I stepped out into the cold I got engulfed in a glacier!

My disgust with woman was not complete, I didn't understand them properly, too many doubts stole my reason. Pah! I'd never even began to think through the consequences of rejecting woman. No wonder I collapsed immediately - I hadn't realized that the rejection of her meant her society's rejection of me!

And so I've stepped back inside for a while, so that my emotions can prepare themselves properly for the next attempt - what am I saying? - for the first attempt!

Please note: in no way in the world have I admitted defeat!

The reason for my slow reply is not only shame, but also I've waited to send some essays I'm working on, in response to your enquiry about what's on my mind, but they are not finished yet. I'm doing a trilogy of essays on women: "An Examination of Woman", "Woman, Religion, and Mother", and "A Critique of the Independent Woman". They should all tie together under one essential theme: the role of woman in the preservation of society. As it is all coming together, they either have the potential for greatness or fizzleness. In any case, I hope to send you a copy shortly.

My anti-social ways do not permit me to meet many people, and those I do meet are generally women (of both sexes). I have had the displeasure of meeting this "new" breed of independent woman - and so have first-hand knowledge of them. What strikes me is the influence these women have over men, and consequently the enormous amount of woman that exists in the thinking of men.

It seems that wherever I go, seemingly widely differing disciplines - physics, philosophy, and Christianity, for instance - are in some sort of hidden conspiracy: for the promotion of the New Age (woops! woman's) philosophy! Hasn't academic philosophy done enough damage! - Christianity would have died out decades ago if this incessant mental masturbation of philosophy hadn't kept on reviving it! How's this for example: The universe must have had a First Cause. And why? Because otherwise there would have to have been an infinite series of events for the present to be reached. But since the present is here, and since an infinite series of events can never be gotten through, the universe must have had a First Cause! Marvelous! Whilst these learned men are busy attacking the fictitious concept of infinity, Christianity breathes a hearty sigh of relief!

Or look at the way academic philosophy restricts itself, nay, imprisons itself, in the meanderings of determinism and free-will! It can't conceive of any alternatives - namely, the logical implications of hard determinism, that is, Truth - but instead gives substance to each of these opposites, declares the whole problem unsolvable, and retires to the more fruitful discussion of who will get the next chair!

When I compare my thoughts with theirs, and see that my reason is superior to both the philosophers and the scientists, my immediate reaction is not one of pride, but rather the observation of how well these brilliant men disguise their dishonesty! - for I well know how much I conceal my own.

David

P.S

Can you give me another discussion on altered states? - but this time without the Buddhist terminology. I have no idea what a "still mind" is, for example, - or "one-pointed concentration". How does the altered state relate to our brain? Is it related to infant consciousness? My feeling is that altered states will be something to speak out against in the future, especially as the New Age seems to be replacing Christianity.

14th May, 1990

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Dear Dave,

Your taking refuge within the familiarity of the emotions is not so much a lapse from Truth, as an inevitability. You mentioned in a previous letter that your ego still held out hope for a worldly heaven, in the shape of one special kind of woman. The rest is history.

I remember you once told me that you had never really suffered in life. Well, you can't say that now! You say that some of what you attempted was harmful; but I wonder if in the end it will have done you more good than harm. Sometimes the best way to learn is the hard way.

Logic is indeed but fluff to the tide of emotions; but faith in logic evaporates emotions into nothingness. My own faith is not perfect, and I too burn because of woman. But for me, the burning is not too unbearable to live with (or die with more probably). I bless my past lives that although I still struggle, my love of Truth seems more central to me than my love of woman. Thus my solitude expresses a love of Truth rather than a disgust with delusion. And while disgust is a great virtue, love is greater still, for it comes when disgust has run its full course.

Even more than this, I find myself without any love at all. I become like an infant, who is ignorant of the whole gamut of man, woman, love and sex. My face becomes like the moon, still, cool, and reflective. Not giving out, but not holding back either. I see the world around me as a mystery. At such times a woman may pour her love onto and into me, but I can do nothing but watch it run off me as if it were water. This is not to say I do not suffer from memories! - ghosts seem to weigh more heavily on consciousness than do living people.

A young boy cannot grow a beard, no matter how he tries. But in his late teens the beard grows of its own accord. It is just a matter of hanging-in there.

Something too can be learned from what new agers call "creative visualization". If you can genuinely see, or visualize yourself, in your mind's eye, doing something you wish to do, then it will very likely come to pass. I would add that if on the other hand you can't for the life of you visualize yourself doing a particular thing, it will definitely not come to pass. In your case, you could see yourself falling for a particular kind of woman - and lo and

behold - it materialized! And you couldn't see yourself in the position of being hated by all society - again, lo and behold! Such is our karma.

In response to your request, I will try to rephrase my thoughts regarding altered states of consciousness.

I must make it absolutely clear that the only thing of any importance at all is truth. All else is useless. If a person speaks the truth they earn my praise; otherwise I scorn them.

The mind that speaks the truth is definitely an altered state. In fact, all states of mind are altered states, though some are more altered than others. The kind of states we are concerned with here are the still, clean-clear, reflective, powerful mind states. In such a state the mind is like a candle flame when there is not the smallest breath of wind - motionless and smooth. The new agers know all about this - but what do they know of truth?

There is no denying the powers of these altered states as far as confidence, mental sharpness, intuition and physical health are concerned. But again, what of truth? If our friends of the new age used such a mind as a stepping stone to truth, then well and good, but to them the altered state is a destination.

To develop a deep love of truth is not an easy task. One can only love truth in fullness and purity when one sees the truth in all its fullness and purity. And how does one see the truth in all its fullness and purity? One does so by freeing the mind of agitations (which buffet it) and dullness (which takes the edge off it), and then directing the mind, with all its (now) unrestrained power, towards truth.

The mental vision of the eternal is a great joy; but even this is paled by the feeling of eternity. And a great joy indeed is needed to out-joy the joy of woman.

New agers attain the clean-clear-still mind by merely concentrating their thoughts away from disturbing ideas and feelings. In contrast, the sage attains it by going directly for truth. The one is spiritual, the other is pitiful.

But how can one strive for truth, if one has an untruthful mind?: One sets out in the direction of truth, with a sure stride and never a backwards glance. This leads to mental clarity. Mental clarity illuminates more truth, which in turn forces more mental clarity, and so on. It is like loves flood-tide sweeping over the banks in surging waves.

Hope to hear from you soon,

Kevin

29-5-90

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill 4101

Further to your questions regarding altered states of consciousness:

How does it relate to our brain?:

I find it useful to picture the mind as a jungle of mental pathways. When many concerns and fears are playing on the mind all these pathways get clogged-up with traffic - none of which knows where it is going. The mind is as good as useless in such a state, as it is not able to make the free and easy mental associations which constitute 90% of its illuminating power. Thus the jumbled mind has no creativity, no imagery, no lateral thinking, no intuition, and no memory.

But if the countless concerns can be layed to rest, all the unnecessary traffic disappears. The roads of the mind are left free and wide for the specialized traffic which should be using them.

There are two ways of clearing away all the unwanted traffic: either one can concentrate the mind away from unpleasant subjects, or one can destroy all delusions outright.

Is the altered state related to infant consciousness?

An infant experiences the unhindered clean-clear mind because the jamming traffic is still under construction.

So, you could say there are three different forms of the clean-clear altered state of consciousness. Only one of which concerns us.

Over the next couple of months I will try to complete "Poison words from the heart". Well, as complete as it's going to be for now. If you have any gems of wisdom, or powerful images that alter the mind, or crystallized thoughts on the new age, then send them up and I'll try to incorporate them.

Overall the book has shaped-up as a condemnation of the feminine. Modern

science and the theory of relativity have shot man's (feeble) faith in rationality to provide absolute truths. Reality has imposed on his dreams and undermined the ideals which sustained him. Thus he has fallen back on his feminine resources. This is where women step in, for they know all about being women, and are all too keen to lend a helping hand - or a well placed boot.

But I have not written against the feminine just because the new age (the woman's age) is upon us. The feminine is the eternal enemy of reason, and this woman's age only highlights the fact.

All for now,

Kevin

P.S Looking forward to receiving your essays.

15-6-90

from:
David Quinn
15 Clarke Av
Battery Pt
Tas 7004

Hello Kevin,

Included are some thoughts of which I'd recorded over the last year. I don't know if they will be of any use to you - it seems I'm saying nothing new - but perhaps they might provide a contrast to your more lyrical style.

My essays on woman are coming along - slowly. There is a difference between pithy little one-liners and a sustained discussion! Not only is the literary side of things a problem, but also I find myself getting deeper and deeper into her maze, so that sooner or later I will have to shout: stop!

Of late, I've been wallowing in my mud again. Things are seeming to be conspiring against me! Nietzsche says that for the man of knowledge, this present age is perhaps the most dangerous of all. Due to science, and the intermingling of cultures, our gross intellectual delusions are evaporating - thus providing conditions for the arisal of infinite intellectual knowledge. On the other hand, we are brought up so delicately that any such knowledge becomes dangerous to us weaklings (this being the reason why the promising conditions for infinite intellectual knowledge are then all but obliterated). In other words, in the past the problem was less the presence of strength, but rather, the lack of intellectual ability. Today, the situation is somewhat reversed. This is why we see "love" being so worshipped as it is - we are too weak to face the nihilism of science.

The more that one thinks infinite thoughts, the more one has to deal with one's solidness. Cold, hunger, pain - all conspire to mock one's efforts, let alone the happiness on the other peoples faces! I have a question for you: if you get kicked off the dole, what then? The problem with soup kitchens is that they are run by Christians - to give satisfaction to their deludedness is definitely a contradiction to our philosophy! Indeed, to beg on the streets - could we here escape the Christian? It seems there is no way out of this dilemma - either work or beg - both involve lies and deception. What irony - the dole is perhaps the most ethical way to live!

Your last letter on altered states makes sense to me. I'd been tending to think of it in this way: the meditator receives his altered states unexpectedly

and only momentarily. This is because as soon as it happens anxiety arises - either from his feeling of success, or more to the point, from his unease over the totally new. Thus he quickly labels it "God" or "Nirvana", thereby giving his ego security again, and boosts it with the feeling of success. Although, of course, he can prolong the heavens through mental skill, as you have mentioned.

The true man, however, is thoroughly grounded in the habit of reason, is always aware of his non-self-existence, and thus enters these realms without fear. Because he places no egotistical value on them he inhabits the heavens freely when called to do so.

My mind, when freed from woman, has lately been on the old classical philosophical problem: the "thing-in-itself". Basically, it boils down to this: the relativity of perception and knowledge, hence the unknowability of absoluteness. All things in the world are fictions, are they not? Things are products of interactions between processes. The qualities of an object depends just as much on the nature of the perceiver, as on the nature of it's own particular causes. However, we must never fall into the trap of saying things are appearances. The perceived world is not a reflection of reality, but is reality itself! It becomes unreal when we believe that the qualities of an object belong to the object itself, or, indeed, if we believe in the reality of qualities or perceptions themselves.

What joy there is in realizing the misguidedness of the question: "Why does anything exist at all?!" How infinitely wrong this question is! Yet it is this very question which stumps the academic philosopher. As you can see, I've come in contact with this peculiar life-form of late. It is amazing - every time you get past their logical games they immediately start throwing things at you: "Don't you believe the Universe exists?", "How does a beginningless Universe explain anything?", "Why, why, why are we here at all?".

I've heard a lovely little phrase recently from science: The Universe is a single, infinite event.

It seems that academic philosophy is entirely based on the premise: the Universe exists. This contradiction in terms is never questioned, but instead supports all their fictions. I don't know if you've attended a first year philosophy course but it is truly disheartening to see this garbage under the name of philosophy - it convinces the students that all philosophy is useless (for they are young enough to see through it).

My course on philosophy:

- Destroying all boundaries, we eliminate the need for things. Things having disappeared, change is seen to be unreal. Once you get rid of change, then you get rid of movement. Unmoving, there ceases to be time. Gone is time; - and purpose is thereby eliminated. No purpose means no enlightenment, and thus all things are free to follow their natural course.

- It is true that God does not change. However, He is most emphatically not an unchanging substance!

- To the women in my audience: cause and effect is most definitely real. To the men in my audience: cause and effect is most definitely not real.

- Understand woman, and you will understand the highest. Transcend woman, and you will transcend the highest. Reject woman, and you will reject the highest - the ego!

- People who believe in free-will save themselves - and lose the world.

- The irony of woman - intolerance and injustice provide the necessary conditions for her tolerance and love.

- Do not get into the habit of resisting God! How does one develop such a habit? By preferring ease and comfort over struggle and hardship - that is, by preserving one's self. At every moment, we are faced with the decision between God and egotism. At every moment we strengthen the habit we choose. Is there anything more ridiculous than the attempts of the comfortable man seeking the knowledge of Truth? For if he happens, by chance, to stumble upon such knowledge, his first instinct will always be to run away!

- It is sometimes said that the path is a spiral. Great, just what we need - another excuse to escape constancy!

- Erotica: pornography approved by women. The sensitive man can get lusty with a clear conscience.

- The irrationality of western philosophy lies in it's continual need to revive irrational nonsense in order to give substance to its own love of rationality.

Western philosophy: an indispensable aid to women and Christians.

- Can the scientist be distinguished from the Christian in his search for "laws" of Nature? Is not the scientist now the high priest in touch with the divine? His search for "ultimates" over and above the flux of Nature will always be doomed to failure. For there are no laws of Nature - She is forever infinitely removed from such things.

- Freedom of thought can only increase in proportion to the amount of honesty one expresses in one's life.

- The words of the wise are whispers - to one another and no-one else! They flutter from one sagely heart to another, century to century, as if in joyous ignorance of the clamouring chatter of the masses. Occasionally though, the masses decide to look up - and they catch sight of one of these ghosts. They prepare the ropes and hooks, and catch hold of its sweet flutterings. They deludedly try and hoist themselves off the ground - but alas, they are much too heavy for the task; and succeed only in dragging down our heavenly friend. Then, as if in disgust or boredom, the masses enjoy crushing the life out of him - to extinction.

- There are no rewards for merely "sitting and thinking". He who believes in merit loses all merit.

- The compassionate always appear arrogant. The arrogant always appear compassionate.

- What are the two types of Buddhism? The Mahayanist is an utter rarity, a clash, a conflict, a thoroughly new species of life forever at odds with the world. He does not spare himself, he goes all the way - in him, the terror of reality is most concentrated, thus he appears as a nightmare to the weak and the compassionate. Outrage is the response to his truths: "Away with that man, he does not deserve to live!" The Hinayanist, on the other hand, is one who understands the implications of the Mahayanist life, but is too weak or cowardly to live it himself, at present. Let this be emphasised: if Mahayana is not understood, then one is neither a Mahayanist nor a Hinayanist. The latter is one who suffers greatly over his weaknesses - on account of his understanding - but his love of Truth is still very strong. Thus he has potential for Mahayana. And for the rest? I mean the "two vehicles" of Buddhism, with all its gurus and paths and meditational techniques? These numerous clear-eyed smiling people

are so infinitely below the level of the Hinayanist, and, hence, are not on any path at all.

- Perhaps all the philosophical teachings of the past are far emptier than they seem. Maybe it is a case, that the "great man of wisdom" in the past discovered something rather unpleasant - truth? - and then proceeded to distance themselves as far away as possible from it. This process of distancing then came to be known as philosophy . . .

- What an odd sort of existence it is, that befalls all those who try to "spiritualize" everything, or who try to fit the world into their minds. How the jar of jam must mock them!

- The bound mind: one which believes in boundaries.

- Negative thinking, self-criticism, guilt - these are but forms of positive thinking, and poor forms at that!

- An individual cannot have friends - by definition.

- The goal of woman: to turn men into infants.

- It is the one who is too cowardly to tread the spiritual path who is praised - for his humanity!

- Truth appears cold - as long as one is attached to warmth.

- All moralizing is a process of self-preservation performed by the weak. Philosophy is an attempt to preserve one's attachments. Where moralizing and philosophizing end, there begins the spiritual path.

- Destroy all those wretched scientific concepts like matter, space, stars, earth, life etc - then you will see that existence, true life - I mean, yourself - will last forever.

- The "decent citizen" is a reasonable man whose irrationality is able to be concealed by favourable circumstances.

- People read novels, fall in love, watch television - because their lives have no significance.

- The "mature" man - one who has lost the strength and desire for perfection, and now proclaims such striving to be folly. Here begins compassion . . .

- Of what use is independence to a woman, if she is - all alone?

- Spirituality is practicality - in it's most practical sense.

- The universal catch-cry is: "The most important thing in life is love." What is really meant here, of course, is: "The most important thing in life is that which makes me feel most important."

- "Opportunity knocks once, but temptation comes every day" - the philosophy of escape.

- One should not enter solitude in order to find God. No, correctly understood, solitude is the path to God.

- One cannot throw away attachments - they must be outgrown.

- To seek God is to fight God.

- Egotism is none other than the selling of oneself to others, in whatever shape or form. Humility and modesty are also tools of the trade.

- Earnestness - a means to escape seriousness?

- From the depths: God is found - only at the expense of others!

- On religion: "Where there is a corpse, there the vultures will gather." Jesus

- The way to God is through atheism pushed to the extreme. Yes, pure spirituality and pure atheism are one and the same.

- Life is fake, being a human is fake. Blessed is he who sees through the fakeness of life and humanity.

- Compassion: We love to see others who are weak and helpless - it gives us strength.

- Oh infinite seriousness! What art thou? What is thy plan for me? . . .
What? Die to the world? Never!

- Fundamentally, it is the heart which thinks - whatever affects the heart is thought about more effortlessly than any amount of "meditation".

- The majority of men stand with both feet firmly planted on the ground, while passing judgement on this, that, and the other. I, on the other hand, seem to be forever floating above the ground, my arms and legs flailing about for something to hold on to, while being buffeted about by this, that, and the other.

23rd June, 1990

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill, 4101

Dear Dave,

Thanks for the selection of writings you sent me. I have used about half of them in the book. I am trying to make this book of such a quality that it will be able to be read repeatedly without becoming boring - like an eternal well-spring of fresh, life-giving water. It would be good if I can publish the book in conjunction with my compilation of other peoples' writings (which you already have), just to show that I don't have a monopoly on the truth. Together they would constitute the last word that needs to be said on the matter. Of course, that word was spoken thousands of years ago, but never as clearly and unreservedly as I have done.

I have yet to decide on a title for the book, but I have narrowed the choice down to three: "Poison words for the heart", "Poison words from the heart", or "Words for eternity". I tend to like the first one, though I am interested in what appeals to you. I think a good title for our correspondence would be "Letters between enemies".

The question of survival is not a dilemma if you just do your best for wisdom. You cannot avoid boosting other peoples ego's. Your mere existence feeds the ego's of your parents. So it is a matter of weighing-up the pros and cons, and then doing the best you can. All one can realistically do is minimize the degree to which one can be used by others.

On the subject of altered states, they have an important value as a form of bio-feedback. You can know your love of God is good if your mind is still, clear, and receptive, and your body relaxed, supple, and balanced (provided of course that you don't try to achieve samadhi by other means). The reason I stress the importance of meditative states so often is because they provide a convenient benchmark and a scale. They serve remind us that we cannot become complacent until we are able to rest in samadhi twenty four hours a day, as fully enlightened Buddhas.

You said in a previous letter that you think some women have potential for greatness. You will have a hard job convincing me of that. For while it is

certainly possible for women to attain Buddhahood if they become men, such a mind transformation is so difficult for them.

I met "your" Sue last week. She is certainly far ahead of the pack of women, but I can still see she has many hindrances. The greatest single hindrance for a woman is her need of a man. She must make a master of man regardless of his intelligence, which involves subverting her own intelligence. Man, on the other hand, wants a woman to worship the power of his mind, so his sacrifice is not nearly so damaging.

I hope Sue pursues her ideas and writes a book about women. Being a woman, her words will have a thousand times more impact on that half of the species than anything I can say. It is difficult for a woman to brand another woman "sexist", for all women share the same body. Women will not be able to separate themselves from her, and they will have to confront what she says.

I will complete the book over the next six weeks, and I will then get as many bound photocopies of it as I can afford. I will try and get a few copies hard-bound, as you have done with the compilation. If you can afford a couple of hundred dollars, that should buy you quite a few copies to do with as you please.

24th August, 1990

from:
Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Hello Dave,

Have you received your copies of "Poison for the heart" which I sent a few weeks ago?

Sometimes when I read it I think it is good. At other times I think it is drab and awkward. Regardless, it is the best I can do given my limited literary talents.

Getting it published will be a problem. Most authors pay for the publication of their first book. But I have to try; I can't think of anything better to do in my life. I have sent copies to Phillip Adams, Clive Robertson, and David Millikan (Director of ABC religious programs) asking them for letters of recommendation which I can take to a publisher. I haven't heard back from them yet.

How are your essays progressing? What is Sue up to?

Here's wishing you Faith

Kevin

14-9-90

from:
David Quinn
17 Broadwaters Pde
Sandy Bay
Tasmania 7005

Kevin

Yes, I received your books. To my way of mind, it succeeds in clearly indicating the direction of Truth, or, more importantly, in bringing the past teachings of the Buddha etc from the distance of the imagination to actuality. That is, it confronts one with choices and decisions. It is the sort of literature that would inspire either love or hate, and nothing in between. I'm sure you know this.

From a purely literary point of view, I do find it uneven. That is, it is smooth and fluid in many places, but there are patches of awkwardness - it appears rushed, not polished, in places. I dare say that a publishing company will ask you to "rework" it before consenting to publish it. However, it is a minor point. (I would be interested in hearing the replies of Adams and co.). In short, the book is like having Kevin himself in the house.

My own essays are on hold. Indeed, I haven't penned a word for several months, due to fights and flounderings in the realm of "No-faith". A pity, because I consider the essays so far as being excellent, and I note with interest that much of the material is not covered in your own essays.

Furthermore, I'm thinking of adding another whole section, a subject not strictly on women, but related, and this, I see will take a while. So, perhaps, the essays will be finished within, hopefully, the next eight years.

My specialty at the moment is the developing crystal-clarity of my ego. It is amazing how much can be achieved on top of a fence!

In any case, I must go now as I must go and talk to Kevin.

David

P.S I've moved to a new address.

5th October, 1990

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Hello Dave,

I love it when our part of the earth tilts more towards the sun. I have recently been basking in it at Chenrezig, building up my energy for fighting against the Dharma and all its True Teachers.

While there I had a discussion with a chap about how to deal with the 99% (morons). He said that white lies were acceptable, as it attracted them to Buddhism, where they would later come to see the real truth. I said that lies, no matter how small, cannot be justified under any circumstances. I enclose a copy of the letter I have just sent to him on the subject. I am sure you will find it of interest.

Regarding "Poison for the heart", yes, it certainly is patchy from a stylistic perspective. I think the reason is that I tend to write better about subjects I personally find inspiring. Yet a significant proportion of "Poison" was written purely out of a feeling of responsibility, because I believed that some things had to be said, in whatever crude manner, because if I didn't say them nobody else was going to. After re-writing them two or three times without much improvement, my impatience said "Enough! - life is so short." If my ego got too aroused while trying to pamper a few words or sentences into a beautiful form I had to stop, and make do with less than perfection.

I could've spent the next 30 years polishing it smooth, but I don't know when I'm going to die. I decided that I must get some copies out now, because such writings are so rare and valuable. Now it is done I can spend whatever years I have left to perfect it and add to it further.

For this same reason, I'd like to see your essays on women, especially as they covered different material to my writings. Think of your future lives! How much they depend on you! If you die before sharing a few copies around, then your efforts will have been largely wasted.

Here are a few ideas that have occurred to me recently:

- Does a newborn baby get bored? No, he has nothing to get bored with.

Now, sentimental rubbish or poisonous insight?

- When in love,
She smiles.

When she smiles,
He worries.

- Her joy is for her joy itself, And her smile is for joy, and not for him.
She looks inwards, while he looks to her. For the joy is her's, which she cannot give. Because he cannot take it.

- At the moment of love
She accepts
He suspects

Here is the letter I sent to Gordon:

4-10-90

from
Kevin Solway (to Gordon)
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill 4101

Hello Gordon,

Hakuin is probably the best teacher of truth I have ever come across. Superior even to the Buddha. His every word plunges my heart into waves of joy. I only wish I could express myself as eloquently as him. Because I can't, I thought I'd send up this photocopy of one of Hakuin's teachings (*), which argues my point about "levels of teachings" better than I can. However, I have been writing about this subject a bit lately, so I'll accompany Hakuin with some of my own thoughts. The numbers below coincide with those marked on the photocopies. Tell me how you think Hakuin's teaching methods match up with those of the Tibetan lamas!

Talk by Hakuin
No. 5
Introductory to lectures on the records of old Sokko.
Translated by Norman Waddell.

IN THE THIRD section of the *Platform Sutra*, the one devoted to doubts and questions, the Sixth Patriarch makes the statement: "Considered as a manifestation in form, the Paradise in the West lies one hundred and eight thousand leagues from here, a distance created by the ten evils and eight false practices in ourselves." Shuko of Unsei, a Ming priest of recent times who lived in Hangchou during the Wan-li period (1573-1672), wrote in his commentary on the *Amida Sutra*:

The *Platform Sutra* mistakenly identifies India with the Pure Land of Bliss. India and China are both part of this defiled world in which we live. If India were the Pure Land, what need would there be for people to aspire toward the eastern quarter or yearn toward the west? "Amida's Pure Land of Bliss lies west of here, many millions of Buddha lands distant from this world."

What we know as the *Platform Sutra* consists of records compiled by disciples of the Sixth Patriarch. We have no assurance that what they have compiled is free from error. We must be very careful to keep such a work from beginning students. If it falls into the hands of those who lack the capacity to understand it, it will turn them into wild demons of destruction. How deplorable!

Faugh! Who was this Shuko anyway? Some hidebound Confucian? An apologist for the Lesser Vehicle? Maybe a Buddhist of Pure Land persuasion who cast groundless aspersions on this sacred work because he was blind to the profound truth contained in the *Meditation Sutra*, [Which states that the Pure Land is "not far from here."] because he was simply not equipped with the eye which would enable him to read sutras? Or maybe he was a cohort of Mara the Destroyer manifesting himself in the guise of a priest, shaven-headed, black-robed, hiding beneath a mask of verbal prajna, bent on destroying with his slander the wondrously subtle, hard-to-encounter words of a true Buddhist saint?

Such ascriptions would seem to fit him all too well. Yet someone took exception to them. "There is no reason to wonder about Master Ko," he said. "Take a good look and you will see that he just lacked the eye of kensho. He didn't have the strength that comes from realizing the Buddha's truth. Not having the karma from previous existence to enable him to reach prajna wisdom if he continued forward and being afraid to retreat because of the terrible samsaric retribution he knew awaited him in the next life, he turned to Pure Land faith. He began to devote himself exclusively to calling Amida's Name, hoping that at his death he would see Amida and his attendant

Bodhisattvas arriving to welcome him to birth in the Pure Land and thereby attain the fruit of Buddhahood.

"So when he happened to open the *Platform Sutra* and read the golden utterances of the Sixth Patriarch expounding the authentic 'direct pointing' of the Zen school, and he realized they were totally at odds with the aspirations he had been cherishing, it dashed all his hopes. Yet this also roused him into putting together the commentary we now see. It was his way of redeeming the worthless notions to which he had grown so attached.

"So he was no Confucian, Taoist, or ally of Mara either. He was just a blind priest with a tolerable facility for the written word. We should not be surprised at him. Beginning from the time of the Sung dynasty, people like him have been as numerous as flax seed."

If what this person says is in fact true, the course of action that Shuko took was extremely ill-advised. We are fortunate that we do have the compassionate instructions of the Sixth Patriarch. Shouldn't we just read them with veneration, believe in them with reverence, and enter into their sacred precincts? What are we to make of a person who would use his minimal literary talent to endeavor to belittle the lofty wisdom and great religious spirit of a man of the Sixth Patriarch's stature? Even granting that to be permissible as long as he is deluding only himself, it is a sad day indeed when he commits his misconceptions to paper and publishes them as a book which can subvert the Zen teaching for untold numbers of future students.

We generally regard the utterances of a sage as being at odds with the notions held by ordinary people, and people who are at variance with such utterances we regard as unenlightened. Now if the words of a sage are no different from the ideas the unenlightened hold to be right and proper, are not those words themselves ignorant and unenlightened, and unworthy of our respect? If the ignorant are not at variance with the words of an enlightened sage, doesn't that make them enlightened men, and as such truly worthy of our reverence?

My comment:

The millions upon millions of Buddhists all agree with the teachings of their great gurus. This means that either the gurus are fakes/evil liars, or the millions upon millions are all truly enlightened beings.

To begin with, Sokei Daishi was a great master with an unsurpassed capacity for transmitting the Dharma. None of the seven hundred pupils who studied with the Fifth Patriarch at Mount Huang-mei could even approach him. His offspring cover the earth now from sea to sea, like the stones on a go board or the stars in the heavens. A common hedgerow monk like Shuko, whose arbitrary conjecture and wild surmise all comes from fossicking around in piles

of old rubbish, does not even belong in the same category as Sokei.

Are you not aware, Shuko, that Master Sokei is a timeless old mirror in which the realms of heaven and hell and the lands of purity and impurity are all reflected equally? Don't you know that they are, as such, the single eye of the Zen monk? A diamond hammer couldn't break it. The finest sword on earth couldn't penetrate it. This is a realm in which there is no coming and going, no birth and death.

The light emitted from the white hair between Amida Buddha's eyebrows, which contains five Sumerus, and his blue lotus eyes, which hold the four great oceans, as well as the trees of seven precious gems and pools of eight virtues that adorn his Pure Land, are all shining brilliantly in our minds right now - they are manifest with perfect clarity right before our eyes. The black cord hell, aggregate hell, shrieking hell, interminable hell and all the rest, are, as such, the entire body of the venerable Sage of Boundless Life (Amida) in all his golden radiance.

Whether it is called the Shining Land of Lapis Lazuli in the East or the Immaculate Land of Purity in the South, it makes no difference - originally, it is all a single ocean of perfect, unsurpassed awakening, and, as such, it is also the intrinsic nature in every human being.

Yet even while it is present in them all, the way each one of them views it is never the same, but varies according to the weight of individual karma and the amount of merit and good fortune they enjoy.

Those who suffer the terrible agonies of hell see seething cauldrons and white-hot furnaces. Craving ghosts see raging fires and pools of pus and blood. Fighting demons see a violent battleground of deadly strife. The unenlightened see a defiled world of ignorance and suffering - all thorns and briars, stones and worthless shards - from which they turn in loathing to seek the Land of Purity. Inhabitants of the deva realms see a wonderful land of brilliant lapis lazuli and transparent crystal. Adherents of the two vehicles see a realm of transition on the path to final attainment. Bodhisattvas see a land of true recompense filled with glorious adornments. Buddhas see a land of eternal tranquil light. How about you Zen monks. *What do you see?*

You must be aware that the jewelled nets of the heavenly realms and the white-hot iron grates in the realms of hell are themselves thousand-layered robes of finest silk; that the exquisite repasts of the Pure Land paradise and the molten bronze served up to hell-dwellers are, as such, banquets replete with a hundred rare tastes. Nowhere in heaven or on earth will you find a second moon. Yet there is no way for those of ordinary or inferior capacity to know it.

Followers of the patriarch-teachers, you monks of superior capacity investigating the hidden depths, until you release your hold from the edge of the precipice to which you hang and perish into life anew, you can never enter this samadhi. But the moment you do, the distinction between Dharma principle and enlightened person disappears, differentiations between mind and

environment vanish. This is what the coming of the old Buddha to welcome you to the Pure Land is really about. You are those superior religious seekers the sutra says are destined for "the highest rank of the highest rebirth in the Pure Land."

Master Ko, if you do not once gain entrance into the Pure Land in this way, you could pass through millions upon millions of Buddha lands, undergo rebirth eight thousand times over, but it would all be a mere shadow in a dream, no different from the imagined land conjured up in Kantan's slumbering brain.¹(*)

The Zen master Sokei stated unequivocally that the ten evils and eight false practices separate us from the Western Paradise. It is a perfectly justified, absolutely authentic teaching. Were the countless Tathagatas in the six directions all to manifest themselves in this world at one time, even they could not change a single syllable of it.

Furthermore, Master Ko, if I said to you, "The Western Paradise is eighteen leagues from here." "The Western Paradise is seven feet from here." "The Western Paradise is eighteen inches over there." these would be perfectly justified, absolutely authentic teachings. How can you lay a hand, or foot, on them! When I make those statements what village do you suppose I am referring to? And if you hesitate or speculate for even a split second, a broken vermilion staff seven feet long stands ready against the wall.

Your resentment at finding the Sixth Patriarch's ideas different to your own led you to take a true teacher totally dedicated to the Buddhist goal of universal salvation and represent him as a dunce who does not even know the difference between the Pure Land and India - do you think that is right?

We can only suppose that some preconception of the Sixth Patriarch which had formed in Shuko's mind led him to think: "It's really a shame that the Sixth Patriarch, with that profound enlightenment of his, was originally a woodcutter from the uncivilized south. Being illiterate, he couldn't read the Buddhist scriptures. He was rude, completely ignorant, in fact, he was no different from those countrymen who tend cows and catch fish or work as menials."

But is it really possible that even such people wouldn't know the difference between the Pure Land and India? Even a tiny child believes in the Pure Land and worships it with a sense of reverence. And we are talking about a great Buddhist teacher - one of the "difficult-to-meet, hard-to-encounter" sages who rarely appears in this world. The venerable Sokei Daishi was a

¹¹ Kantan was a poor scholar who, while travelling to take the official examinations, dreamed that he passed them with flying colors and, after an illustrious government career, attained the post of prime minister, whereupon he woke up, realized that life is an empty dream, and returned home.

veritable udumbara flower who blossomed auspiciously in answer to the prophecies of the Buddhist sages.

This genuinely enlightened man, endowed with the ten superhuman powers of Buddhahood, appeared in the world riding upon the vehicle of the universal vow and revealed a secret of religious attainment not preached by any Buddha-patriarch before him. It was like the Dragon god entering the world-encompassing ocean, turning its salt water to fresh and working with perfectly unobstructed freedom to make it fall over all the earth as pure, sweet manna, reviving parched wastelands from the ravages of great drought. It was like a rich man entering an immense treasure house, emerging with many articles rarely seen in the world and distributing them to the cold and hungry, giving them new life by relieving their need and suffering. Such activities have nothing to do with speculation or conjecture. They cannot be approached by ordinary human understanding.

Priests of today who have woven themselves into complicated webs of words and letters, who, after sucking and gnawing on this literary sewage until their mouths suppurate, proceed to spew out a tissue of irresponsible nonsense - should not even be mentioned in the same breath as the Sixth Patriarch.

My comment:

Guess who this refers to!

Shakyamuni Buddha tells us that the Pure Land lies many millions of Buddha-lands distant from here. The Zen patriarch Eno says the distance is one hundred and eight thousand leagues. Both utterances come from men whose power - strength derived from great wisdom - is awesomely vast. Their words reverberate like the earth-shaking stomp of the elephant king, resound like the roar of the lion monarch, bursting the brains of any jackal or other scavenger who stops to ponder them or shows so much as the slightest hesitation.

Yet Shuko glibly delivers the judgment that the "*Platform Sutra* mistakenly regards India as the Pure Land of Bliss." "What we know as the *Platform Sutra*," he says, "consists of records compiled by disciples of the Sixth Patriarch. We have no assurance that what they have compiled is free from error." Now maybe that sounds like he is trying to be helpful, but what he is really doing is disparaging the Sixth Patriarch.

In the *Rokusodankyo Kokan*, a commentary on the *Platform Sutra*, the author writes: "According to gazeteers and geographical works I have consulted, the distance from the west gate of Chang-an to the east gate of Kapilavastu in India is one hundred thousand leagues, so Shuko's criticism of the *Platform Sutra* for mistaking India for the Pure Land may well have a solid basis in fact."

Now that isn't even good rubbish. But even supposing (alas!) that the

author's penchant for poking into old books is justified, I want him to tell me: What gazeteer or geography since the time of the Great Yu ever stated that India is distant from China by ten evils and eight wrong practices? It's a great shame, really. Instead of wasting his time nosing through reference books, why didn't he just read the *Platform Sutra* with care and respect, and devote himself attentively to investigating Shakyamuni Buddha's true meaning? If he had continued to contemplate it - both coming and going - he would suddenly have broken through and grasped that meaning. Then he would have that "solid basis" of his. He would be clapping his hands joyfully, howling with laughter - he couldn't have helped himself. *How about those great roars of laughter? What would they mean?*

It is absurd for someone in Master Ko's advanced state of spiritual myopia to be going around delivering wild judgments on the golden utterances of a genuine sage like the Sixth Patriarch. The author of the *Rokusodankyo Kokan* is another of those like Master Ko who spends his entire life entangled in a jungle of vines down inside a dark cave. They are like a midget in a crowded theatre trying to watch a play. Since he can't see anything, he jumps up and down and applauds when everyone else does. They also remind you of a troupe of blind Persians who stumble upon a parchment leaf inscribed with Sanskrit words; they wander off into the middle of nowhere and secretly pool their knowledge trying to decipher the meaning of the text. But as they haven't the faintest idea what it says, they fail to get even a single word right, and they turn themselves into laughing stocks in the bargain.

Actually, such people do not even merit our attention, and yet since I am afraid of the harm they can do misleading even a few sincere seekers, I find it necessary to lay down a few entangling vines of my own like this.

"The greatest care must be taken to keep such a work from beginning students," says Shuko's commentary. "If it does chance to fall into the hands of those who lack the capacity to understand it, it will turn them into wild demons of destruction. How deplorable!"

My answer to the gross irresponsibility of such a statement is: we must take the greatest care not to pass stupid, misinformed judgments on a work like the *Platform Sutra*. When people with unenlightened views judge such a work on the basis of their own ignorance, they immediately transform themselves into wild demons of destruction. It is that which I find deplorable.

To begin with, Tathagatas appear in the world one after another for the sole purpose of opening up paths to Buddha-wisdom for sentient beings. That has always been their primary aim in manifesting themselves. **Although the sutras and commentaries contain a variety of Dharma "gates" - abrupt and gradual teachings, verbal and pre-verbal teachings, exoteric and esoteric teachings, first and last teachings - in the end they all come down to one teaching and one teaching alone: the fundamental self-nature inherent in each and every person.**

My comment:

Note especially:- "Pure Land of her own intrinsic mind-nature" - not a Pure Land after death. Note also:- "It was a specific remedy (my italics) prescribed for the occasion and imparted to Queen Vaidehi alone." That is, the Buddha did not teach it to large masses of dull-witted beginners indiscriminately.

Abrupt teachings vs gradual, verbal vs pre-verbal, exoteric vs esoteric, first vs last teachings. All this does not, and should not mean lies vs truth. Better small truths than small lies. "Gradual teachings" refer to small truths, imparted with great skill in means, by an enlightened teacher on a particular occasion and for a particular person.

Then what are these elusive "gradual teachings" (or small truths for small minds)? They are anything that can inspire a person to think for themselves, and come to love and depend on reason. Intelligent humour, thought provoking stories, inspiring knowledge, mind-altering words and images, all these are the "first teachings", and never involve untruths or misleading blind alleys.

Needless to say, this form of teaching is not easy, and does not lend itself to organizations, large crowds, economics and timetables. It involves quality time spent between the enlightened guru and the student.

It is no different in Sokei Daishi's case. While the *Platform Sutra* which contains his teaching has chapters devoted to his religious career, to his answers to questioners doubts, to meditation and wisdom, to repentance, and so on - they are in the end none other than the one teaching of kensho (seeing into the true self-nature). Wise sages for twenty-eight generations in India and six generations in China, as well as the venerable Zen teachers of the Five Houses and Seven Schools who descended from them, have every one of them transmitted this Dharma of kensho as they strove to lead people to awakening in Shakyamuni's place devoting themselves singlemindedly to achieving the fundamental aim for which all Buddhas appear in the world. None of them ever uttered one word about the Western Paradise, nor preached a single syllable about birth in the Pure Land. When the students who came after them began their study of the Way and took it upon themselves to read the *Platform Sutra*, none of them was ever reduced to becoming a wild demon. On the contrary, it matured their attainment and enabled them to grow into great Dharma vessels. So please, Master Ko, stop whining about the *Platform Sutra*.

It is because of misguided men like you that Nankai Soho of the Yuan wrote:

The *Platform Sutra* is not mere words. It is the principle of Bodhidharma's

`direct pointing' that has been transmitted from patriarch to patriarch. It is thanks to it that great, venerable masters in the past like Nangaku and Seigen cleared their minds. After them, it cleared the minds of their disciples Baso and Sekito. The spread of the Zen school today throughout the world is also firmly rooted in this same principle of direct pointing. Indeed, is it possible that anyone in the future could clear his mind and see into his own nature without recourse to this same direct pointing?

These words of Nankai Soho represent the accepted norm in Zen temples and monasteries everywhere. Yet there is Master Ko, ensconced in some remote temple, giving forth with those partisan hunches of his. The one is as different from the other as cloud from mud.

Since some people are naturally perceptive and some are not, and some have great ability while others have little, there is a correspondingly great variety in the teachings which Buddhas impart to them. Buddhas work in the same way that skilled physicians do. A physician does not set out when he examines patients with just one medical prescription already fixed in his mind; since the ailments from which they suffer vary greatly, he must be able to prescribe a wide variety of remedies for them.

Take, for example, the desire for rebirth found among followers of the Pure Land school. Shakyamuni, the Great Physician King who relieves the suffering of sentient beings, in order to save Queen Vaidehi from the misery of a cruel imprisonment, converted her to firm belief in the Pure Land of her own intrinsic mind- nature by using good and skillful means which he devised for her particular situation. It was a specific remedy prescribed for the occasion and imparted to Queen Vaidehi alone.

My comment:

Note especially:- "Pure Land of her own intrinsic mind-nature" - not a Pure Land after death. Note also:- "It was a specific remedy (my italics) prescribed for the occasion and imparted to Queen Vaidehi alone." That is, the Buddha did not teach it to large masses of dull-witted beginners indiscriminately.

Abrupt teachings vs gradual, verbal vs pre-verbal, exoteric vs esoteric, first vs last teachings. All this does not, and should not mean lies vs truth. Better small truths than small lies. "Gradual teachings" refer to small truths, imparted with great skill in means, by an enlightened teacher on a particular occasion and for a particular person.

Then what are these elusive "gradual teachings" (or small truths for small minds)? They are anything that can inspire a person to think for themselves, and come to love and depend on reason. Intelligent humour, thought provoking stories, inspiring knowledge, mind-altering words and images, all these are the "first teachings", and never involve untruths or

misleading blind alleys.

Needless to say, this form of teaching is not easy, and does not lend itself to organizations, large crowds, economics and timetables. It involves quality time spent between the enlightened guru and the student.

Men like Shuko, not having attained the truth of the Buddha's wonderful skillful means, cling mulishly to the deluded notion of a Pure Land and Buddhas which exist separately apart from the mind. They are incapable of truly grasping that there is no such thing as a Buddha with his own Buddha land, that the village right in front of them and the village behind them and everywhere else - it is all Buddha land. There is no such thing as a Buddha body either. South and north, east and west, all is the Buddha body in its entirety. Being incapable of truly grasping such truths, when Shuko heard a genuine Buddhist teaching which said, "you are separated from the Western Paradise by the ten evils and eight false practices in yourself," he was appalled because it did not agree with the conception of the Pure Land which he had erected in his own mind. He hoped that by roundly condemning it he could keep others from hearing or reading about it.

If we let Shuko have his way and keep beginners from reading the *Platform Sutra* on the grounds that it is unsuitable for them, then the *Kegon Sutra*, and the *Lotus, Nirvana*, and other Mahayana sutras in which the Buddha reveals the substance of his enlightenment, are not suitable for them either. I say this because the great master Eno, having penetrated the profoundest subtleties of the Buddha-mind, having broken decisively through the deep ground whence the ocean of Buddhist teaching finds its source, spoke with the same tongue, sang from the same mouth, as all the other Buddhas.

Furthermore, the *Kegon Goron* states that "aspirants belonging to the first class recognize the Buddha's great power, observe his precepts, and by utilizing the power of the vow working in themselves, gain birth in his Pure Land. That Pure Land is a provisional manifestation, not a real Pure Land. The reason aspirants seek it is because they have not seen into their own true nature and hence do not know that ignorance is in itself the fundamental wisdom of the Tathagatas - and they are thus still subject to the working of causation. The preaching of a scripture such as the Amida Sutra is based upon such a principle."

My comment:

"Aspirants belonging to the first class recognize the Buddha's great power, observe his precepts, and by utilizing the power of the vow working in themselves, gain birth in his Pure Land."

Recognizing the Buddha's great power means realizing the fact that there is no free will. Observing his precepts means living in awareness of the laws of cause and effect. The Pure

Land is the bodhicitta mind, which gives one the confidence and resolve to cleanse oneself of all gross defilements. See here, even for beginners, there are no concessions made.

We may be sure if Shuko had seen this passage, he would have grabbed his brush and dashed off some lines about the *Kegon Goron* being unfit for beginners. The *Kegon Goron* is fortunate indeed to have avoided the blind-eyed gaze of the "Great Teacher of the Lotus Pond." It saves us having to listen to warnings about "giving it to people of small capacity," and "turning them into wild demons." Sohaku Daishi dwelling within the stillness of eternal samadhi, should be delighted at this stroke of good fortune.

Seen by the light of the true Dharma eye, all people - the old and the young, the high and the low, priest and laymen, wise and otherwise - are endowed with the wonderful virtue of Buddha wisdom. It is present without any lack in them all. Not one among them - or even half of one - is to be cast aside and rejected because he is a beginner.

Nonetheless, since when students first set out on the Way they do not know what is beneficial to their practice and what is not, and they can't distinguish immediate needs from less urgent ones, we refer to them for the time being as beginners. **At that point, they read the sacred Buddhist writings and entrust themselves to the guidance of a good teacher and friend.**

My comment:

Or, failing to find a good teacher and friend, they entrust themselves to the dictates of reason, which, in the end, is the only good teacher and friend.

Upon bringing the Great Matter to completion and fully maturing into great Dharma vessels, they will acquire a wonderful ability for expressing their attainment and, using that ability, will strive to impart the great Dharma-gift to others, holding Buddha-wisdom up like a sun to illuminate the eternal darkness, keeping its vital pulse alive through the degenerate age of the latter day. It is these we can call true descendents of the Buddhas, those whose debt of gratitude to their predecessors has been repaid in full.

But if they are compelled to practice the Nembutsu along with all other students of whatever kind and capacity on the grounds that they are beginners, we will have all the redoubtable members of the younger generation - those Bodhidharma praised as being "native born to the Mahayana in this land," people gifted with outstanding talent, who have it in them to become great Dharma pillars worthy to stand in the future with Tokusan, Rinzai, Baso, and Sekito - traipsing along after half-dead old duffers, sitting in the shade next to the pond with listless old grannies, dropping their heads and closing their eyes in broad daylight and intoning endless choruses of Nembutsu. If that happens,

whose children are we going to find to carry on the vital pulse of Buddha-wisdom? Who will become the cool, refreshing shade trees to provide refuge for those in the latter day? All the true customs and traditions of the Zen school will fall right to earth. The seeds of Buddhahood will wither, die, and disappear forever.

My comment:

While my regard for humanity is low in the extreme, I have a higher opinion of people than the Tibetan lamas do. I do not believe people are so stupid, especially the young, that they haven't the intelligence to see and enjoy the truth. My enlightenment did not come from gurus, scriptures, chanting mantras, doing prostrations, practicing virtuous conduct, or sitting in the lotus posture. It came from having a human brain, the vital seed of Buddhahood. Everybody has this seed, but they smother it, cover it up, crush it to death with so much religious garbage.

Give me a person for a few years and I will help them to uncover their own Buddhahood. But let them become religious, taking on-board a thousand lies and justifications for their own inadequacy, and they will remain imprisoned within samsara for thousands of lives to come. Every person is only a hairsbreadth away from enlightenment, but religion tells you that you are a "beginner", and that you must learn all the scriptures, and so on, just so you can get to the first stage. The great gurus insist that after a lifetime of effort you may eventually attain their level! What a pitiful thing that would be! All that work, just to bury your own humanity.

"Beginners" invariably have more brains, more potential, than their so-called gurus. Such a guru only serves to cut-off the supply of valuable nutrients beginners need while they are growing. Nipped in the bud, their spirits destroyed, they end up as weak, unhealthy and stunted individuals for the rest of their miserable lives.

The young are like fully formed chicks begging to be released from their shells. All it requires is a helping peck from the mother to set them free. But the mother is scared they might die from the cold air, so lets them die lonely, trapped within their dark and suffocating prison.

I want these great and stalwart men to choose the right path. If, at a time like this, the golden words in the Tripitaka, all the Mahayana sutras which were compiled in the Pippali cave for beginners to use in after ages, if everything except the three Pure Land sutras is relegated to the back shelves of the bookcase and left there untouched, it will end up as bug-fodder, buried uselessly in the bellies of bookworms, no different from stacks of fake burial money left forgotten in an old shrine deep in the mountains - of absolutely no

use to anyone. How deplorable!

My comment:

I hope "Poison for the heart" can be found on the library shelves, and that it is not hidden away in some obscure cupboard.

Those people mentioned before whom the *Meditation Sutra* says are destined for the highest rank of the highest rebirth in the Pure Land, those suited to read the Mahayana sutras, have now bitten the dust as well - they no longer exist. Shuko's commentary, in slanderously rejecting anything counter to his own notions, may be compared to the infamous Ch'in emperor's book-burning pit. The Ch'in emperor's tyrannical policies were totally at odds with the teachings in the Confucian classics and other Confucian writings. Resenting this, he had his Confucians buried alive and all their books consigned to the flames. What Shuko has done represents a catastrophe of similar proportions.

The three Wu emperors undertook openly to suppress Buddhism. Shuko attempted to do the same thing surreptitiously. The former went about it publicly, the latter did it on the sly - yet the crime is one. But Shuko is not really to blame for his transgressions. He did what he did because he never encountered an authentic master to guide him and was unable to attain the eye that would have enabled him to see through into the secret depths. He did not possess the wonderful spiritual power that comes from kensho.

Yet Shuko is given as "an example for good teachers past, present, and future." People praise him as "foremost among the great priests of the Zen, Teaching, and Precepts schools." Can they be in their right minds!

The Zen forests of today will be found upon inspection to be thickly infested with a race of bonzes just like Shuko. You find them everywhere, fastened with grips of death to the "silent tranquillity" of their "withered-tree" sitting - and imagining that to be the true practice of the Buddha's Way. They don't take kindly to views which are not in agreement with their own. The Buddha's sutras they regard as they would a mortal enemy and forbid students to read them. They fear them as an evil spirit fears a sacred amulet.

Being foolishly wedded to ordinary perception and experience in the belief that it is Zen, they take offense at anything which differs from their own convictions. They view the records of the Zen masters as they would a deadly adversary and refuse to let students near them. They avoid them like the lame hare avoids the hungry tiger. When we have adherents of the Pure Land shunning and disparaging the sacred writings of the Buddhas, and followers of Zen out to slander them into disrepute, the danger to the Buddhist Way must be said to have reached a critical stage.

Don't get me wrong. I am not urging students to become masters of the

classics and histories, to spend all their time exploring ancient writings, or to lose themselves in the pleasures of poetry and letters; I am not telling them to compete in these fields against others and win fame for themselves by proving their superiority. They could attain an eloquence equal to that of the Great Purna, possess knowledge so great they surpassed Shariputra, but if they are lacking in the basic stuff of enlightenment, if they do not have the right eye of kensho, false views bred of arrogance will inevitably find their way deep into their spiritual vitals, blasting the life from the seed of Buddhahood, and turning them into sentient beings destined for permanent residency in hell.

It is not like this with true followers of the Way. They must as an essential first step see their own original nature as clearly as if they are looking at the palm of their hand. When from time to time they take and read through the writings that contain the words and teachings of the Buddha-patriarchs, they will illuminate those ancient teachings with their own minds. They will visit authentic teachers for guidance. They will pledge themselves with firm determination to work their way through the final koans of the patriarchal teachers and, before they die, to produce from their forge a descendent - one person or at least half a person - as a way of repaying their deep debt of thanks to their predecessors. It is such people who are worthy to be called "progeny of the house of Zen."

I respectfully submit to the `Great Teacher of the Lotus Pond': "If you wish to plant yourself in some hinterland where you are free to finger your lotus-bead rosary, droop your head, drop your eyelids, and intone the Buddha's Name because you want to be born in the Land of Lotus Flowers, that is no business of mine. It is entirely up to you. But when you start gazing elsewhere with that myopic look in your eyes and decide to divert yourself by writing commentaries that pass belittling judgment on a great saint and matchless Dharma-transmitter like the Sixth Patriarch, then I must ask you to take the words you have and shelve them away, far out of sight, where no one will ever lay eyes on them. Why do I say that? I say it because the great Dragon King, who controls the clouds in the heavens and the rains that fall over the earth, cannot be known or fathomed by a mud snail or a clam."

One of the teachers of the past said:

The `western quarter' refers to the original mind of sentient beings. `Passing beyond millions and millions of Buddha-lands [to attain rebirth in the Pure Land]' signifies sentient beings terminating the ten evil thoughts and abruptly transcending the ten stages of Bodhisattvahood. 'Amida,' signifying immeasurable life, stands for the Buddha-nature in sentient beings. `Kannon,' `Seishi,' and Amida's other attendant Bodhisattvas represent the incomprehensible working of the original self-nature. `Sentient being' is ignorance and the many thoughts, fears, discernments, and discriminations that result from it. `When life ends' refers to the time when discriminations and emotions cease to arise. `Cessation of intellection and discrimination' is the

purifying of the original mind-ground and indicates the Pure Land in the West.

It is to the west that sun, moon, and stars all return. In the same way, it is to the one universal mind that all the thoughts, fears, and discriminations of sentient beings return. It is thus one single mind, calm and undisturbed. And because Amida Buddha exists here, when you awaken to your self-nature the 84,000 evil passions transform instantly into 84,000 marvelous virtues. To the incomprehensible working which brings this about we give the names Kannon, Seishi, and so on. The uneasy mind you have while you are in a state of illusion is called the defiled land. When you awaken and your mind is clear and free of defilement, that is called the Pure Land.

Hence the *Kechimyaku-ron* says that "the Nembutsu practiced by Buddhist saints in the past was not directed toward an external Buddha; their Nembutsu practice was oriented solely toward the internal Buddha in their own minds. . . . If you want to discover Buddha, first you must see into your own true nature. Unless you have seen into your own nature, what good can come from doing Nembutsu or reciting sutras?"

"Buddha" means "one who is awakened." Once you have awakened, your own mind is itself Buddha. By seeking outside yourself for a Buddha invested with form, you are proclaiming yourself a foolish man. It is like a person who wants to catch a fish. He must start by looking in the water, because fish live in the water and are not found apart from it. If a person wants to find Buddha he must look into his own mind, because it is there and nowhere else that Buddha exists.

Question: "In that case, what can I do to become thoroughly awakened to my own mind?"

What is that which asks such a question? Is it your mind? Is it your original nature? Is it some kind of spirit or demon? Is it inside you? Outside you? Is it somewhere intermediate? Is it blue, yellow, red, or white? This is something you must investigate and clarify for yourself. You must investigate it whether you are standing or sitting, when you are eating your rice or drinking your tea, when you are speaking and when you are silent. You must keep at it with total, singleminded devotion. And never, whatever you do, look in sutras or in commentaries for an answer, or seek it in the words you hear a teacher speak.

When all the effort you can muster has been exhausted, when you have reached a total impasse, and you have become like the cat at the rathole, like the mother hen warming her egg, it will suddenly come to you and you will break free. The phoenix will be through the golden net, the crane will fly clear of the cage.

But even if no breakthrough occurs until your dying day and you spend twenty or thirty years in vain without ever seeing into your true nature, I want your solemn pledge that you will never turn for spiritual support to those tales that you hear the down-and-out old men and washed-out old women peddling

everywhere today. If you do, they will stick to your hide, they will cling to your bones, you will never be free of them. And as for your chances with the patriarchs' difficult-to-pass koans, the less said about them the better, because they will then be totally beyond your grasp.

My comment:

There is no excuse for the lie of "expedient means".

Hence a priest of former times said, "A person who commits himself to the practice of Zen must be equipped with three essentials. A great root of faith. A great ball of doubt. A great tenacity of purpose. Lacking any one of them, he is like a tripod with only two legs."

By "great root of faith" is meant the belief that each and every person has an essential self-nature which he can see into; and the belief in a principle by which this self-nature can be fully penetrated. Even though you attain this belief, you cannot break through and penetrate to total awakening unless fundamental doubts arise as you tackle the difficult-to-pass koans. And even if these doubts crystallize so that you yourself become a great ball of doubt, you will still be unable to break it apart unless you constantly engage those koans with great burning tenacity of purpose.

Thus it has been said that it takes three long kalpas for lazy and inattentive sentient beings to attain nirvana, while for the fearless and stout-hearted, Buddhahood comes in a single instant of thought. What you must do is to concentrate all your effort on bringing your fundamental potential into full play. The practice of Zen is like making a fire by friction. The essential thing as you rub wood against stone is to apply continuous, all-out effort. If you stop when you see the first trace of smoke, you will never get even a flicker of fire, even though you might rub away for three long kalpas.

Only a few hundred yards from here is a beach. Suppose that someone is bothered because he has never experienced the taste of sea water and decides to sample it for himself. He sets out for the beach but before he has gone a hundred paces he stops and comes back; then he starts out again but this time he returns after he has taken only ten steps. He will never know the taste of sea water that way, will he? But if he keeps going straight ahead without turning back, it doesn't even matter if he lives far inland in a landlocked province such as Shinano, Kai, Hida, or Mino, he will still eventually reach the sea. Then, by dipping his finger in the water and tasting it, he will know in an instant what sea water tastes like the world over, because it is of course the same everywhere, in India, China, the great southern sea or the great northern sea.

Those Dharma patricians who explore the secret depths are like this too. They go straight forward, boring into their own minds with unbroken effort, never letting up or retreating. Then the breakthrough suddenly comes, and with

that they penetrate their own nature, the natures of others, the nature of sentient beings, the nature of the evil passions and of enlightenment, the nature of the Buddha nature, the god nature, the Bodhisattva nature, the sentient being nature, the non-sentient being nature, the craving ghost nature, the contentious spirit nature, the beast nature - they are all of them seen in a single instant of thought. The great matter of their religious quest is thus completely and utterly resolved. There is nothing left. They are free of birth and death. **What a thrilling moment it is!**

My comment:
Hooray!

The Tibetan lamas are just like old Shuko, blind old bonzes who lack the eye of kensho. Yet their only fault is that no-one ever suggested to them that truth might be important - they are innocent.

If you tell a lie, such as "there is life after death," or "this ritual will remove a lot of bad karma," then you are stuck with it. You can never then contradict such statements with truth while in the presence of those to whom you told the lie. Yet how can you avoid their presence? If you speak the truth, it is bound to filter out to them somehow, then both you and they will be in a horrible mess.

The method of the Buddhas is to mix both small and large truths (never lies) so that individuals can take what they can understand. This is the safest bet, for the dull-witted cannot be hurt by large truths - the dull-witted will just pass them over, and hopefully benefit from the remainder.

The truth must never be held-back, veiled or obstructed; not for any reason. A bright light or a loud bell can awaken even the dead.

If Hakuin and I can speak the truth as openly and clearly as we do, to the obvious benefit of the world, then why can't the Tibetan lamas or the Christian priests? They are as good as speechless because they have not penetrated to the heart of the Dharma. They remain mere parasites, blind and brainless worms.

Am I then a madman, for spouting my venom in this manner, condemning men to hell, who after all are "representatives of the Buddha"? I am either mad, or I am not. Is there a third category available to you with which to cope with me? Yes, there is the category of the unknown quantity. If you lack the wisdom to judge finally and truly, then the only option is to delay judgement. There is no shame in not making unnecessary mistakes.

Hope to hear your thoughts regarding this stuff, otherwise I'll see you in a couple of months or three.

Kevin

10th December, 1990

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill 4101

Dave,

I'm thinking of going to the Maleny folk festival starting on the 28th of this month. Have you got Greg's address or phone number? I'll try and get in touch with him while I'm there.

I've been ringing talk-back programs on a regular basis lately. It really makes it difficult when people are determined not to listen to you. People have been ringing 4BC demanding that I be banned from speaking on air because I "put women down." I have repeatedly rang and explained that I do not need to put women down because they are about as low as they can get. My only aim is to help them.

It is clear to me that the "independent" woman has been deified by many men, who have failed at being men, and have fallen back into a respectful reverence for woman's deceptive confidence and security. They speak, almost with tears in their eyes, about "balancing" the masculine and feminine sides of the personality. They worship the woman who is strong and forthright on the surface, but, importantly, is feminine beneath. It is hardly surprising that they reel with terror when I disparage their God of Gods.

Kevin

14th December, 1990

from:
David Quinn
17 Broadwater Pde
Sandy Bay
Tasmania 7005

Hello Kevin,

I haven't heard from Greg for well over a year now. The last I heard was that he was travelling around Queensland with a puppet theatre company. It's possible, however, that he may be finished and is back living at Maleny. At the back of this letter I've drawn a map of his place in relation to the town of Maleny (from memory; no street names I'm afraid), and also I've written the address of his mother, if you want to contact her.

I actually heard you on radio the other week: "Religion, Art, and Imagination" on the ABC. You rang up and had a chat to Mr. Millikin (perhaps to prompt him into responding to your book?). What a joke of a show! Why do they bother "discussing" when they already know the answers?

My essays on women are finished, and are currently at the printers. My mind has entertained a giant debate about whether I should release them to "the public". For the trouble is that my life is in contradiction to what is expressed in the essays. I have been gripped by indecision for a while now, concerning this one point. Whatever good these essays might bring would only be undone when they are compared to the manner of my life. Hence, I was thinking that I would not release them until my life was in conformity with them - irreversible conformity. On the other hand, as you say, these essays need to be released now. The solution to this dilemma is obvious: I shall release the essays under a pseudonym. Thus the essays will represent my ideality - to which it is my sincere aim to bring into actuality, but which I cannot do immediately. Once I have reached irreversible conformity, then I will claim them as my own.

What of Gordon?

David

4th January, 1991

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Dear Dave,

I've just returned from the Maleny folk festival and I think I've really benefited from it. The experience has forced me to suffer, and again come to terms with how different I am and what I have to do. It is important to have things thrown into sharp relief every now and again, to make you choose out of pain, and get off the fence.

There were quite a lot of women at the festival that appealed to my animal and emotional nature. They were soft, warm, calm, sensitive, and caring. Of course, they were all brainless and deeply in love with equally brainless men. One such lovely woman even affectionately touched me on the arm, thinking me to be a normal person. This was terribly painful, being mistaken for somebody else - an egotistical moron. Painful also was the fact that this lovely woman preferred this Devil-man to myself, after all the hard work I've done to become a good person! Such is the dilemma of desiring both God and a woman's affection. You price yourself out of the market.

A woman will not approve of God, because God is against her. If she loves you it is the Devil she sees in you which she loves - the part of you she sees that makes her ego stronger, her confidence deeper, her peace more blissful, and her enjoyment more joyful. She loves the man who can make her forget her worries - her conscience. Thus she loves the man of wit, the man of music and poetry, the man of lies and flattery, the man who is dextrous and sensitive in all the ways of the ego, who has the right word and the right touch to alleviate her every smallest hint of pain or discomfort.

And woman doesn't necessarily want the best man, just as one doesn't necessarily want the very best television set. A man that will work in conjunction with, and who is supportive of her other attachments will suffice her. One that can distract for the specified period of time is all that is needed. Anything more would be superfluous and would only be creating complications.

All this was made painfully clear to me - again! Now once more I am filled with disgust upon the idea of seeking approval or appreciation from others,

which is really seeking approval and appreciation from the Devil!

Here are some of my observations on the folk festival:-

The aim: To make everybody equal "folk", with no distinctions between good and bad, or right and wrong. What is more, to make all people emotional folk, whose values are obtained and transmitted through the mediums of music, dance, tee-shirt art, drugs, sex, love, and emotional and self-righteous poetry. Rational argument, philosophy and truth are definitely not folk traditions. There is much emphasis on vegetarianism, the environment, and a hypocritical kind of wholesome moralism in general. This is to help alleviate the feeling of guilt for being totally decadent and immoral and loving every minute of it. It is a desperate attempt to salvage something they can believe is meaningful out of a life they believe is meaningless. They want to conserve the world so they can conserve their own pride (in not being destroyers) and also to preserve their hope for the future enjoyment of wine, women and song. That is, they are not serious about conserving the world. Their desire for world peace and environmental protection is only a tool of the imagination, to make the dream of life that much more enjoyable.

The women: Probably 30% of the women (at least) had long blonde hair, transparent steel blue eyes, no make-up, slight frames, pastel shaded tops - purple or orange, covering Indian style finely floralled dresses. Also, these women didn't seem to speak. I am sure their boyfriends must have had trouble telling them apart.

If the woman's hair was dark, she had big baby-doll eyes to make up for it. Ugly or unattached women would not dare attend this festival.

The culture: High-tech folk music is reverting to traditional instruments and rhythms: drums, sticks, didgereedoes, and yelling. The fashions are based on bright colours and bare skin. New years eve saw a pagan festival through the streets followed by a bonfire. This step back to the stone-age is regarded by folk gurus as spiritual.

The egos: Whereas most people are happy to be spectators, "folk" people have participation bred into them. If they are not singing or playing their many and varied instruments they are pontificating on aboriginal rights, flogging off their paintings, parading their clothes and/or bodies, reading their poetry, selling their jewelry, or dancing, kissing and hugging in the streets.

All this is purely and simply showing off how well you can cater for and please other peoples' egos. By putting your values and your strengths on display you conveniently flatter those who share the same values, and who respect egotistical strength. They will flatter you in return and seek your company. Thus all this activity is about attention-seeking and flattery.

Ego-experts have learned that only speakers are rewarded, not listeners. Only those who erect billboards and have large shopfronts will attract the buyers. Buyers like to know what they are getting; they prefer a shoddy product that has a circulation than an unknown quantity that nobody uses.

If not a single person buys a certain product then everybody steers clear of it. On the other hand, if a single buyer is absolutely in love with the product then it immediately takes on a significant value. This is precisely the reason why everyone is so concerned with finding themselves a lover - no matter whom the lover might be. For to have value in the eyes of others means to feel valuable, and have the invaluable self-esteem. So, it is not so much that this one person, the lover, thinks something of you, but that in being loved by just this one, you take on a value to the whole of society.

* * *

Yes, this is all basic stuff, but it serves to be reminded of just how basic it is.

One of the best selling books of all time, alongside the Bible, is called "Everything you ever need to know you learnt at kindergarten." I would put it this way: "Everything people know, or ever want to know, they learnt at kindergarten."

Yes, I felt totally alone, unwanted, useless, rejected, invisible, ugly, and inadequate. But if I didn't feel all these things then something would've been terribly wrong. For until one finally renounces the final shards of the ego one must always suffer these feelings, otherwise one is living in a fools paradise.

I saw Gordon recently. He said he basically agreed with Hakuin's words and my letter, but I don't think he really grasped it. I myself had to read Hakuin's teaching a few times before it really sank in. Also, Gordon is thirty nine and has a twenty eight year old, blonde haired, transparent steel blue eyed, non-speaking de facto lover, so he is quite a way behind the eight ball. His intellectual understanding is good, but he baulks at judging the Tibetan lamas to be "wrong" or "evil". He still has the tendency of making excuses for them, to leave himself a way out. But I think he is slowly changing. He is aware of how difficult and how painful such a change is, so this is at least something.

By chance I ran into Greg at the festival. He hasn't changed much at all; he's running away from God as hard and as fast as he can, to keep at a safe distance.

Hope to hear from you soon,

Kevin

P.S Trevor has gone back to his girlfriend in Holland. Tracey has gone to England.

10th April, 1991

from:
Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Dave,

I am putting together a book of aphorisms and pithy observations which I am calling "Wit for Wisdom". It is not strictly a spiritual book, but is designed to stimulate people's intelligence and courage, thus promoting them into the human realm, and once there to consolidate the position. As the title suggests I am concentrating on humorous, ironic and powerful thoughts.

I enclose about forty pages (I now have over eighty) which might stimulate you into penning a few yourself. Please send me the results so I can include them. Tell me whether you want them under your own name, or mixed-in with everyone else's. I have decided to present mine separately from the rest because I would like people to know my personality. I reason that if people know me personally then my words will have a greater impact.

Please don't take too long.

Kevin

26th April, 1991

from:
David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Hello Kevin,

I've changed address.

Included are a number of aphorisms which you may be interested in. Some more will come in the near future, depending on how quickly you want to bring out the book - is there time for another month of composing?

Have you received the Woman essays? Any comment?

David

P.S If you decide to use any of my aphorisms just scatter them about amongst the others, don't bother about putting them under my name.

- Woman wishes to wish away the differences between the sexes - but then, that is the nature of woman.

- Happiness is a full life; consequently, happiness is death.

- Society is the process in which everyone fights all battles except the one that should be fought.

- Television is immortality - for it is impossible to die in front of one, isn't it?

- The ignorant are aware of many mysteries and understand everything else, whereas the wise are aware of one mystery and understand nothing else.

- In the past, the masses were ignorant and bored. With the creation of the media, the one has merely increased and the other diminished.

- The continuation and well-being of democracy depends upon the good will of the masses to ignore what really goes on.

- Democracy is like the "decent citizen" - it seems reasonable under reasonable conditions, but it can give birth to a tyrant.

- Totalitarianism is the masculine, democracy the feminine - both have their good and bad aspects, and both can be oppressive at times.

- Democracy is woman's greatest invention. Indeed, it even reflects her character: purposeless, irrational, subject to public opinion and passing fashions, rambling, confused, underhanded, scheming, in love with its own purity.

- The essence of the feminine art lies in totally dominating and manipulating the man's feelings so as to make him believe that he is the dominant and manipulating one.

- Man sees woman as mysterious only because he tries to use his reason to understand the stream of irrationality which is woman.

- A woman's chief pleasure consists of conquering man's irrationality with her own brand of irrationality.

- Woman's acting is so brilliant that man actually takes her seriously!

- Woman thinks: I have a right to be loved until I'm seventy.

- In the interests of equal opportunity, philosophic discussion should be forbidden to cows with lipstick.

- A woman is humiliated to find her husband is having an affair. She says:

"What nauseates me the most is the fact that she knows all about my life."

- Man: Does my salvation lie in her? Is she perfection? Is she the answer to my yearnings? . . . No! I do not believe in it any more! Woman: You don't know how to love. Man: I see it as a lie! Woman: You don't know how to love. Man: I will never find my happiness in it! Woman: You don't know how to love.

- It is terrible to be alone, and it is terrible to be in love, but one is cheaper than the other.

- The overwhelming pain of loneliness; a mother smiles at her baby - watch out for the Devil!

- Woman says: men are like buses - if you miss one, another will come along in five minutes.

- Who'd want to be an adult in this world? The normal, relaxed, well-adjusted adult is constantly exhausting himself playing a thousand games - 250 of these are spent in frantic pursuit of what it wants; another 250 are spent trying to avoid what it does not want; a further 250 involve elaborate justifications, trying to give the whole process some semblance of respectability; and the final 250 entail the efforts of trying to appear normal, relaxed, and well-adjusted.

- A favourite game of woman is to invoke jealousy in her man by deliberately giving her attention to another man, only to come back, in time, to her man, to dote on him. She is never really interested in the second man, but affects interest, which easily fools both men. The second man is used by her as a device to revel in the pleasures of male manipulation. Both men are confounded, having their emotions pulled this way and that - but she knows what is going on.

- Nobody makes for a worse philosopher than does the physicist.

- Philosophical discussion between religious people is often a curious affair, and is always decidedly unphilosophic. Both parties to the discussion always seem to know what its outcome will be, and it seems their only function is to steer the conversation to that already known end. But such is the cowardly

nature of the religious.

- Where logic sees contradiction, reason often sees none.

- Nothing is more nauseating than the oft-repeated phrase "honesty about feelings". Honesty about feelings - who cares!

- The musician has power that politicians can only dream about.

- Egotism is the disease of the mind,
Society is the symptom of this disease.
Egotism gains substance through repetitious thinking,
Society is composed of routines.
Egotism is sticky with clinging,
Society creeps within tradition.
Egotism is deceitful by its very nature,
Society is corrupt to the core.
Egotism needs to be reassured of its significance,
Society created the media.
Egotism needs categories for its security,
Society has culture.
Egotism is a hell few want to escape,
Society is a hell many want to escape.
Why? The mother is more important than the child!

- A curious feature of modern society: how a person's character is perceived depends on the nature of his sex life.

- A woman's face is pure sex! Those red vagina lips smiling with eyes glancing up and down - she is forgotten, and pure sex is there to engulf you!

- In marriage, man seeks to shelve her to the back of his mind, whilst the woman wants to be at the front - thus begins the battle between two uncommunicative opponents which so characterizes marriage.

- The woman and the sage are forever diametrically opposed - each thinks the other lives a life of escapism.

22nd May, 1991

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Dear Dave,

I have read your writings on women. I'll let you know the impression they made on me after my thoughts have bounced around for a while.

What do you think of all those one-liners? One must be careful not to be sidetracked from the infinite with all that plain witty stuff (as you will see it is) that virtually any one could write. Their value is no more than as tools for prying open closed-shut brains. They are small truths for those who aren't ready to face the big ones. I am finding it quite tiring to put these witty things together, they don't inspire me, they are so close yet so far away from God.

And what did you make of Celia Green? She is no world destroying conflagration, but it is encouraging to know that at least one woman thinks. She is a good role model for women, and heaven knows women need some. A couple of her books are "The Human Evasion" and "The Decline and Fall of Science". If you cannot get hold of the first book I can send you a few photocopies from it.

She certainly has a mind, but she hasn't negotiated the Barrier or considered too deeply what it would actually be like to live in the direct experience Truth. She speaks very little about life without attachments, and without love. Her words do not confront you with the terrible and the lifeless. She has a wealth of ideas, but eternity does not spill from her pages. She is preoccupied with seeing what is wrong rather than experiencing what is right. And of the falsities she does detect, she doesn't home-in on the essential ones - life, death, and consciousness. In this sense she is like Nietzsche in all his books except "Zarathustra", merely entertaining herself and showing-off her talents. One more person, human, all too human.

*

I too am more human than I would like to be at this stage in my life, and I am still haunted by women more than is good for my health.

I was eating a meal at the Hare Krishna restaurant in town the other day when the young woman behind the counter threw a consumptive stare in my direction. She looked like an angel, radiant skin, eyes that have never seen ugliness in this world, never blinked in fear or shame, eyes that flooded loving prayers upon me. What was she? . . . this spirit of clear waters, alive as spring rains, light as mist, heavy as earth, age of mountain valleys, this oaken grace, movement of meadows, still as time, smile of sunshine, hair of autumn grasses.

Five minutes later I noticed her again as she smilingly greeted some customers. I almost died . . . I'll swear she had horns and vampire teeth! Her eyes sparkled a sinister light, the light of a thousand lies; her skin shone with a rancid sweat, the sweat of dying souls; pupils darted, glanced aside, mind worked, lips moved, teeth flashed, and then a manufactured blush of humility - and of superiority also.

Terrible it is to see through a split in the curtain, the evil goings-on behind.

*

As I read through the correspondence we have had over the last few years I am struck by the sheer negativity of it. This is magnificent. Anyone else reading it would think that we must be extremely deluded to have so many pains and problems. But we talk about the reality of life, and our distance from God, in a genuine attempt to actually leave the world behind us. Religious people speak of heavenly bliss and peace in a cowardly attempt to cover up their inadequacy, not to mention their contentedness with their inadequacy. They will speak of what they want, but not of what is required to attain it. They are quite happy to shamelessly waste their few years on this earth dreaming of heaven. They have no sense of urgency.

A single beat of a butterfly's wings can be the cause of a huge cyclone. Likewise, a single enlightened thought in an individual, at the right time, can conceivably save all intelligent life in the Universe. And a failure of that individual to have that single enlightened thought can cause the destruction of all life in the Universe. Who is that individual? And when will that thought come? You could be that individual, and that thought could be the one you are having this instant! Or maybe you are not having that enlightened thought this instant? - dread the thought of it!

So a sense of extreme urgency must be with us every moment, ensuring that our mind is in as enlightened a state as possible at all times, so that the

compounded consequences in the unforeseeable future will be as good as they possibly can be.

People fear urgency because it means one has to do something, in which case one is lacking something. For example, it is a matter of urgency that Saddam Hussein and his army is quickly put out of commission before they develop a nuclear capacity and reek even more havoc. But the peace protesters refuse to believe that people can be so evil, so prefer to do virtually nothing about the situation. They cannot believe that evil exists, because they might have to see it in themselves.

*

I have met a chap by the name of Dan Rowden through a talk-back radio program we both call (and have appeared on) occasionally. He is unemployed and is an amateur astronomer and poet. I include here a few of his poems for your interest. The last four are his most recent. He is quite interested in the infinite but has some strong reservations. Unfortunately, like most poets, he doesn't actually understand what he writes.

(December, 1990)

PERCEPTION

"So many think it, therefore it must be true!"
But what place does Truth have in such a crazed alchemy?
The final gold? Hardly!
A face lingers there in my mind, Galileo! Yes, he knows!
To ask a sheep about Truth
Is to ask an insomniac
To solve a problem by sleeping on it.
Truth is a finished cross-word, some people get there
While others find consolation in their failure,
Ah, sweet ignorance! "Near enough is good enough!"
Is that a voice I hear? Aristarchus!
A choir! A choir of singularities.
The haunting strains of individuality.
Socrates! I didn't know you sang so well,
But oh, dear Ptolemy, you're rather out of tune!
Luther! Such mellow tones no sheep was ever heard to make.
Friedrich, dear friend Nietzsche although your song is sweet

I fear the man at the organ has other ideas!
Alone we may well stand,
But if Truth is at our side
What real strength has the pain of solitude?

(March, 1990)

THE PIECES LAY BEFORE ME

The pieces lay before me as if pleading,
That I should give this jigsaw some worthy meaning.
This myriad of forms, confused with multiplicity
Did vex my soul, not revealing its simplicity.
In search of answers then began a quest,
Through the mystic realms and philosophers best.
Impaled on stakes of feeble truth and useless allegory,
To solve this broken puzzle is now the only glory.
In deepest sleep and waking hours I go,
A hunter slowly stalking an imaginary foe.
Obsessed, in mute derision it's now I lie,
The only need to join the pieces, ere I die.
Then finally, in fulfillment, standing free,
I saw this complex, binding puzzle, was me.

(March, 1990)

AUGUST

The night air dew it greets the day,
And so, shall I?
The golden orb he spins his web
Where new cicadas fly.
The fig-bird calls, the shrike replies,
A leaf upon the willow dies;
A dove in quest of love belies
The hand of fate, which oft' denies,
And so, shall I?

From this cold time the star twins hide,
And so, shall I?
Orion's light it meets the morn,
But few know why.
Old men talk of days they've seen,
Their memory's heart forged deadly keen.
But young men dream, fine things they glean,
A strength of hope that's never been,
And so shall I!

(October, 1990)

THE FUNDAMENTALIST

Bound by guilt is he;
The preacher's tool; the layman's fool;
The living story of all things.
Immersed in mystery he be;
The prophet's friend; individuality's end;
A cancerous confusion it brings.
Untouched by Truth he lies;
The future's pain; the evangelist's gain;
Of wasted lives he sings.

(November, 1990)

ODE TO GALILEO

Within my heart I see him now,
Galileo, old friend of Truth.
And still they of robes and vow
Remain ensnared in wisdom's youth.

Old friend you told what Nature gives,
Not mindful of the foe.
A soul whose righteous courage lives
As flames within the snow.

In life we seek, in death we know.
In life we sow, in death we reap.

In scorn you live, though hope not dead;
The withered rose may yet bloom and rise.
Your thoughts your own within your bed,
They live in God's own guise.

Of Truth you speak, (though yet unseen)
Above the throng of ignorance,
With wisdom's heart, eyes deadly keen,
Though not feeling its significance.

In life we seek, in death we know.
In life we sow, in death we reap.

But now! In fear and terror's hold,
No crime of greater passion be;
A voice is silenced, its heart rent cold,
Truth's face, not yet set free.

My friend with yours, my heart it lies
Though time, its favours be not sent.
A soul as ours it never dies,
Its earthly cause will be not spent.

In life we seek, in death we know.
In life we sow, in death we reap.

And now the seven trumpets sound;
The Lamb, he has returned.
But still I hear no church bells pound
With chords of wisdom learned.

But there alone within the crowd,
A man who knew your voice;
A man beneath religion drowned,
And yet, for him, no choice.

(1991)

THOUGHTS ON TRUTH

How to love but not possess,
To teach but not delude,
To learn but not believe,
To speak, but not deceive.

Such are the pains of Truth.

How to die and yet know life,
To doubt and yet know faith,
To judge and yet know concession,
To soar and yet know possession.

Such are the vexations of Truth.

How to be but never exist,
To hold but never contain,
To lead but never impress,
To whisper, but never confess.

Such is the joy of Truth.

(1991)

NATURE AND MAN

In all the known universe,
Change is the only constant,
Causality the only force,
Nature the only law,
Truth, the ultimate source.

In all the heart of man
Illusion is the only constant,
Emotion the only force,
Self, the only law,
Ego, the ultimate source.

(1991)

THOUGHTS OF COALESCENCE

Majestic forest, heart of my heart,
Soul of my soul; such soothing comfort
Quells the deepest pains.
Creeping vines, breath of my breath,
Thought of my thought, what part of me
Was cradled in your peaceful youth?
Wandering mist, time of my time,
Kin of my kin, what eternal forces
Have shaped us?
Solemn coppice, song of my song,
Path of my path, what part of me
Shall be sheltered in your silent chase?
Sweet Nature, God of my God,
Cause of my cause, what pale illusion
Can hide me from your ceaseless will?

(1991)

SINE QUA NON

Let us go forth and seek the truth!
Let us be shepherds and not just sheep.
Let us not be deceived by our own eyes,
Nor believe what we see in our sleep.
For God's sake let us use reason!
Let us not be consumed by our guiles;
Leave wanting and wishing to others,
For delusion abides in their smiles.
Let us not be a part of the haystack
But the messianic needle within;
Leave the illusion of life to the others
Who pray for the souls of their kin.
For man's sake deny not the truth!
Let us follow the path yet unworn,
For ultimate Truth is among us:
We are lifeless, yet never unborn!

*

I am occasionally going back to "Poison for the heart" and rewriting small parts of it. Could you please tell me which parts you think I should especially give some more attention to. That is, tell me which parts you found to be the worst.

Also, I am thinking of subtitling it "The Poison Sutra". It is after all the word of the Buddha. This will help to ensure its survival through time, but the heavy cost will be that it will be associated with traditional Buddhism and thus will turn a lot of intelligent people off. What do you make of it, when you weigh-up the pro's and con's? I am in two minds at the moment as the pro's and con's seem so equal.

*

I will conclude with a few short extracts from the Buddha's little known "Ultimate Extinction of the Dharma Sutra":

"When the Dharma is about to disappear, women will become vigorous and will at all times do deeds of virtue. Men will grow lax and will no longer speak the Dharma."

"When my Dharma disappears it will be just like an oil lamp which flares brightly for an instant just before it goes out. After this time it is difficult to speak with certainty of what will follow."

"Good persons will be hard to find; at most there will be one or two. Men will die younger, and women will live longer."

Bye for now,

Kevin

P.S

- What is Sue doing these days?

- Yes, take another month to write some aphorisms. Send up any good ones you have, but I am more interested in humorous ones for the book.

19th August, 1991

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
Qld 4101

Hi,

What's happening? Are you still inspired by the infinite? Have you met anybody that makes you think that wisdom has a hope of surviving? Is the world proving annoyingly attractive at times? Have you managed to stop thinking about women?

It has been a while now since I read your booklet Woman. My overall impression . . . a little wordy, but infinitely better than anything you find on library shelves, primarily because it actually says something worthwhile. I have read it once, and re-read some parts of it several times, but I do not feel greatly motivated to read the whole thing again. This either says something about your writing, or perhaps that I know as much about women as I want to know and am all too aware of the dangers of lingering on the subject of women. Probably both. Have you got a copy of the manuscript on computer disk? if not, can you get a copy from the typist? You can always rework it in future, as I plan to do with "Poison".

I particularly liked the insights regarding evolution, and the creation of the formidable psychological entity WOMAN. No doubt in fifty years or so some academic will publish a book with a few of these very same ideas and be hailed as a genius. On the subject of fame . . . I have something to say about that shortly.

Your book had a very practical use a couple of months ago when I was sitting in the refectory at Uni talking across the table to a very attractive girl who had eyes that took up a good half of her face and begged you to fall into them. Danny came in, and seeing more into the situation than I wanted to see at that moment in time pulled a copy of WOMAN out of his bag, making a blatant display of the title in the process, and slipped it into my bag. That girl has never looked at me the same way again.

Speaking of Danny, after I showed him some of the anti- Christian leaflets I used to post around the Uni he decided to pen some himself. He ended up producing two leaflets, and pinned them up all around the Uni one week after the other. I told him that just two leaflets wouldn't have much effect and that I

thought a more sustained effort was necessary. I suspected something, and very soon my suspicions were confirmed. As we passed a noticeboard one afternoon I spotted a reply to one of Danny's leaflets, written by some intellectual. Danny's eyes lit up. This was just what he had wanted all along. He was more interested in being noticed than in actually helping people to become enlightened.

Fame of any kind is dangerous before you are selfless enough to transcend it. People of some cultures dislike having their photograph taken because they believe a photograph takes away a part of your soul. And so it does. The moment you depend on being noticed, and on being either famous or infamous, your soul is snuffed out. This is always something to keep in mind when you write for others to read, and when you begin to live a public life.

I came into a great wealth today - the last installment of Hakuin's Kaien Fusetsu. I find writing so much hard work, and Hakuin does it so well, so I might as well regard his writings as my own and promote them also. I remember you telling me that you don't understand a lot of what he writes, but it is not necessary to follow all that he says to feel the conscience- wrenching strength of his genuine heart. I enclose a copy.

I have taken to writing and collecting aphorisms. They say virtually everything that prose does, though in fewer words which are more potent and enduring. Unfortunately, most people don't believe you really mean something unless you write it in prose. But I'm not going to let that stop me. I mean what I write, so I'll write what I please. Prose has its place - these letters for example, but it is easy to write too much. Prose is a good human touch, for humans.

Hope to hear from you soon,

Kevin

8th September, 1991

from:

David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Hello Kevin,

Two years ago I sent off a flurry of despairing letters to you; and almost nothing since. But I think I've been silent long enough now. You show an interest about what's happening with me, where I'm at, how I've developed etc, so with this letter I will give an account of myself. By the end of this letter you will fully understand why I have been quiet in the past and why I will contrive so in the future. Also understand, that this letter is written as much for my own development as it is for your edification.

If there is a certainty in my character, it would be the fact of my weakness. I am weak - you know that, I know that. How much despair I've gone through over this point! When I saw how terribly I've been brought up - so aimless, purposeless, so lacking in perseverance, so thoughtless, so insecure - When I reflected on this, my mind would inevitably indulge in the pleasures of fatalism. Bad past; no future. I looked at the loftiness of Mahayana and then at the baseness of my character; it seemed to me that for me to strive to become a philosopher would be somewhat equivalent to a fifty year old paraplegic who smoked 100 cigarettes a day to strive for an olympic gold medal in athletics.

Oh, but I did try to ignore all this. I did say to myself: I can change and I will change. Unfortunately, this noble sentiment got overwhelmed by faulty methods. That is, my attempts at living philosophically were pretentious, dishonest, obscure, unrealistic, half-hearted - and bathed in ignorance. Thus I found myself two years ago, around the time of our letter flurry.

If I were to describe the two years since, I would best perhaps say: very bleak and "moderately" liberating. A royal broth mixing in all the elements of despair, depression, terrible depravity and mindfulness, cringing insecurity, long periods of cow-like vacancies - all interspersed with occasional periods of lucidity and rational processes. It seems now that I've just lived through a nightmare, a nightmare of the sort lived through by one of those grotesque characters out of a Dostoevski novel. It really seems now so horrifyingly weird - the sort of thoughts and feelings one has in the hell realms.

Now, looking at myself, I think I've come out of all this relatively unscathed. To be sure, much damage has been done - but none of it, I believe irreversible damage. I've successfully crawled my way back into the human realm; and I

now have a much greater appreciation of its virtues. I feel much more mature, more serious, more in line with where I'm actually at. And this is not just some strange whim, but is the result of the last two, three, four years. I believe I'm closer than I've ever been to really developing Bodhicitta. "The revolution of the mind and spirit" is happening - I will go all the way!

Of course, it has to be understood that, in terms of mental development, I'm still very much a Third World person. My reason has been shot to pieces, my concentration is almost non-existent, my ability to absorb new thoughts severely crippled. Added to this, my mind is still very sick - in terms of bad habits and childhood attachments and behaviourisms.

However, I have developed plans and will spend the indefinite future implementing them. This is the reason why I wish to remain silent for a time to come.

I said earlier that the nightmare of the last two years was also moderately liberating. By this, I meant I've been largely liberated from you. I am no longer and have no wish to be your disciple. In the past, being your disciple was a tremendous learning experience, and I'll be eternally grateful for it, but it also led to the disastrous situation of the disciple imitating instead of developing. Because the disciple has tremendous respect for the teacher, he too easily falls into the trap of merely wanting to gain favour in his teacher's eyes. I recognized this in myself long ago, and it was one of the reasons I came to Hobart. However, I still, since then, recognized it in me in everything I thought - it went very deep; my reasoning would not be my reasoning but your voice talking inside my head. My actions were judged not by my reason but by your values - and so on. The reason why I want to remain silent is that I don't want to re-awaken this attachment. My respect for you has not lessened, and I want to develop outside of this respect. Ideally, and this is my plan, I want to re-establish contact with you when I am truly a Zen Master of my own account. An equal, not a disciple; a two-way spar, rather than one-way lessons. This may take a year, it may take twenty.

However, don't you stop writing to me! Don't take my silence as a lack of interest in Truth (for if that were to occur, I would tell you). Inspire me! Encourage me! Rubbish the world for me! Keep sending me material and new ways of looking at things. It all helps - I consider everything carefully whatever you send to me. It may be the difference between success and failure for me.

Looking forward to your next letter.

David

P.S

- Sue is now living in Brisbane, so you may get a visit from her sometime.
- I assume that we'll let each other know of any changes of address.

29th September, 1991

from:
Kevin Solway
PO Box 207
St Lucia
QLD 4067

Hello Dave,

Good to hear from you. Yes, imitation is a problem, and always will be until we reach perfect enlightenment. If nothing else there will always be the tendency to imitate that which you want to become, even if you don't imitate any particular person. Various forms of imitation are useful tools in the forward march to individuality.

Danny and I went into 4BC studios last week along with an academic acquaintance of mine to talk about evolution and creationism. It ended up being a discussion about the existence of God and the morality of believing things which aren't true just because they relieve pain. The host of the program was shocked to hear me say that I could prove that God didn't exist. He had never heard anyone make such an outrageous claim. Even the most eminent of learned men say that even if there is no evidence for the existence of a God, the non-existence of God can never be absolutely proven, so there is always a possibility that God exists, no matter how slight.

I argued that as all things have causes it is impossible for a God (which by definition is without causes) to exist. It was then put to me: "But that is just your theory. How do you know that all things have causes?"

"The reason all things have causes is because all things have parts, or attributes. The parts or attributes of a thing are causes of the thing itself because without parts or attributes the thing would not exist. Also, things can only exist relative to other things, so we again see a dependency, or causal relationship that is necessary for anything to exist. That is why all things must have causes. Do you understand?"

"No I don't" was the reply.

So much for reason.

I enclose some computer disks. If you meet people with computers they may like to take copies. I've given up trying to get "Poison" published through the normal channels. Most of the publishers I write to aren't even interested in looking at a few sample chapters. So I'm releasing it free via the computer networks. If people show enough interest then perhaps publishers might take

notice. However, I'm not expecting people to show enough interest - not if my work is truthful. I'm thirty and look forty. The people say: "If that's what thinking does for you, it's not worth it!"

Bye for now,

Kevin

10th October, 1991

from:
Kevin Solway
PO Box 207
St Lucia
QLD 4067

Do you have any more aphorisms to send me?

Kevin

14th October, 1991

from:

David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Kevin: My mind is starting to show some life again, but still is sluggish enough not to be able to produce the sort of witty aphorisms you desire. Still, here are a few I've recently come across.

- Woman is clay, longing to become mire Victor Hugo

Ayn Rand:

- Parties provide the chance for people to be even more aimless than usual.

- A man, conceivably, could adjust to the knowledge that he was at a higher level than those around him, although no rational man could possibly enjoy that perspective; but to a woman it would be unbearable.

- Romantic love is one of the few issues in life that I have no wish to argue about or even to explain. I know that the value of romantic love is not axiomatic, but that's almost how I want to treat it.

(says Ayn Rand, the woman philosopher, who places reason as the highest of all)

- A rational process is a moral process. If devotion to truth is the hallmark of morality, then there is no greater, nobler, more heroic form of devotion than the act of a man who assumes the responsibility of thinking.

- Do you ask what moral obligation I owe to my fellow men? None - except the obligation I owe to myself, to material objects, to all of existence: rationality.

- They have taught man that he is a hopeless misfit made of two elements, both symbols of death. A body without a soul is a corpse, a soul without a

body is a ghost - yet such is their image of man's nature: a battleground of a struggle between a corpse and a ghost, and they base their whole morality upon it. They call it a morality of mercy and a doctrine of love for man.

- The modern mystics cry: sacrifice is the essence of all morality, the highest virtue of man's reach. But this is the morality of death. It is your mind they want you to surrender.

- You who rebel against causality, your motive is a fraudulent desire, not to escape it, but worse: to reverse it.

- For centuries, the mystics of spirit had existed by running a protection racket - by making life on earth unbearable, then changing you for consolation and relief.

- Their magic tool is the blank-out. Their religion is the voodoo belief that nothing can come into existence unless thought about.

- Do you think your modern preachers are taking you back to the Dark Ages? They are taking you back to darker ages than any your history has known. Their goal is not the era of pre-science, but the era of pre-language. Their purpose is to deprive man the concept of objective reality.

- Make no mistake about the character of mystics. To undercut your consciousness has always been their only purpose throughout the ages - and power, the power to rule you by force, has always been their only lust. Make no mistake: the supernatural power that a mystic dreads, the unknowable spirit he worships, the consciousness he considers omnipotent is - yours.

- Faith in the supernatural begins as faith in the superiority of others.

- Every dictator is a mystic, and every mystic is a potential dictator.

- The mystic craves obedience from men, not their agreement. He wants them to surrender their consciousness to his assertions, his edicts, his wishes, his whims - as his consciousness is surrendered to theirs. He wants to deal with men by means of faith and force. Reason is the enemy he dreads - to him,

reason is a means of deception.

- The advocacy of altruism is the advocacy of murder: to destroy all that is good for the sake of a naught.

- There are two sides to every issue: one side is right and the other is wrong, but the middle is always evil. In any compromise between food and poison, it is only death that can win. You, who are half-rational, half-coward, have been playing a con game with reality, but the victim you have conned is yourself.

Myself:

- To trust woman is to betray oneself.

- Woman cheapens his thoughts. He knows this, but does not tell her - he buys her flowers instead.

- A man considers himself happily married when he can snuggle up to her warmth, without actually interacting with her. Thus he maintains a clean conscience.

- Woman is Mediocrity veiled behind illusions of greatness; Man is the seed of Greatness undermined by uncertainty. In the entire history of our species, woman has held the upper hand, but I vow some day that men will be liberated!

- Woman is a domesticated animal; the feminist has returned to the wild. The goddess has gone wandering, collecting a few bruises, developing a few survival traits. She is lost; the bed beckons her. She will soon return.

- The Christian lives in a nightmare and thinks it is a pleasant dream.

- Modern Society progresses, and its criteria is jest - it has progressed in jest. Modern man is now happier; he is more serious about his happiness - thus Society progresses, and it progresses in jest.

- An aristocracy concentrates all the power into one man; an aristocracy shares it out to a select few; a democracy, however, is most generous - the power is shared amongst the millions and millions of T.V sets.

- Art is to spirituality in the same way as a miscarriage is to a wild, fully-functioning human organism.

- The scholar labours meticulously for years on end to produce his masterpiece
 - which the thinker destroys with a single sentence.

- Art as parasitism: art needs convention, in order to feed itself.

- Art as parasitism: artists depend, for their existence, upon stunting the human brain.

- Artists take the mind back to childhood, and congratulate each other for a job well done.

- Artists never really exist - they are always in the future.

- Art comes from God, they say, And for its fantasies we humans pay.

- Artists destroy well-worn stereotypes, and think they have something to say.

- Christianity says, "Come, give up your reason . . .", and Academic Philosophy says, "Go on, it's useless anyway".

24th January, 1992

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

Dear Dave,

How have you been? Are you feeling middle-aged? Someone called me that the other day. I am still swimming upstream against the torrent, but I'm not sure I've been making much ground lately. I've been thinking more about things than infinite things. I'll fill you in on some of my recent experiences, you may gain something from them.

I met a chap at Uni a while back and gave him a copy of "Poison" to read. When he had finished reading it he handed it back to me, along with some notes he had jotted down on scraps of paper. I have tried to type out what was on those scraps to make it moderately readable. You will see the results of my effort below, followed by my reply to him.

Ian is about 35, a tutor in physics at Queensland Uni, and an ex-Christian. He has come to understand that people are in fact robots, fully determined by the environment, but chooses to call them "cybernetic systems". He understands that the things we perceive as real are in fact only models, representing associations, nothing more. Yet he disagrees with my "super-hard determinism" and "theory of universal causation" as he calls it. He maintains that philosophical analyses of things based on causation, which I am so fond of, are not only unnecessary but mistaken. He says that I am setting up causation as an ultimate reality when it is in fact only a model, or a useful assumption.

It is clear to me that while Ian has a degree of intellectual understanding, he doesn't go beyond his "models". I am always telling Ian how the model of cause and effect is the only model that can effectively undermine all models. But of course, as you will see, Ian doesn't think we need to go beyond them, nor does he believe it is possible to do so. His understanding of Nietzsche goes something like this:

The Superman is the meaning of the Earth! Believeth not in them which speak of superterrestrial hopes. Orgasm is the greatest of all human pleasures: thus has Nature ordained! I bid you my brethren, seeketh to stimulate the pleasure centres of your brain by all possible means. And, if by some electrical or genetic means you are able to stimulate those pleasure centres without cease, then you will have achieved the highest! Then and only then will

ye truly be Higher Men. Thus spake Zarathustra.

11th December, 1991

Ian -----

My life - search for spirituality/philosophy - hermit dream - clash of traditions
science-church. esp Plato (betrayal of Socrates?) Nietzsche Both
timely -

Incidentally I think that Nietzsche goes way beyond Kierkegaard - not in cohesion of theory (eternal recurrence, self-overcoming), not in the things he adapted from Schopenhauer - but in the pure "poetic" force with which he understood the ramifications of science - especially evolution.

Oddly this force seems to be less clear today because: (a) it is less novel. (b) myths have grown up around it that have retreated. and (c) tolerance has been interpreted by the herd as relativism (as you point out).

I think that Nietzsche is much more forceful than Kierkegaard in seeing how this quantum leap in reason breaks with archaic mixed-up notions of spirituality. When Nietzsche says "spirit" he means the lion, the powerful machine, of brain and body. No more otherworldliness, no more talk of the lowly "physical" plane, but a reveling affirmation of the spirituality of blood, hair, bone, and flesh. Nietzsche is unique in this - Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard are plodding.

But apart from this always - I had a feeling that something was missing in science. Where previously there was purpose and ethics, modern science, unlike the beast that Nietzsche foresaw, had ripped open the machine and left only flailing wires shooting strange sparks of electricity - nihilism at its worst.

But still I had to face the hard truth - that there was no code by which to interpret God, spirit, purpose, path etc. This was much harder to face than leaving the herd to pursue "truth" - and it required a much greater integrity than leaving Christianity. It is hard to accept that all this spiritual gamesmanship was more to do ego than hard, hard, hard facts.

Now in this rarified - but hardly "lofty" atmosphere we can take another look at the inadequacy of science. Science is powerless to describe what we should try to achieve - you can't derive an ought from an is. This is what makes ethics such a lively topic for me - and this is why I find frank acceptance of this problem so refreshing. When I first came to this realization - I felt such a fool -

and I felt so ordinary. That is, until I realized how rarified this atmosphere really was . . . then I despaired.

We see the archer stretch the bow, but we don't see the force he applies. No one has ever seen "force". There are only associations. The "picture" of force (a vector) fits the data gained through induction. The model is contained in "the computer", (the modeling device, the cybernetic system that houses the model) and represents merely an association . . . "causes" need never be mentioned . . . only associations and models based on assumptions (it should be noted that vectors don't work in relativity!). Please, don't be offended, but I feel that some work in maths, logic and/or physics would help you see this point.

It seems to me that you have hit upon a number of "truths" - but it seems to be in spite of your theory rather than because of it.

I like your arguments about: authority, will, ego, tolerance. But I think your theory leads you astray in the area of ethics. (I understand that your theory is shrouded in "teaching aids", but it is what you give me that I must work with. Furthermore, you can't always hide behind the irony of the teacher).

Indeed, I think you have interpreted even your own theory wrongly. If the ego is simply a functional creation of evolution then why must we go beyond it? I think that the simplicity of the function of ego - which can be paralleled with the simplicity of the pleasure/pain program - is at times inefficient. We can often do better if we ignore our first impulses and reason things out, but this does not show that ego and pleasure/pain are dysfunctional. In fact, I think they are essential to understanding how we function. It's just like the white man to move into new territory and to immediately start making the rules!

In ordinary conversation people use the words "know", "believe", "faith" in different ways - as you have picked up. They tend to say that they believe, only when they have faith, and not knowledge! Furthermore, in some circles, faith is seen as a good trait - as if self-deception is a required talent. But I think that irony over this point comes at too high a price. I see induction and deduction as the only valid paths to truth. When we use "intuition", we are using valuable heuristics, but we should always defer to logic. When we get too clever over this point, we start to generate confusions. It can take decades to see through these confusions and, in the end, we learn little more than if the master had said to us: "I have no authority other than induction and deduction." In one fell swoop the student understands, and will not be led astray (at least, not by the teacher.) The teacher is less of a hero, and more of a thorn - perhaps a resented thorn - but this is the price the teacher pays.

In logic, a necessary truth is one that cannot be false in any possible world. For example, "The moon is made of green cheese or the moon is NOT made of

green cheese." This cannot be false. On the other hand, the statement "the moon is not made of green cheese" is a contingent truth, dependent on observation. I think your notion that everything has causes is contingent and false - but you also mix up some definitions of "cause".

Now smoking and lung cancer are correlated by experiment. But there is not necessarily an association between smoking and lung cancer. Yet Kevin says, "There is at least the association that an experiment has been done which involves both lung cancer and smoking, thus they are causally related."

There are a number of "non-ironic ironies":

- "A wise person is worth more than a fool."
- "Physical health is correlated with mental health."

(In fact, I would conjecture that Weltenshaft and physical health are, on average, equally important for sanity!)

These would not be ironic except that the herd spends a great deal of its time avoiding them. Indeed, to even state these truths is a threat to the herd. Consequently, it is almost impossible to even think these truths, and it takes great integrity to face up to them openly and consciously.

But there is one ironic irony which requires even greater integrity than these. to understand it one must go beyond the hard integrity of the sages who have become infused with the life-blood of evolution. It is simply this: "Pleasure is good in its own right."

11th December, 1992

from:
Kevin Solway (to Ian)
PO Box 207
St Lucia 4067

Ian,

In response to the notes you sent me:

The fact that all things must have causes is a necessary truth and not a contingent truth. For example, the truth "all bicycles have two wheels" is a necessary truth based on the fact that the word "bicycle" implies that the thing in question has two wheels. That is, we do not need to see the bicycle to know that it must have two wheels. Similarly, "a thing has causes" is a necessary truth based on the fact that the word "thing" implies that the thing in question has

causes. And why? Because a thing can only exist relative to other things. For example, a thing must exist relative to an observer at least. This relation is necessary for the existence of the thing. But is this necessary relation strictly a cause of the thing? My definition of a cause is simple enough: a cause is something which is necessary for another thing to exist.

Now, regarding the experimental correlation between smoking and lung cancer, YES, there is definitely a direct causal relation between smoking and cancer. But by the same token there is a direct causal relationship between ALL THINGS in Nature. This is because all things are physically connected, yes, physically connected, by air, by space, by all kinds of ways. If things are physically connected then they must be causally related. Of course, I am using the word "causally" in its broadest possible, philosophical sense. My good health is physically connected to the movement of Pluto's atmosphere, and is thus causally related to the movement of Pluto's atmosphere. But I do not take it that the movement of Pluto's atmosphere is the cause of my good health in an everyday practical sense.

To labour the point, the movement of Pluto's atmosphere IS connected to my good health, but not in any way that I currently perceive is useful to me in my efforts to maintain good health from day to day.

Regarding models of reality, of course cause and effect is a model, representing mere associations as you say. But this doesn't negate the usefulness and validity of cause and effect as a philosophical tool. Your concept "model" is itself a model representing mere associations. My point is that cause and effect is the only useful tool when it comes to successfully realizing the illusory nature of the tools.

Now onto the subject of evolution. Undoubtedly the ego has aided the survival of the species in the past, and has thus been favoured by natural selection. I do not say we must go beyond the ego, only that from my observations and reasonings I deduce that we must go beyond the ego if the species is to have the best chance of survival. Not that the survival of the species is my primary goal by any means; no, my goal in life, and in death for that matter, is the survival of wisdom. The survival of wisdom is aided by the practice of wisdom, which entails going beyond the ego.

Please note that this ambition of mine to destroy the ego is as much a creation of evolution as is egotism. Evolution, like white man, often moves into new territory and changes the rules.

Finally, I must point out that the sage does in fact have one authority higher than mere induction and deduction: he has Faith! He has faith in the truth he has discovered through induction and deduction, which is infinitely removed from mere knowledge. Faith makes the difference between having infinite authority and having none at all.

Infinite authority says: "Pleasure is good in its own right, insofar as it leads to wisdom."

That's all for now,

Kevin

I have also been talking with a chap who has recently moved into the house. He too understands that we are robots and function entirely by cause and effect.

But, when it comes to the consequences of this knowledge, and the renouncing of the ego, he backs down. He says that because the nature of reality is that all things are uncertain, then knowledge of the principle of cause and effect is also uncertain. He reasons that if he cannot be 100% confident in the principle of cause and effect then he is not going to base his life on it, and is certainly not going to try to convert others to it.

I will try to summarize his argument. He says that all knowledge is uncertain for two reasons: Firstly, he says that knowledge is uncertain because of the chaotic nature of reality - we can't get a grasp on things because of their infinite complexity. Secondly he says that even if we could know things we can never know whether we are knowing them correctly. We may be programmed to think that we are being logical when in fact we are not being logical - so there is no way to know with certainty when we are thinking logically. We may think that one point of logic leads seamlessly on from another. Even more, we may think our whole philosophy is seamless and flawless, when it might actually be entirely groundless. In other words, if we can never know if the philosophy of cause of effect is ultimately true, then why put any value on it?

This is a very frustrating argument isn't it? It is also a very common one, so I thought I'd elaborate on it here. I put this problem to a couple of people I know who claim to have grasped an understanding of the Truth, and it completely stumped them. You could see the beads of sweat raising on their vexed foreheads.

I will deal with his second argument first; that of being unsure that our knowing is correct. For a person with imperfect logical thought processes, uncertainty should be a constant companion. To such a person I would say that life is simply a matter of doing your best, that's all. It's not a terribly complicated philosophical solution is it? What else can such a person do? Nature gives most of us no other choice. It must do. If something seems more reasonable than another, then you go with the one that seems more reasonable. And why? Because reason has value. But that statement itself requires further investigation, which I will go into soon. In any case, the philosophy of causation seems more reasonable than any other to a reasoning person.

Yet it must be said that "doing your best" can sometimes lead to knowing things with certainty and without error. If by some chance a person's logical thought processes were perfect, even for but a moment, then the person's reasoning for that moment would be perfect. Whatever knowledge issued from that perfect reasoning would also be perfect. Now, in that moment of perfect reasoning the person may reason that their reasoning is perfect, which would necessarily be a correct reasoning. So the person would be reasoning correctly, and would correctly know they were doing so.

Of course, the mere fact that a person thinks they are reasoning correctly does not mean they are reasoning correctly. But it does not logically follow from this point that if a person thinks they are reasoning correctly they may be mistaken. As we have seen above, in the case of a person having perfect logical thought processes there is no chance that their reasoning is faulty. People generally have a lot of trouble with this point of logic. They get confused between probabilities and particulars. In the general case, the chances are that a person may be wrong, but in a particular case there may be no chance that the person is wrong.

Two people may be absolutely certain that they know the ultimate Truth. One may be mistaken and the other may not be mistaken. But it does not logically follow from this that a person cannot be sure they know the ultimate Truth. As stated, they are both sure, but only one of them is correct.

The difficulty people have with this reasoning is that they cannot think of themselves as individuals, particular individuals. Their reality comes from probabilities, or numbers. People are afraid of making an individual stand because they know that everybody else thinks in terms of probabilities. My flatmate denies that his thinking on this subject is influenced by such crude things as probabilities and the opinions of others. He is a very logical person after all. But the herd mentality goes down deep. I know that he is afraid of losing all his happiness, which he would if he became a true individual. I know he is afraid of being hated by women. Naturally enough, his ego will not let him undermine the cornerstones of his strength and happiness, which is the herd.

Now, concerning the first point about not being able to know things, or get a grasp on them, because of the infinite complexity of Nature. Again, his thinking has stopped in the shallows. Things in the world are surely unknowable in the ultimate sense, but we can certainly be confident with our categories, because we jolly well make them up! Logical reasoning deals with categories, and because we nominate them we can know them with certainty. The philosophy of cause and effect is arrived at through such categorization, so, provided the reasoning is faultless, the result is also faultless.

Finally, why should we put ultimate value on reason and truth? Why not put ultimate value on ignorance and happiness? A nihilist is someone who sees that nothing has value so makes up values to suit himself. Is one who puts value on reason any better than a nihilist? The difference is a matter of degree. The only thing that separates a spiritual man and a nihilist is that the spiritual man puts more value on reason. Both choose their values on a whim and their values are arbitrary, but the spiritual man makes his choice with considerably less ego than does the nihilist. Importantly, it must be seen that the spiritual man's whim is directed by the same force as the nihilist's whim - the selfish desire to be free of pain. There is no shame in this. But the more spiritual the

man is, and the lesser his ego, the purer his motivation and actions will be.

So, we have determined that the spiritual man is different because he puts more emphasis on reason, but why does he think reason is so important? I could posit all sorts of reasons about how reason promises the most lasting happiness to a desirous, reasoning soul, but in the end it is Nature that makes him think that reason and truth are the most important. Nature makes the spiritual man seek ego satisfaction through truth (which as it happens is destructive to the ego), and Nature makes others seek satisfaction through only a limited use of reason. Nature, too, has made the spiritual man want to convert the nihilist to seek satisfaction through reason and truth, and the nihilist to resist!

When I showed my flatmate what I have just written he said: "But what is reason? - it is totally arbitrary. Reason is whatever you define it to be, so why put so much value on it?" . . . No, reason is what the perfectly reasoning individual defines it to be!

My mind has been fairly poorly lately, and needed a holiday. So I took a dainty twenty-one year old girl out for the evening. . . . Delightful . . . I felt . . . Nothing . . . Her face . . . was a vacuum . . . But I made sure it won't happen again by telling her some of my ideas. The evening inspired a few of the aphorisms that follow.

By the way, if you want a bound copy of "Wit for Wisdom", all 200 pages of it, you will need to send me \$25 dollars to cover costs. I am sure you will think it is worth it.

- Reconcile: to make a right out of two wrongs.

- The reason I think women are inferior is that I judge them by the same criteria as I judge men.

- People avoid the truth to give themselves something to do.

- A man needs a simple woman to help him forget just how simple women are.

- Love essentially involves being responsible to make sure that another person does not get bored.

- A woman plays hard to get to distract a man from thinking that she will be impossible to get rid of.

- A woman will not make heavy demands on a man till she has trapped him.

- If a man knows not the bliss of being struck with a phenomenal love, he knows not temptation.

- Freedom from desire is usually but an avoidance of temptation.

- A man doesn't realize what a fool he is till he has someone to talk to.

- Romance is a war that is ended by a mutual declaration of love.

- The purpose of love is to ensure that even the strongest reproduce.

- If you go against the grain when young the grain will go against you when old.

- Men who love women have no respect for them.

- In marriage you sometimes have to sleep with someone whom you feel like killing.

- A gentleman is a man who will not squeeze a girl's hand unless he is prepared to marry her.

- There is nothing more intimidating to a man than a woman's desires.

- Men are more creative than women, especially in ending a relationship.

- It is easy to be liked if you do not continually speak magnificent truths that everybody hates.

- It is easier to imagine a person is great if their behaviour does not continually remind you that you are not.

- If a girl can comprehend the word "soul" she is not beautiful.

- A man can accept his inferiority in various matters because his reason has sway over his feelings, but a woman must have none superior to her.

- To be popular with women, be sure never mention the fact that women as a class are less rational and hence inferior to men.

- No man fully resents knowing magnificent truths until it has cost him the affections of a woman.

- A man finds more joy in winning a woman's love than in being loved. To win a woman's love is to be rewarded with a priceless gift from an angel, but to be loved is to be used by a vain fool.

Hope to hear from you soon,

Kevin

10th February, 1992

from:
David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Dear Kevin,

Middle aged? Sometimes I feel so, sometimes older. Yet people tell me I look young for my age. This is probably due to my being immature and irresponsible. I am a child yet to be a man.

I was actually in Brisbane not too long ago. I did not come and see you, for the reasons outlined in my last letter, though it was tempting. As you know, Sue has been living in Brisbane for quite a few months now. Before she moved up there, she became pregnant through me, and consequently decided to move to Brisbane and raise the child by herself. I visited Brisbane in December primarily to assist her through labour, and am now back in Hobart resuming my hermitic self.

I found your letter most interesting as it dealt with issues that have long been in my mind. Ever since I read in "The Human Evasion" by Celia Green where she states that the highest philosophical realization is that of "everything is uncertain", I've been wondering: Is that really so?

As you say, this view is very common. Almost uncommonly uncommon. It is the religion of our times; UNCERTAINTY has replaced GOD, and like most political processes, where nothing changes very much except the faces, the new God has assumed all the responsibilities of the old: namely, that of undermining confidence in reason and individuality and the will to Truth. It is a disease, as irrational and harmful a disease as any fanatical fundamentalist fairytale. It shows yet again that we humans have no compunction about existing in fairytales - we merely demand "intellectually respectable", hard-to-dispute fairytales. And often not even this.

But first to Ian. In spite of your "tidying-up", I still found his notes irritatingly obscure, so much so that I initially wondered whether I could be bothered trying to get to the bottom of them or not. I don't think he understood your book at all. But he nevertheless felt he should try and respond in some clever manner - all in the interests of not appearing stupid, I suppose. The whole tone and structure of his notes reminds me of the bloke who typed up my "Woman" essays - he sent back my manuscript covered with comments

scrawled in red ink, comments which were at best outrageous, just bits and pieces of abuse (there's no other word for it really) thrown up without explanation or context. If people are going to criticize they should really do it properly, and not just shoot down "straw men" of their imaginations.

Ultimately, the question is: Is Ian interested in Truth or not? Or is he really interested in his protecting his view of himself as being a hard-nosed scientist who has outgrown idealism? If it's a case of the former, then why isn't he jumping up and down with joy at the thought of cause and effect, which at the very least promises to produce much intellectual fruit, let alone the key to Ultimate truth? Why does he need to fight against it, when it should seem to confirm to him what he already professes to know: namely, that things are not ultimately real, being merely "associations and nothing more"? At the very least, the concept of cause and effect would provide for him a whole new angle on things, and promise further to integrate what he already knows into an intelligible whole. Why does he treat it as if it were a threat?

I think that there are two main reasons for this. Firstly, he simply hasn't grasped it yet. It seems that his notions of causality are very much trapped in the scientific framework. Thus, causality cannot be conceived of apart from mechanics - causes are "forces", "energies", "momentums", "collisions", "laws of Nature", etc. As he points out, these are constructions of the mind in an effort to deal with phenomena. But he goes on to reason that since these are constructions and not ultimately real, cause and effect must be ultimately unreal.

A scientist will never accept a "causal link" until they have viewed it under a microscope!

Because all our perceptions are perceptions of appearances and associations, we can never, as it were, close the gap between two "events". No matter how minute our frame of reference, we will never catch such an animal as a "causal link". To a mind that depends on capturing and caging the world into a network of concepts, this can be a very disconcerting thing. Because Ian cannot conceive of a direct causal link between things, he automatically assumes the very existence of cause and effect is in doubt. His error lies in doubting cause and effect itself, instead of doubting his notions of cause and effect.

But really, he wouldn't need the tool of cause and effect if he truly believed that everything is a "model representing mere associations, and nothing more". Indeed, if he diligently followed through with all the implications of this, he would become enlightened in no time at all. But, as you say, it all comes down to whether you do believe there is life after death, the death of all models. Here lies the real reason for his reluctance.

His spirit is broken - or as the world would have it, he has matured. He used to be a Christian, that is, an idealist, but can no longer believe in idealism. His "models" now provide him with the necessary confusion to find refuge in. His so-called integrity at "having faced the hard truth, that there is no code to interpret God, spirit, path, purpose, etc" is in actuality a relief; it is a relief to be no longer passionate about a spiritual ideal. So then, Kierkegaard is a plodder, because he merely keeps prattling on about leaving the herd in pursuit of truth. But this, this business of being an individual, is just spiritual gamesmanship for the ego. Nietzsche is much more with it, as he doesn't believe in petty idealism - no, he urges the opposite: the elimination of all idealism in an orgy of irrationality.

Having straightened all this out, Ian now throws himself into "ethics", like all mature adults should, and since he no longer believes in anything, the whole "problem of ethics" takes on a perplexing vitality like never before. Clayton's spirituality: the spirituality you have when you don't have spirituality.

All is most clearly revealed in his highest wisdom - "Pleasure is good in its own right" - which really means: "I can no longer understand the notion of suffering for an ideal".

His fractured spirit is something his ego wishes to avoid at all costs, and this avoidance is expressed all throughout his notes. He becomes the tutor, the academic, almost a professor, hinting at some hidden wisdom that poor Kevin is not yet privy to. A little bit more maths, Kevin, and you'll get your theory straightened out. You have some good ideas, but I have to say that you have a long way to go. You haven't even realized that rarified atmosphere; how far you are from the lofty heights!

In short: irritating, poetic cleverness; all too common.

Your flatmate poses a far more interesting and difficult problem. He maintains that all knowledge is uncertain as we can never be sure whether we are reasoning correctly or not, that reason is ultimately arbitrary. I dare say that had you suddenly turned around and confronted me with this problem, I too would have had a stumped forehead vexed with sweat. For one as dull of wit as I, this problem is subtle indeed.

As you say, this view that "all knowledge is uncertain" is common - indeed, it positively characterizes the Western philosophical thought of the last couple of centuries or so. The whole issue has been rattling around my head for some time now; your letter gives me the chance to articulate some of the fruits of this labour. I will use your flatmate merely as a focus for my arguments. With the little information you gave, I am in danger of misrepresenting him. I have no desire to criticize someone without good reason, so what follows is merely an attack on a very common view.

Further, if one is to answer this problem then it should be done thoroughly. The resolving of this issue is crucial; otherwise it can so very easily sap the spirit of strength and lead it to stagnation. It is important to determine exactly where this whole view is coming from, so I will have to go into points which seems obvious. Thus, your patience is needed.

"Reason is totally arbitrary. Reason is whatever you define it to be, so why put any value on it?" This seems an extraordinary statement from someone who utterly depends on reason in order to perform the slightest action in the world; from someone who depended on reason to build up his skills, his personality, his speech and knowledge; from someone who would be totally imbecilic without it.

To say reason is totally arbitrary is to say that it is indistinguishable from nonsense. To say reason is totally arbitrary is to say that a contradiction is equivalent to a non-contradiction. Only a thoroughly insane person could "believe" this. In every possible manner, your flatmate's whole life contradicts his "reason is totally arbitrary".

Reason evolved as man's major tool for dealing with Nature. It expands knowledge of what causes what; it enables him to deal with circumstances, present and future, in a flexible manner. Thus, at the very least, reason has an intimate relationship with Nature.

Reason must necessarily presuppose the principle of cause and effect. Science could not make a single solitary step without presupposing it. The very success of science and technology suggests that cause and effect and Nature are inseparable. It doesn't prove the universality of cause and effect, but it does at least demand that if one is to disbelieve in cause and effect then some pretty powerful evidence would be needed.

Since you describe your flatmate as being very logical then he should know that the actual logical step is the very opposite of being arbitrary. Indeed, it is the most precise: a logical step is either completely correct or completely incorrect, never inbetween. There is no mystery to the logical step, be it induction or deduction - it is none other that the relating of two previously unrelated strands of information (associations) via the sharing of a category. It is all above board, in plain view, with no hidden factors to upset the apple cart. If there be any uncertainty in a conclusion, then of course it must come from any uncertainty in the original strands of associations and premises, and not in the logical step itself.

Your flatmate may suggest that this is where "arbitrariness" comes into play. All the materials that reason manipulates, the strands of associations, are subject to the whims, values, and prejudices of the reasoner. For example, an

historical account of some event must necessarily be a non-objective, hence arbitrary, account - depending on one's whims, values, and prejudices; certain things are emphasised, others ignored, etc.

Yet not all knowledge is subject to such relativity. An historical, or scientific account, must necessarily be a fiction. But the fact that there can be no objective historical account is certain. Here is a certainty which relativity or perspectivism by definition cannot undermine. Similarly, when one reasons about "things" and whether they have causes or not, one steps outside the whole domain of relativity. Indeed, the principle of cause and effect underpins the very notion of relativity.

As you say, we can be certain of our definitions precisely because we make them up. For example, I would define the "universe" as being utterly everything. I would define ultimate truth as being that which is everywhere and everywhen - it would have to be at least as large as the universe, and at least as pervasive as the universe. That is, ultimate truth would have to be one, eternal, unchanging, and boundaryless - anything less and contradictions would arise. I would then examine the universe to discover what it is that seems to be constant everywhere and everywhen, and this seems to be "change". So then I think to myself: "If I understand change, then I understand everything". And so on.

Furthermore, there are certain "necessary truths" which, as Ian points out, must necessarily be true in all possible worlds. For example, "free-will" is an impossibility no matter whether things in the world are caused, uncaused, or a mixture of both. Another, the mind can only perceive "appearances" and not "things-in-themselves": this must necessarily be true no matter how demonically our brains are programmed.

In any case, your flatmate's demand that he be certain of "cause and effect" before basing his life upon it, is the same as demanding the fruit before planting the seed. Truth and certainty comes later, not necessarily at the beginning.

To say "all knowledge is uncertain" is the equivalent to saying "enlightenment is a myth". Is enlightenment a myth? Your flatmate wouldn't have a clue. Indeed, no man can answer this question with certainty until he becomes enlightened himself! So, at the very least, unless your flatmate is a Buddha, his view is premature.

And where did this "all knowledge is uncertain" come from? Out of the blue? Or as a product of reasoning? Either way, he cannot be certain as to whether it is actually true or not. If it is a product of reasoning, then a whole network of assumptions, premises, and logical steps comes into play, all of which, by his reasoning, becomes uncertain. He may have started off with certainties, or what he considers to be certainties, in order to reach his

conclusion; but alas, the conclusion immediately undermines itself. Thus he is forever destined to be uncertain even about this view that "all knowledge is uncertain".

The statement "all knowledge is uncertain" is by definition irrational, since it cannot be supported by reason without falling into contradiction. It does not follow from this that "therefore some knowledge must be certain", but it does mean that he cannot believe his "all knowledge is uncertain" with certainty. Certainty may be possible after all.

Your flatmate may accept the above arguments and yet argue: "Even so, everything the understanding process understands, my mind is capable of doubting. Precisely because my mind can entertain doubts about everything, I will never be certain as to the truth of my knowledge."

This, possibly, is where your flatmate is ultimately coming from. He would not doubt that reason is non-arbitrary in an everyday practical sense, but as far as ultimate issues are concerned, nothing is certain.

This is a most interesting view. It is also a potentially self-destructing view. The mind could become absorbed in a particular line of reasoning, and it may reach a conclusion with the conviction of absolute rational certainty; but the next moment the mind moves on, frees itself from the rational network just inhabited, looks back at the conclusion just reached and promptly doubts it. Conceivably, the mind could go on like this forever, in a continual looking over the shoulder in an effort to doubt its latest reasonings.

But this is merely a habit, and an irrational one at that. The mind is capable of wonderful imaginings. It can build constructions that have little to do with the rest of reality. Equally so, it can construct "doubts" that have no validity. A person who seriously entered into this habit is in danger of undermining his mental faculties.

The irrationality of doubting in this manner lays in the fact that all doubting depends on certainties for its existence. The very process of the mind doubting necessarily depends on its conviction in a certainty lying elsewhere. The whole basis of your flatmate's uncertainty rests on the conjecture that our brains may be programmed to never be able to reason perfectly (combined with plenty of ability to deceive us into thinking otherwise). This is a conjecture with no basis to it. There is no evidence for it. Thus, by the same reasoning, it could equally be the case that our brains are capable of reasoning perfectly.

Your flatmate should, if he is consistent, doubt, say, the geometrical proof of Pythagoras's Theorem. A more seamless logical proof one could not get! Yet, according to your flatmate, some hidden factor could exist to falsify it. On what basis? A conjecture? To doubt a perfectly seamless proof such as

Pythagoras's Theorem is to doubt the mind's very ability to recognize objects and definitions. This is the road to imbecility on the boat of groundless conjecture.

All this strikes me as an attempt to avoid reality. To any genuine soul with a thirst for reality, the conviction "all knowledge is uncertain" would be intolerable - not mere despair, but absolute agony. Only two possible futures await such a soul: an all out drive for enlightenment; or a quick exit into insanity.

To be able to exist with the conviction "all knowledge is uncertain" and to make one's way about the world as if nothing were seriously amiss, indicates a strength so extraordinary that it could only come from one who is mentally dead, indifferent to Truth.

A nihilist is one who stops short of pushing his investigations to the very end; or else is a common indifferent atheist who likes to stick interesting labels upon himself. The former may be someone who is simply lacking in faith that Truth can be a reality; or he may be someone who has always harboured a secret longing to be free of philosophical thought and gets out at the first respectable opportunity.

The holder of the view "all knowledge is uncertain" is like this; he reasons: "I love my life, my habits, my comforts. Serious philosophy can only lead me away from these things, therefore nothing is certain."

The will to Truth is the crucial thing. Such a will can only but expose the inherent contradiction involved in the reasoning: "All things are uncertain, therefore cause and effect is uncertain".

To say all things are uncertain is to say that we can never be sure of seeing things as they really are, which is to say we can never see things as they really are. This is to say we can only ever see deceptions because of the distorted programming of our brains. This is to say we can only ever see appearances because of this distortion. This is to say that all things are relative, which is to say all things have causes.

Thus, if "all things are uncertain" is certain, then "all things have causes" is equally certain. Causality does not depend on uncertainty, but uncertainty depends on causality.

David

P.S I'll send up some money for "Wit" in a couple of weeks.

13th March, 1992

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

Dear Dave,

Have you got, or can you get a copy of your "Woman" manuscript on computer disk (5 1/4" floppy) in Ascii format (ie, plain text, without special codes). If so, I will be able to convert it into a computer program which will receive wider distribution.

Dan Rowden and I have decided to start-up an Atheist Society. I enclose a copy of what our goals are and a questionnaire we are asking interested people to complete. We want to make every effort to ensure that the society remains hard-hitting and uncompromising. I'm not sure how long I will remain associated with this thing, as I know it will go downhill with time as it attracts more members and inevitably becomes more democratic and unoffensive. Nevertheless, I am prepared to put in enough work to kick it off because I think the Atheist Society represents a stimulant pill that society needs. It represents intellectual discernment - unheard of these days - which is an ideal after all, as weak as it may become.

While we get it off the ground, and maybe forevermore, membership is by contribution, so if you can part with any amount to help cover our costs (photocopying etc) it is much appreciated - if you would like to damn yourself along with us.

Many people are at my heels about my continually referring to "masculine" and "feminine" qualities of personality, and "the spiritual man". They tell me I am being sexist for implying that masculine qualities belong to men and feminine qualities belong to women. I beg your pardon I say to them, I never said anything of the kind. I use the word "masculine" to refer to the numerous and complex qualities of mind and behaviour most apparent in the male of the species, certainly not to imply that they belong to men. I refer to "the spiritual man" because "the spiritual person" does not convey my message. If a person is spiritual, they are by that very fact a man, in the sense that they exhibit the very best of the masculine qualities, whether they be male or female by sex. This kind of "man" is very far indeed from being a person.

This is all very straightforward, so the cause of their displeasure must lie

deeper. And the cause is simply this: nobody wants to see any difference between the sexes. Or if they are brave enough to see differences, they don't want to see any difference in value. They believe that if there is no difference in value between masculine and feminine qualities, then why have words for them? Why bother to even recognize their existence? To do so would be to construct unnecessary barriers!

Well, as far as I'm concerned masculine qualities have infinite value, while feminine qualities have no value whatsoever; so it is in my interests to draw a sharp distinction between them. And because masculine qualities are found mainly in men I will continue to use the words "masculine" and "man" - if only to challenge people to take a look. Yes, to invite people to take a look, and see how different men are from women; to challenge people to consider that man, on the whole, is not a woman. No, I will not use some word other than "masculine" to describe strength, dynamism, courage, nobility, rationality, consistency, and depth. For to do so might incline us to overlook the main repository of these priceless treasures - men.

Women then say to me: "But all those qualities you mentioned, like strength, courage, and depth, are just as much, if not more the domain of women than of men". And so I politely inform them that it is precisely because they lack these qualities that they believe they already possess them.

"But women do not agree with you!"

Tough! It was never my intention not to offend anyone.

Now, on to the subject of your last letter. The whole subject of "knowing things" is so awkward that I try to keep it as simple as possible. That is why I settled on the argument of "the perfect reasoner" which kills the whole philosophy of uncertainty with a single blow. The problem is, of course, that a person has to have an intelligent, courageous mind to see the truth of my argument, which means that my argument is of little use. So be it.

I gave your letter to my flatmate to read and he said he would write a reply to it. He hasn't done so yet, but his response goes something like this: Yes, I am fully aware of the contradictions inherent in my argument. I am a hypocrite. His point is that he doesn't see an alternative. In other words, he is intellectually uncertain that all things are uncertain but has to settle on some certainty or other for practical purposes, for the purpose of living. So, on a whim, and he settles on happiness (though he baulks when it comes to admitting this). And he obviously feels that the idea of the certainty of uncertainty gives him more happiness than the idea of the certainty of certainty. In other words, he is just cowardly, no more, no less.

He is your classical nihilist, as I discussed in my last letter. His whim, and

his certainty, is based on ego rather than a relative absence of ego. As I say, it is a matter of degree. Because his ego is relatively strong he has a strong need of pleasure. Reason destroys pleasure. So he reaches the conclusion: "why put total value on reason if values are but a matter of whim?". Someone with a less of an ego would say: "I must put total value on reason if I am to be happy" - and this thought is their downgoing. They will become Buddhas.

On the same subject I had a discussion with someone a few days ago about the existence of God. I told them that I can easily prove the non-existence of God. They told me that they had studied philosophy at Uni last year and it was shown that it was impossible to prove or disprove the existence of God. So, I painstakingly explained how if a thing existed, then it must be a thing (by definition), and that all things have causes (things they exist relative to), so something without a cause (God) is impossible. The person replied that there are things beyond our imagination, so how can I say that! When I said that a thing is a thing whether it is beyond our imagination or not, and that the only thing that is not a thing is Nature, the person scooted off on their bicycle. And I'm sure that girl liked me for a while there too.

I haven't heard from Sue, but I would be interested to see her (and the reincarnation of David). Would she mind if you gave me her phone number?

Bye for now,

Kevin

- THE ATHEIST SOCIETY -

The Atheist Society is a socially concerned organization. It consists of individuals from various academic and social backgrounds, each having a knowledge of the non-existence of God and an uncompromising rejection of all concepts of God, be they metaphysical or socio-political in nature. Members of this society do not adopt a non-committal, agnostic viewpoint and are therefore openly anti-religious.

The following is a brief outline of the basic principles and goals of the Atheist Society :-

1. To seek the truth in all things.
2. To uphold the principle of intellectual freedom and to encourage freedom of thought and expression both within educational institutions and the broader community.

3. To actively and publicly seek to debunk religious and philosophic mythology using rational and reasoned argument.
4. To uphold the value of truth and reason in all intellectual pursuits and to restore pragmatism to its rightful place within these pursuits.
5. To encourage intellectual discernment and to expose the falsity of the modern nihilistic philosophy of relativism.
6. To challenge any social tradition which is founded upon superstition or false concepts.

11th April, 1992

from:
David Quinn
3/73 Augusta Rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Dear Kevin

The argument of the "perfect reasoner" may demolish the philosophy of uncertainty, but the trouble is one has had to have experienced perfect reasoning in order to grasp it. For the average nihilist, the argument holds no water. One can only appeal to their conscience by pointing out the contradictions of nihilism and uncertainty.

I really don't think that women are at all concerned about whether the sexes are different or not. To them, the whole issue is irrelevant - for they know full well that, in the end, only woman exists. What is called "man" is but an appendage of her; man is the rib of woman. Women are quite happy to emphasize differences one moment, and extol sameness the next. One minute man is the powerful romantic hero, the next he is a poor imitation of woman - only woman exists and all other views are to protect and further this. A coin has two sides - men can prattle on all they like about how the side of heads is different or the same as that of tails, but she knows that it is all one coin. And the coin is woman.

The Atheist Society sounds interesting enough. I want to know more about it. What will be its structure? Will there be meetings? Newsletters? Group activities and all the other stuff that is normally associated with societies?

Sue is waiting to hear from you. Her number is *** *****.

Hear from you soon

David

4th May, 1992

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

Dear Dave,

My latest project is a compilation of the best writings about women, that is, the evil that is Woman. I am including sections from Kierkegaard's "Banquet", essays from his journals, as well as some of Nietzsche's aphorisms, a collection of quotes from a wide variety of sources, Schopenhauer's essay "On Women", bits from Ramakrishna, Plato, and Freud, my chapter on women from "Poison", and am also thinking of including your "Woman - An Exposition for the developing mind". The combination, packed into and displayed from a single computer program, should be truly awesome.

But I would like to see you give "Exposition" one more editing. I have spent the last couple of days typing it into my computer, so I now have it in a form which is easy to edit. While a lot of the short essays in part III are sharp and punchy, the same cannot be said for significant stretches of text in the first two parts. If you can force yourself to do so (I know this will be a real drag) can you mark-up a copy of "Exposition" with pen, send it to me, and I'll make the changes to the text I have stored in my computer. If you mark which bits you want deleted, sentences you want moved or new sentences inserted, words changed or deleted, paragraphs moved, spellings changed, just mark them clearly with pen, and it will be easy enough for me to make the changes on the computer. There is a lot of good material there, but I think it needs to be made a little more readable. Try to cut down on wordy sentences, and words with a lot of syllables, if you can. Also, I notice you use the word "entirely" a lot. I know these are annoyingly small things, but if changing them can help a message to find its way more deeply into a person's brain then I reason that it must be worth it.

I laughed when Sue told me about the person who typed up your "Exposition" . . . finished the job and then went to Melbourne for a sex change! The most amazing thing was that it was a male who wanted to change into a woman, and not the other way around.

The Atheist Society experiment seems to be going quite well. We are trying to make people think and to expand their horizons, and I think we are achieving that so far. We have signed up Phillip Adams, Robyn Williams, and Karl Kruszelnicki as honorary members. We have sent offers to Stephen Hawking, Richard Dawkins, Steven Jay Gould, and Ben Elton. They may not be true

atheists in the pure sense of the word, but we feel that having these well-known public figures publicly display their atheism will make people think a bit. These people are regarded as role models by many. Their public declaration of atheism will force people to consider the question, the either/or question, the question whether God exists, or whether he does not. The challenge is unmistakably thrust forward.

I have decided that even if we attract no members at all, and are unable to engage anyone in meaningful discussion, and cannot make a single person understand cause and effect, then we have still done good in the mere fact of our existing. Yes, just existing, and advertising our existence, and signing up famous people as honorary members has an impact on the way people think. I think it might just give them a shove in the direction of the human realm. It might just awaken one or two dialectical processes in their brains.

For my part, I will make it quite clear, publicly clear, that I am fully aware of the limitations of the Atheist Society, and that I do not pretend that we are trying to teach people ultimate truth. One does not teach ultimate truth to young children - to do so would not only be cruel, but in vain. One has to devise interesting games for them, so that the field will be prepared and cultivated for the seed which will follow. Especially, one does not suggest or incline the children to believe that their games are the end of the story, but rather that their games are just a beginning. Now, with regard to the Atheist Society: one does not teach ultimate truth to fools.

To do all this without causing harm to people, or to the truth, is what Buddhism calls "skill in means". I will simply have to make sure my skill in means is good enough.

Sue tells me you are working on a new project - some kind of a dialogue. I would be interested to know more. I hope you find time to re-edit "Exposition" while you are doing this. The sooner I can release the program the better.

How are things with you? Write soon.

Kevin

7th May, 1992

from:
David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Dear Kevin,

Yes, I will re-edit "Exposition" and get it up to you as soon as possible. To tell the truth, I have never been happy with it and have been wanting to rework it for a long time. Your request will give me the incentive to do it.

My new project, the one that I am currently working on, is not a dialogue but a series of essays. In essence, it will be on real aspects of spiritual living. Just as I used the subject of women in my last project, this time I will use Western Philosophy/Christianity/the world - though this time it will be even more personal than "Exposition". I think it is important to reveal the way in which the world goes about philosophy, as it entraps too many intelligent people. As such, I will go into some detail with the arguments of "freewill vs determinism", the God question, uncertainty, science, the insidious nature of Christianity, the way the world does all it can to prevent spirituality etc. I plan this project to be perfectly written, so that not even a comma will be out of place. It will be like music, designed to snare poor unsuspecting egos.

After this, I have an idea in mind for a work in dialogue form. The title will be something like "Who is the sage?" I will present four alternative philosophies as bluntly as I can, presented in the form of conversation covering a range of topics, mostly dealing with how to live. I'm thinking that I would try to present each philosophy as objectively as I can, that is, I will use no literary tricks to bring any one of them into favourable light. That is, I want the reader to decide: Who is the sage.

As for me personally, I'm just plodding through each day in my seemingly never-ending struggle in dealing with spiritual demands. What is demanded of me and what actually exists in me produce no end of games, much of which is by no means entertaining. I'm edging forward though.

When I look at your life and your determination to make yourself known, whether it be through the Atheist Society or your book or whatever, I confess that I am rather dazzled by it all. That authority you possess is not mine yet - consequently, the fear and trembling of it all still overwhelms me. Just the very notion of having a belief, a belief which is more important than life or death, is

something that is so alien to everything I have been brought up to be. To even come to terms with the thought of spiritual living is enough to make me gnash my teeth. But everything is seeping in. It will seep in.

David

19th May, 1992

from:
David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

Dear Kevin,

Here it is, "Exposition" reworked. In fact, I've given it the complete overhaul. You were right in your criticisms - much of it was sloppy and poorly written. I believe it is now greatly improved.

I would like a printed copy of the final text; the only trouble is I cannot spare a cent at the moment. Is it possible for you to organize a copy for me, and I'll reimburse you when I can? Just stick it in the old binding. I've decided to discard the pseudonym and claim the damn thing as my own. The time is now ripe to do so.

How's the Atheist Society going?

David

15th July, 1992

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

Dear Dave,

I enclose a rough copy of your manuscript. You will notice that I have made quite a lot of changes. Most of these changes have been to the style, but I have removed or rewritten some of the parts I thought were unclear. You really should get yourself a computer. You would find editing much easier - and editing is probably 80% of writing. I think a manuscript of such material needs at least four or five drafts to become readable. Tell your parents that if they want you to achieve anything in life they'd better give you fifteen hundred dollars to buy a computer. They will only waste it on themselves if you don't.

I found that I could cut out a lot of the words you used without any loss of meaning. When I cut several words out of a sentence I would often find that the sentence became too short. I would then look at the following sentence, remove unnecessary words and hey-presto I could join the two short sentences together into one sentence with twice the original meaning. This also improved the flow as you don't have to navigate as many punctuation marks to imbibe the nectar. Everything is closer together and you don't have to work so hard at remembering what you have just read and keeping track of the argument.

Yet I am still not happy with it. Even after I have had my go at it there are still intrusive paragraphs that don't belong, or belong somewhere else. There is still a lot of diverging from the case in hand which makes for difficult reading. And as far as I'm concerned if something is difficult to read then it is too difficult.

You would find this problem easier to resolve with a computer. To do a quality job the only alternative is to write on hundreds of scraps of paper and continually rewrite and rearrange the whole thing - which is so hard to do properly as to be impractical.

All the same I have released the new "Exposition" as part of the "Woman" compilation. It's not quite up to the standard of Kierkegaard's "Banquet" but should still have an impact.

The Atheist Society hasn't been doing much at all. In the first place real atheists are hard to find, and then once you have real Atheists there is no place

to go but Enlightenment, so the activities are somewhat circumscribed. We'll try to get air time on Phillip Adams's "Late night live" and Robyn Williams's "The Science Show". It is an opportunity to say things in public that aren't normally said.

I have been strange lately (normal lately), chasing after aloof types of women again. Of course, my subconscious desire to be rejected (free) stops me from doing enough work to break the armour of such women. When I sense I am close to a breakthrough I back off and honour their pleas for me to go away. I'm not sure its doing me any good but I have to do it.

Sue might have told you about the compilation of love poems I have released as shareware. They have sprung from this same energy which has been possessing me in part of late. I am periodically falling from philosophic and spiritual idealism into romantic idealism. The relief is that it is still idealism, and as such is irritating and dynamic. That is, it dissatisfies and therefore impels one to reach for higher, more substantial, truer ideals. Romantic idealism can serve as a stepping stone between everyday brainlessness and the beginnings of thoughtful enquiry.

My flatmate and I are probably going to put out a kind of underground newsletter in the near future, so please send us articles and even any monetary support you can offer. We are going to hit things like overpopulation, religion, feminism, etc. Why are we doing this you may ask? Again, just because it may do some good and I can't think of anything better to do at present.

I enclose a letter I recently sent to "The Courier Mail" and some essays I recently handed in for a philosophy examination. Use them to spark yourself up if you get sleepy. Incidentally, the two philosophy essays constituted 50% of the course, and they still gave me a grade of 6 (out of 7). "The Courier Mail" only published the first three paragraphs of the letter that follows.

4th July, 1992

from:
Kevin Solway
PO Box 207
St Lucia 4067

To: The Courier Mail

Dear Sir/Madam,

We live in a matriarchal society, not a patriarchal one. The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. We live and have ever lived in a woman's world, and the Universe revolves around it - woman makes sure of this.

Women are totally unconcerned about the needs and values of men. More precisely, women cannot comprehend the needs of men because, on the whole, they lack the capacity for rational thought. Moreover women will never become aware that they are so lacking, precisely because women cannot reason sufficiently to do so.

At best, woman is doomed to see man as no more than a poor copy of herself - herself being the genuine article; at worst she vainly believes that men exist purely to serve her. She does not and cannot recognize the many and unique strengths of men, and the countless great achievements that blossom from his discerning mind and valiant heart.

Men are virtually entirely responsible for the creation of science, philosophy, literature, all the great works of art, and all the useful inventions of mankind. In short, men are largely responsible for everything of value we possess today.

There is no doubt that women are masterful with emotions, but the emotional world is a hateful, harsh, and evil world because it is devoid of reason and truth. Only men know this, and real men steer well clear of it. To have a balanced set of emotions is to compromise with evil. To be a woman is to be tolerant of everything, including untruth.

Women think emotions are of ultimate value because women are irrational. But one cannot tell women this. In fact, the reason men stop talking to women once the courtship stage is over is that women are incapable of conversing with men about important subjects, and men can endure trivia for only so long.

Indeed I have not written this letter for women, for feminine women at least, because one would have to be a fool to try to reason with women.

Yours faithfully,

Kevin Solway

PHILOSOPHY EXAMINATION

Question: What is a justification of a belief? Can any belief be justified?
Discuss.

I have studied the literature on this subject with care and have rejected it as being unworthy of attention. Any good idea can be expressed simply and in few words. The literature on the subject in question is bloated beyond all dignity and deserves to have the air let out of it.

Having no alternative open to me, I am forced to present my own thoughts on the matter.

A good justification for a belief is a good reason for a belief. A good reason for a belief depends largely on the kind of belief it is. There are two kinds of belief:

1. Beliefs about things in the world
2. Beliefs about universal logical principles.

Assuming that we value rational consistency (an optimistic assumption - concedo) then beliefs about the world are good if they are as rationally consistent as possible. It is impossible to achieve a perfect justification for beliefs about the sensory world because all such beliefs are based on other beliefs and these in turn are based on other beliefs, and so on. One will never reach a self-justifying belief within this sphere of finitudes. Even the belief that I seem to see something that looks white depends on many other beliefs, like the belief that I exist for example, which requires justification itself.

For beliefs about universal logical principles a justification needs to be perfectly rational and explainable. Such a justification can be perfect because the reasoning is based on a priori knowledge. That a bicycle has two wheels can be perfectly justified because a bicycle necessarily has two wheels.

But this is only drivel of the first water. If we remain on the level of the mundane intellect, the finite intellect, it is all too easy to pick faults in the above argument. For example, it is an a priori truth that there is no white black. But the mundane intellect could point out that such a statement is based on a belief that white and black exist at all, which requires justification.

In such a painful manner we could go on forever. If we want to answer this question in a way that a noble and honest soul would find even remotely satisfying then we have to go far beyond the realms of academic philosophy - and into the Infinite. For a consciousness of the Infinite is required if one is ever to be able to truly justify one's beliefs, whether those beliefs be about things in the world, or in the abstract world of logic.

The reason is this: if a mind comprehends the Infinite and dwells in the Infinite, then its finite reflections are no more than fleeting patterns within its Infinite reflection. In this profound state there are no distinctions between types of belief. All beliefs arise spontaneously, as spontaneous as only Infinite thought and reasoning can be. Then, white is white because it is white and black is black because it is black. Likewise, some beliefs are true because they are true while others are false because they are false. Only an Enlightened, Infinite mind can reason thus, all others minds need, sorely need justification for their beliefs, because they have a false basis. That is, they have a finite basis.

And how does one attain an Enlightened mind? One follows the path of the mundane intellect deep down into the realms of universal logical principles, being slayed, oneself, as one goes. One comes to realize on a purely intellectual level that the universal logical principles validate the beliefs about things in the world (for it is a universal logical truth that beliefs about things in the world are imperfectly justifiable). Further, one examines, with heart, the belief in one's own existence. Then, if one is a brave warrior of the spirit, there is a breakthrough - and one negotiates the Barrier in an instant of time.

Clearly, a good justification can only issue from a good mind - and a good mind is exactly a consciousness of the Infinite for the reasons explained. This means that academic philosophy, being an infinity of finitudes, is based on blind faith in absolutely every respect.

This explanation of how beliefs can be justified was written out of a spirit of conscience rather than conformity. If I wanted standard academic philosophers to understand my argument I would have written a load of rubbish. If you, the reader, have any trouble understanding my seemingly religious figures of speech you may find that my essay on the mind-body question sheds a little more light. But then again, it might not. To experience light - one must have eyes.

Question: What is the mind-body problem and why is it a problem?

After surveying the literature on the subject of the mind-body problem I have been forced to the conclusion that the literature is worthless - other than in its possibly unnecessary value in revealing the worthlessness of many so-called philosophers. For something that is essentially a very simple problem, something that is not really difficult enough to justify the designation "problem", the academic philosophers have made very hard work of accomplishing nothing. This is because academic philosophers, whether they know it or not, have an aversion to truth. If they did not have such a cowardly aversion, all their "problems" would be solved in an instant, dooming their "philosophy" once and for all to historical quaintness where it deserves to be (philosophy: a word borrowed from the Greeks and subsequently prostituted).

However, for the purposes of filling the space required of me I will fight back the nausea to mention some of the arrant nonsense that has been presented to us in the name of philosophy. But I hate to do even this, for the repeating of such juvenile slobber, even when only to cut it to shreds, tends to lend it credence in the eyes of the dull-witted.

But first, let me state what the "mind-body problem" is. It is essentially this: is the mind distinct from the body, or is the mind a part of the body, or the body a part of the mind?; and what significance does the answer, or lack of an answer, have with respect to the way we live our lives? Do we have a soul? Does some part of us live on when the body dies? Are we as much a part of Nature, and subject to Her laws, as are material things?

The reasoning I will put forward is simple enough, but if for an unforeseeable reason a person needs to see the same reasoning repeated elsewhere they can look to the writings of the ancient Buddhist philosophers like Nagarjuna and Candrakirti.

Things are either separate or the same. That is, to clarify and establish this truth, things are either separate, utterly separate and independent, or they are not separate, are dependent, and thus joined - or in other words, one and the same thing. For example, my hand is causally connected to the rest of my body, so it is not separate from my body, therefore it is the same as my body (though distinguishable to our consciousness for practical purposes).

Having established that things are either separate or the same it must be seen that nothing is separate. The reason nothing is separate from anything else is that all things are causally connected, or joined. Can anything exist that is not

causally related to anything else? No, because inherent in the meaning of the term "existence" is the fact that things exist relative to other things. Things exist relative to an observer at the very least. If a thing is dependent on other things for its existence then that thing is causally connected to them and is therefore not separate. The only possible conclusion is that all things are the same, one and the same thing.

This immediately annihilates all dual notions of mind-body, meaning that the dualistic philosophers concerned have wasted their lives in a vain pursuit, which is a great disappointment to me. Put simply, if the mind was separate from the body then there is no way that the mind would ever be aware of the body or what it was doing.

The materialist theory of mind is far more in line with my conclusion of Infinite Unity. Specifically, the functionalist theory of mind shows the most promise as it deals with relationships (the abstract) rather than the simple units of the identity theory. But, simple as the functionalist concept is, it is too deep (deep means simple) for many contemporary philosophers. Let me reveal the extent of their plight to help shed light on why the mind-body problem continues to be such a problem.

One argument against functionalism is that a functional device can have many different functions depending on how states are interpreted. The critics say that many interpretations are possible, which leads to absurd results, thus disproving functionalism. The point these critics fail to understand is that there is ever only one possible interpretation for any one state at any one time, because this interpretation is necessitated by the larger program. And that larger program is ultimately nothing less than Nature Herself. These blind critics cannot see the connectedness, and the deterministic nature of all things. Yes, Nature is the Grand Programmer, and all mind-programs are but a part of the Infinite Program of Nature. And it is this connection which may prove a stumbling block for the functionalists, who, to some degree are infected with the same disease as their critics - the disease of finite thinking.

So, in conclusion, the mind-body problem is a problem as long as we conceive of things as independent entities. Specifically, it is a problem if we conceive of mind as separate from the body. Yet even if we conceive of a mindbody (unit) the problem will reincarnate in a new guise because the temptation will be to conceive of the mindbody as separate from the surrounding environment. The barrier of finite thinking is difficult indeed to smash.

So, do we die with the body, or live forever? Indeed, we die with the body, insofar as a body can die . . . for what is a body but one of Nature's breaths?

5th September, 1992

from:

Kevin Solway
71 Gladstone rd
Highgate Hill
QLD 4101

This may be the hardest letter I have written. Something has changed in me. I have been made humble. I have hit something hard and solid and only my momentum has been enough to carry me through it. I have gone through it, but it is still with me, as when a car goes through a brick wall it will get a few bricks through the windscreen and a few landing on the seat. Plenty of dints and scratches and cracks, and one less brick wall - or one less part of it.

I am stretched to describe what has happened. I have faced something primal, not in the safe confines of thought, but in the vast ruthless battlefield of life. I sipped nectar in realms of permanent pleasure, made a home in the black flames of hell.

I have recently realized how shallow I am. I am shallow because I am not deeply immersed in fantasy. Because of my fear I flounder on the surface making foolish and undignified noises.

Zarathustra's last vice was supposed to have been compassion. I have many vices, but my biggest vice is probably my attachment to truth. Yet it dwindles.

My hatred for the herd is gone, and with it my love of truth. I can no longer look down on the masses. They are geniuses, Buddhas, truly they are. To choose to live in fantasy, success and failure, gain and loss, and be happy with all: happy in pain, happy in joy, and to live long and healthy, is surely godlike almost beyond comprehension. They feel themselves individual and whole, free as can be.

Godlike in a way I never was. I failed to be a god. For whatever reason my mind lacked sufficient resolve. Dreaming hurt me and I lacked the skill to dream hurt into happiness and health. As a last resort and in my wretchedness I turned to reason, and had the gaul to disparage those who had succeeded where I had failed! What a miserable creature I am! I deserve nothing. Reality is truly a crutch for those who can't handle drugs.

So I went back inside to meet them again. I mean people, everyday people, gods. I awoke the "inner self", the old me who would be a god. He had been

learning a lot all these years of watching. Now he could cut it with the best! Let it fly! Reborn! New world. New people. So different. Now I respect, truly respect my brothers and sisters, because I became one of them, for the first time since I was a young child became one of them. I felt their world, the power of the loins, primal genetic forces, the love of lies, the fear of anything even remotely true. I was there, let myself be there for what felt like the first time. I have always been honest, but never this honest, not so honest as to lie, and live in a world of lies - the normal world. Now my truths themselves became lies, that is, a category of lies, like something needed to make up a script. Real truth has no place in a script, or in a dream. This is how I lived. Now I respect.

I have always said that one's purpose in life is arbitrary; that it must be chosen on a whim. All except one or two choose as a goal happiness through fantasy. The exceptions choose happiness through reason alone. Both goals are equally valid. Now I respect.

Yesterday I met a woman in her sixties who told me about the criminals and general bastards and mad people she had slept with (and enjoyed sleeping with) when she was younger. She told me about how she married a multi-millionaire doctor for his money. She bore him a son and she left the child behind when she left after three years. The boy was physically and emotionally abused throughout his childhood which resulted in him having deep psychological problems for the rest of his life. She has no regrets. None. She has had an exciting and fulfilling life. She is an average person, no more no less. She had a goal and achieved it. I have a goal and work at it. I respect.

Do you know what I'm saying? Before now, all these things were thoughts for me. I knew them alright. I could feel them too, and experience them, but now I have entered into them deeper than ever. I am changed. I have been made simple. I have aged. I am no longer a spiritual man, philosopher, or thinker - not in any case. I am nothing. I have said this, but now I realize it more fully. This is something.

Going forward seems like retreat . . . where have I heard that before? In a past life? What incredible loops we loop! Like a comet revisiting the same sun and being burned away just a little more each time (hopefully).

Having dismantled this pride, this pride in truth, there is a void in my soul. I have trouble motivating myself to do anything. I feel no sincere disgust nor any sincere love. I can generate no lasting passion. I realize more fully now how much my quest for integrity was empowered by my ego. Not that it was much relative to others, but it was still a lot, which is becoming agonizingly clear to me as I try to live without it.

The fact is, if you strive for truth not a single person in the world will recognize

or respect the fact. They have no reason to; especially women. How can this not be painful for a man? - when evolution has ensured that he has a driving primal desire for attention, approval, and affection. Perhaps Kierkegaard did not talk about suffering enough! And no one else was brave enough to broach the subject as compassionately and self-sacrificingly as he did.

Life can get lonely as you get older, into your thirties, and there comes a clash with the ideals you had settled on as a child. The higher you go, the more you must depend on help from above.

I saw Sue a couple of weeks ago and she challenged me that perhaps I have been wrong all these years in providing you with an object of attachment, in making myself available for use as a guru or father figure. She suggests that this very attachment may be a serious hindrance to your spiritual development. This is a valid criticism, but what can I say? I am not perfect. To the degree that we are not perfect we make mistakes and I am open to the fact that I may regularly be mistaken or blinded.

Life is exceedingly lonely when you decide to think, and it becomes very easy to project qualities onto others which would render them suitable to converse with. It is in the same way that a man will project intelligence onto a brainless dainty in order to believe that he can educate her, dignify her, and make her a worthy partner. If indeed I have tended to see you as more lofty and discerning than you are, then I think it has been only minimally.

Everyone desires a father figure, an authority. This is natural. Attachment is surely a problem, yet we cannot avoid authorities because genuine authorities are invaluable. A balance must be made. Until the moment of perfection arrives concessions must always be made to the ego, otherwise the truth of it will be denied - dishonestly and dangerously denied. He that cannot lie, knoweth not what is truth, says Nietzsche.

What are your thoughts on the matter?

What have you decided to do about your "Woman" essays? I'm afraid that nothing is safe if it passes through my hands. I have no respect for private property. Which reminds me, have you heard of a fellow called U.G Krishnamurti (not J. Krishnamurti)? I was given a photocopy of some of his teachings recently and what he says is good quality. He regards the body as being the highest intelligence, no life after death, etc. On the whole, fairly down to earth. The photocopy I have is sold in specialist shops and is the photocopy of a book called "Mind is a Myth" (Dinesh publications). Unusual for a photocopy to be sold in the bookshops you might think? Well, not if you

read what is written on one of the opening pages: "My teaching, if that is the word you want to use, has no copyright. You are free to reproduce, distribute, interpret, misinterpret, distort, garble, do what you like, even claim authorship, without my consent or the permission of anybody."

This has inspired me to take the copyright notice off the writings I have released on the computer networks. I have replaced it with this message: "There is no copyright on this work. You are free to reproduce this work and copy from it all you please."

I have told you a little about the love poems I have been compiling. It is my response to the problem of bringing life to dead men. While the purpose of "Poison for the heart" is to trick people into becoming enlightened, and "Power words" is to trick people into beginning to think, "The love base" is to trick people into thinking about doing something. It introduces the ideal - the seed of discontent.

I enclose a selection of poems, including a few from Danny:

"The lover tells of the perfect beauty" by William Butler Yeats

O cloud-pale eyelids, dream-dimmed eyes,
The poets labouring all their days
To build a perfect beauty in rhyme
And overthrown by a woman's gaze
And by the unlabouring brood of the skies:
And therefore my heart will bow, when dew
Is dropping sleep, until God burn time,
Before the unlabouring stars and you.

"Even so came love" by J.R. Hervey

Treading unknown ways and lovely beyond
All lonely dreams, 'tis Love herself I see -
'Tis Love herself who pledges sanctuary
In bosom quiet as a twilight pond.

Out of the unguessed deep the song is blown,
And all earth's voices die. What shall compare
With that by which all other things are fair.
Who shall contend with Love's unravaged throne?

As comes the moon into surrendered skies,

Even so came Love to whom I yield me now,
Deliberate hand and heart and dreaming brow,
And song sweet lips and beauty-haunted eyes.

"The caress" by Juana de Ibarbourou

The soundless dusk was growing dim
in the midst of a sweet and quiet repose,
and in the blue shadows of the bower
the pallor of moonlight filtered down.

Your hand, all nerves, was stripping
petals from the roses with restless
impatience, which at times the secret
impulse of a desire was urging.

And when you'd picked a white and tender rose,
that was like a trembling bird
caught in your hand by chance,

with cautious step you drew near.
You gave me the rose with your eyes
and I felt the sensation of a kiss.

from "A girl's hair" by Dafydd Ab Edmwnd

He who could win the girl I love
would win a grove of light,
with her silken, starry hair
in golden columns from her head,
dragon fire lighting up a door,
three chains like the Milky Way.
She sets alight in one bush
a roof of hair like a bonfire.
In summer she has on her head
something like the Golden Hillside.

from "The dream" by Theodore Roethke

I met her as a blossom on a stem

Before she ever breathed, and in that dream
The mind remembers from a deeper sleep:
Eye learned from eye, cold lip from sensual lip.
My dream divided on a point of fire;
Light hardened on the water where we were;
A bird sang low; the moonlight sifted in;
The water rippled, and she rippled on.

She held her body steady in the wind;
Our shadows met, and slowly swung around;
She turned the field into a glittering sea;
I played in flame and water like a boy
And I swayed out beyond the white seafoam;
Like a wet log, I sang within a flame.
In that last while, eternity's confine,
I came to love, I came into my own.

by Uc Brunec

Love is a courteous spirit
Who lets himself be seen
Only in his semblance.

For he shoots his sweet arrows
From the eyes to the eyes,
And passes from the eyes to the heart
And from the heart to the thoughts.

by Guido Cavalcanti

It was through the eyes
That the battle came at first
And all my strength was at once broken,
And with the blow my mind was destroyed . . .

"Nuptial Sleep" by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

At length their long kiss severed, with sweet smart;
And as the last slow sudden drops are shed
From sparkling eaves when all the storm has fled,

So singly flagged the pulses of each heart.
Their bosom sundered, with the opening start
Of married flowers to either side outspread
From the knit stem; yet still their mouths, burnt red,
Fawned on each other where they lay apart.

Sleep sank them lower than the tide of dreams,
And their dreams watched them sink, and slid away.
Slowly their souls swam up again, through gleams
Of watered light and dull drowned waifs of day;
Till from some wonder of new woods and streams
He woke, and wondered more: for there she lay.

"Versicle" by Hugh McCrae

I dreamt you were a dream,
And hardly breathed for fear
Of waking; ne'er to dream
Of you, again . . . my dear . . .

from "The Kiss" by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

I was a child beneath her touch, - a man
When breast to breast we clung, even I and she, -
A spirit when her spirit looked through me, -
A god when all our life-breath met to fan
Our life-blood, till love's emulous ardours ran,
Fire within fire, desire in deity.

"Stop, shadow of my elusive beloved" by Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz

Stop, shadow of my elusive beloved,
image of enchantment that I most desire,
beautiful illusion for whom I happily die,
sweet fiction for whom I painfully live.

If to the magnet of your graces, attractive,
my breast serves as obedient steel,
why do you capture my love in such pleasure
if you are to leave me later, fugitive?

But you cannot boast, satisfied,
that your tyranny triumphs over me:
for though you have eluded the tight noose

that encircled your fantastic form,
it matters little to deceive arms and breast
if I fashion a prison for you in my fantasy.

"Summum Bonum" by Robert Browning

All the breath and the bloom of the year
in the bag of one bee:
All the wonder and wealth of the mine
in the heart of one gem:
in the core of one pearl all the shade and
the shine of the sea:
Breath and bloom, shade and shine, -
wonder, wealth, and - how far above them -
Truth, that's brighter than a gem,
Trust, that's purer than a pearl, -
Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe -
all were for me
in the kiss of one girl.

"The Sleeper" by Dan Rowden

As the eagle dreams of gentle winds,
And autumn leaves, the restful earth;
As the lover dreams of moonlit nights,
And empty pages, the poet's loving hand:
Thus, I dream of you.

As a father weeps over the newborn child,
And a girl, her first sweet kiss;
As the thinker yearns for the key to life,
And weary days, the night's calm bliss:
Thus I think of you.

"Night Quest" by Dan Rowden

Though a tear have I shed
For every star that cuts through
The ebon void of fathomless night:
Still I love you,
And forever will I search this velvet host,
For the sparkle of your eyes.

from "Dreams" by Michael Longley

Your face with hair
falling over it
was all of your mind
that I understood.

"A virginal" by Ezra Pound

No, no! Go from me. I have left her lately.
I will not spoil my sheath with lesser brightness,
For my surrounding air hath a new lightness;
Slight are her arms, yet they have bound me straitly
And left me cloaked as with a gauze of aether
As with sweet leaves; as with subtle clearness.
Oh, I have picked up magic in her nearness
To sheathe me half in half the things that sheathe her.

"Her gifts" by Dante Gabriel Rossetti

High grace, the dower of queens; and therewithal
Some wood-born wonder's sweet simplicity;
A glance like water brimming with the sky
Of hyacinth-light where forest-shadows fall;
Such thrilling pallor of cheek as doth enthrall
The heart; a mouth whose passionate forms imply
All music and all silence held thereby;
Deep golden locks, her sovereign coronal;
A round reared neck, meet column of Love's shrine
To cling to when the heart takes sanctuary;
Hands which for ever at Love's bidding be,
And soft-stirred feet still answering to his sign:-

These are her gifts, as tongue may tell them o'er.
Breathe low her name, my soul; for that means more.

by Dante Alighieri

Her beauty has more force than rock,
And her blow cannot be cured by herbs.
So I have fled through plains and hills
To be able to escape from such a woman.
And neither hill nor wall nor green grass
Can ever shade me from her light.

Once I saw her dressed in green,
In such a form that she would have given to stone
The love that I bear for her very shadow.
And I have longed for her
In a beautiful meadow of grass,
Closed round by highest hills,
As deeply in love as any woman ever was.

"Love's birth" by Dan Rowden

Her voice, like the wind,
Lifts my spirit up, and tosses it,
As though dust, into the Heavens.

Her smile, like the sun,
Melts my glacial heart, and draws it,
As though dew, into the clouds.

Her touch, like the night,
Calms my fearful mind, and caresses it,
Like woven silk, into a dream.

Her love, like the Earth,
Binds my restless soul, and drags it,
Like a newborn child, into the world.

"Amorous anticipation" by Jorge Luis Borges

Not the intimacy of your forehead clear as a celebration
nor the prize of your body, still mysterious and tacit
and childlike
nor the sequence of your life showing itself in words
or silence
will be so mysterious a favor
as to watch your dream implied
in the vigil of my arms.
Miraculously virgin again through the absolving virtue of sleep,
quiet and resplendent like a lucky choice of memories,
you will give me those far reaches of your life that you yourself
do not have.
Cast into stillness,
I will perceive that ultimate strand of your being
and will see you for the first time, perhaps
as God must see you,
the fiction of Time destroyed,
without love, without me.

"A blade of grass" by Brian Patten

You ask for a poem.
I offer you a blade of grass.
You say it is not good enough.
You ask for a poem.

You are indignant.
You say it is too easy to offer grass.
It is absurd.
Anyone can offer a blade of grass.

You ask for a poem.
And so I write you a tragedy about
How a blade of grass
Becomes more and more difficult to offer,

And about how as you grow older
A blade of grass
Becomes more difficult to accept.

from "The innocence of any flesh sleeping" by Brian Patten

Sleeping beside you I dreamt I woke beside you;
waking beside you I thought I was dreaming.

from "And sometimes it happens" by Brian Patten

And sometimes it happens that you are loved and then
You are not loved,
And love is past.
And whole days are lost and among them
A fountain empties itself into the grass.

And sometimes you want to speak to her and then
You do not want to speak,
Then the opportunity has passed.
Your dreams flare up, they suddenly vanish.

So you have nothing.
You wonder if these things matter and then
As soon as you begin to wonder if these things matter
They cease to matter,
And caring is past.
And a fountain empties itself into the grass.

"Brown penny" by William Butler Yeats

I whispered, "I am too young."
And then, "I am old enough";
Wherefore I threw a penny
To find out if I might love.
"Go and love, go and love, young man,
If the lady be young and fair."
Ah, penny, brown penny, brown penny,
I am looped in the loops of her hair.

O love is the crooked thing,
There is nobody wise enough
To find out all that is in it,
For he would be thinking of love
Till the stars had run away
And the shadows eaten the moon.
Ah, penny, brown penny, brown penny,
One cannot begin it too soon.

"Full woman, carnal apple . . ." by Pablo Neruda

Full woman, carnal apple, hot moon,
dense aroma of crushed seaweed, mud and light,
what obscure clarity opens between your columns?
What ancient night does man touch with his senses?

Oh, loving is a journey with water and stars,
with stifled air and brusque tempests of flour:
loving is a combat of lightning bolts
and two bodies defeated by a single drop of honey.

Kiss by kiss I traverse your small infinity,
your edges, your rivers, your tiny villages,
and the genital fire transformed into delicacy

runs along the slender paths of blood
until plunging headlong like a carnation of the night,
until it is and is no more than lightning in the darkness.

"Cobra woman" by Nigel Jackson

With a fine brazen arrogance of hair
Lionsurfing the disdain of youth, you drew
Me desertwards, mesmerised, to woo
The hooded violence of your cobra stare.

Dangerous one, dwelling in ancient dreams,
You raise the slumbering fire in my spine
To try your adept tongue and deadly wine,
And prove your mistressship of living streams.

"Become a dream" by Kevin Solway

Get thee to a nunnery
Where our love can long endure
Where I will always be your God
And you always be mine
And like gods we'll play in Heaven

Till the end of time.

by Otomo Yakamochi

Once I did believe
myself to be a warrior
though I have found
Love has caused me to grow thin
since my love was not returned

by Ronsard

Dying of love,
I yet will not declare
The happy malady of which I die
Because I fear lest any come to cure
The sweetness of the anguish that I sigh.

by John Dryden

Pains of love be sweeter far
Than all other pleasures are.

"Seizure" by Sappho

To me that man equals a god
as he sits before you and listens
closely to your sweet voice

and lovely laughter - which troubles
the heart in my ribs. For now
as I look at you my voice fails,

my tongue is broken and thin fire
runs like a thief through my body.
My eyes are dead to light, my ears

pound, and sweat pours down over me.

I shudder, I am paler than grass,
and am intimate with dying - but

I must suffer everything, being poor.

"Bernice" by George Moore

I know not how it was, her kisses stung
Her bird-like throat full-filled with fluttering voice,
Leaned over me, and all her sultry hair
Fell round my face. The perfume of roses
Drove me mad. I know not how it was,
In kissing her, I held her face beneath
The pallid water-flowers, until it grew
more wan than they. The roses were asleep,
The moon saw not between the darkling trees,
Only the lilies saw her drowned face.

And now through all the odorous summer night
I harken to the fountain's warbling song,
Murmuring softly, O softly, to the lilies
The secret of Bernice, my only love.

"Chantecler" by Charles Brasch

Where I love I hate
And cannot
Love where I hate

But, blind in the net
Turn and burn and
Curse the foiled heart.

"The Hill" by Rupert Brook

Breathless, we flung us on the windy hill,
Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.
You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass;
Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,

When we are old, are old . . ." "And when we die
All's over that is ours; and life burns on
Through other lovers, other lips," said I,
"Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won!"
"We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!" we said;
"We shall go down with unreluctant tread
Rose-crowned into the darkness! . . ." Proud we were,
And laughed, that had such brave true things to say.
And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.

by Emmett Williams

She loves me
She loves me not
She loves
She loves me
She She loves She

by Guillaume IX

Never has man been able to understand
What love is,
In wish or in desire,
In thought or in imagination;
Such joy has no equal,
And whoever would praise it properly
Would not be able to accomplish this task,
If he tried for a year.

Through her joy she can heal the sick,
And through her anger she can kill the healthy,
And of the wise man make a fool,
And cause the handsome one to lose his beauty,
And brutalize the most courteous
And give courtesy to every brute.

"What then?" by Dan Rowden

If I said I love you, What then?

Would the rainbow's gentle arch
Fall silently upon the ashen sea?
Would the swallow's playful dance
Forever be as still as earth-felt snow?
Would summers die, If I said I love you?

Would the Heavens quake and thunder
And Lucifer himself bemoan his birth,
Tearing at his heart in wild perdition?
Would the trembling of your heart
Bring muteness to the softness of your lips,
And time itself be forever stilled?
Would statues weep, If I said I love you?

"Paradox" by Dan Rowden

Her hate is like a knife
Hovering silently over my heart,
And only if it plunges tearfully downward
Can I possibly know her love.

"Regrets" by Dan Rowden

She should have married the postman, I think;
She gives him more smiles than me.
There's a middle-aged grocer she knows pretty well;
She often invites him for tea.
But they do not love her,
Nor care for her heart;
They merely submit to her guiles.
If only they knew that her heart isn't true,
They'd never acknowledge her smiles.
Yes, she should have married the postman, I think;
I really don't care for him much.

from Like Our Bodies Imprint by Yehuda Amichai

Like our bodies imprint
Not a sign will remain that we are in this place
The world closes behind us,

the sand straightens itself

Dates are already in view
In which you no longer exist,
Already a wind blows clouds
Which will not rain on us both

The three languages I know,
All the colours in which I see and dream

NONE WILL HELP ME.

from "I wonder, love . . ." by Pedro Salinas

I wonder, love, are you
a long farewell that never ends?
From the first, living is separating.
In the first encounter
with light, with lips,
the heart perceives the anguish
of having to be blind and alone some day.
Love is the miraculous delay
of its own termination.

"Love" by George Granville

Love is begot by fancy, bred
By ignorance, by expectation fed,
Destroyed by knowledge, and, at best,
Lost in the moment 'tis possessed.

"Summary" by Dorothy Parker

Every love's the love before
In a duller dress.
That's the measure of my lore -
Here's my bitterness:
Would I knew a little more,
Or very much less!

4th October, 1992

from:
David Quinn
3/73 Augusta rd
Lenah Valley
Tas 7008

You say, Kevin, that you are stretched to describe what has happened. I am equally stretched to understand your description. I mean, I really do not know what to make of your letter. This is because there seems to be all sorts of inconsistencies contained within it. Sometimes I hear the voice of the philosopher, sometimes the narrator, sometimes the child. But I'm even not certain as to whether these inconsistencies actually exist in your letter, or arise purely from the limits of my own understanding.

It seems that your description of the world of the lying gods is the description of the worldly belief that "everyone is imperfect, and always will be imperfect". In other words, the choosing of fantasy is the rejection of truth or spiritual ideality as a mode of life. As you say, this is something you have known and thought about for years. How are you now different? Has truth disappeared from the horizon?

You see, I have no idea what you mean by "change". On the face of it, it seems that you are fully in control of the situation, that these heavenly experiences of yours are like a little temporary eddy in the steady stream to truth. "Change" can refer to a complete departure from philosophical living, that is, forming a stagnant pool; or it could be anything in between; or "change" could refer to no departure whatsoever, that this phase of your life is a necessary step in the right direction. Are you in the position to be able to categorize it in this manner?

Sue tells me one or two things about what you're up to of late. For example she gives me some descriptions of your romantic pursuits. I, like a gossip hound, lap it all up - it always interests me to hear of your activities whatever they may be. However, her descriptions are, at bottom, as vague and nebulous as your own letter. I suppose only a three-hundred page volume of small print, outlining all the happenings in meticulous detail would satisfy me. Consequently, I really cannot understand the intent of your letter.

The line describing how it has become agonizingly clear how much egotism was involved in your quest for integrity now that you try to live without it - this is an example of that which perplexes me. Is this meant to be irony? Or what? This is the thing: your letter is a mix of narration and irony, and it is difficult to separate which is which. I guess it is the case that my lofty and discerning

mind is unable to deal with these issues.

You know, Kevin, I really can't imagine you living a godly life. I can't conjure up the appropriate images of your worshipping a woman, or being the hippie. It must be torture for you, if these are the sorts of activities you are pursuing. How can you bear it? You mentioned on the phone that it is difficult to motivate yourself to truth when everyone else in the world has no interest in it. Should this be an appropriate motivation? Is this the egotism you talk about which empowered your past quests for integrity? I mean, if one is motivated by the effects of one's actions, how can we stop from entering the godly realms of lies. The ego cares little for the nature of the effects, just as long as it can produce effects.

You are always living and mixing with people - how much of your quest for integrity is empowered by them, rather than by truth alone. Kierkegaard makes a criticism of Socrates, in that Socrates spent all his days talking with others; he wondered how Socrates would have coped without those stimulants.

Sue might be right when she says that you may have overestimated my powers in the past, though I am not sure that this can be judged properly as yet. It is an open-ended question, in as much as my life is still an open-ended question.

Similarly, I cannot judge yet whether your manner of teaching has produced hindrances to my spiritual development or not. However, I will make the following points:

- It must be remembered that for the first twenty years of life, I was a mindless entity, completely devoid of purpose and thought. This is actually a blessing of sorts, since if one is to have a mindless upbringing then it is better to be completely mindless. In that way, attachment to intellectual and philosophical achievements are slight.
- That I met you at the right stage of life, just when I was beginning to awake from my slumber, and had developed a modicum of disgust for society.
- That I felt the truth of your words in a powerful manner, and was immediately seized by the importance of it all. In short, I was transformed from a mindless, drugged-out drop-out into a passionate lover of reason and truth - all in the matter of weeks.
- That this set up a clash with my past, persuading me to spend the next few years, from then till now, trying to come to grips with it all.

- That during those years when I had associated with your company I was certainly not qualified to preach to anybody, and so was not happy with your pressuring me into a crusading mode. I attempted it for a while, but knew deep down that it was nothing but a farce. This is a doubt I have in you and your manner of teaching. No doubt, crusading is a noble and necessary activity for you; you have planted deep roots - crusading thus showers benefits to the world and yourself. Back then I possessed mere tentative buds. Your manner both explicitly and implicitly pressured me to be militant before I was ready to do so. I would much rather you ensured that your disciples were qualified before crusading. I do not know what you make of these thoughts, but am open to the possibility that they are in error. What do you think?

Actually, I can't agree with Sue about you being a hindrance to me on account of your being a guru or father-figure. Surely, if these were the problem, the fault would lay with me. I mean, it is the demons of my past which hinder more than anything else. If I had had a more favourable upbringing, then I would've simply taken from you what I needed, and then moved on. It is because of my past mindless existence, that I came to rely on your authority. And this was a piece of good fortune, not a hindrance. For if I had had developed attachments to intellectual or philosophical attainments before meeting you, then I would have resisted your words. But as it was, I absorbed the whole thing in toto. Thus I came to judge all things via your teachings and precepts, of which I grasped their essential truth from the beginning. In this way my whole life completely changed.

Now, this type of behaviour - that of judging things through your eyes - is fine and necessary, for a while, until it becomes assimilated into my thinking. But there is the very real danger of stagnation inherent: one can appear to develop one's mind merely by imitation - knowledge is gained by comparing new information with Kevin's assumptions and precepts; actions are performed in conformity with Kevin's values. In other words, it is easy to cease the important bit: the understanding of Truth for oneself. This danger is greatly increased when the imitator is pressured into "speaking the pure truth" to others. The imitator gets embroiled in the game of how to give slicky answers to others, of how to defend Kevin's views to others. In other words, the imitator loses himself in preserving the ego, rather than increasing his spirit.

This is why I am totally against imitation. By imitation, I mean copying another's actions or lifestyle in an ignorant manner, even if this other happens to be a Buddha. No, it is best that one endeavours to think out for oneself how to act in this world, to think out how to pursue truth in one's own particular manner, to explore the various lifestyles and examples of past spiritual men so that one can create a new way of living and speaking truthfully, created out of one's own understanding.

This, of course, is why I am living a couple of thousand miles away from you. Before returning to Brisbane and rejoining your company, my ego needs to be capable of standing on its own two feet, with a sufficient grasp of Truth. Only in this way will you then benefit me.

Your personality is powerful, and it is this which can produce the hindrances to your disciples. If they are simply carried along on the strength of your personality, what good does it do them? It simply blinds them to their own strengths and weaknesses, and this hinders them from developing. And it is here that feelings of loneliness in a teacher can do all sorts of harm.

One looks at history and sees that the disciple is almost invariably a far inferior creature to his master. This is either because (a) the master is simply an extraordinary creature and no amount of teaching can turn a disciple into an extraordinary creature, or (b) the disciple is prevented from reaching the extraordinary on account of his attachment to his master or (c) both. How on earth can I bear being inferior? What a miserable wretch I would be if I could not attain the master's heights! How can I possibly live kissing the feet of another man? It's just not possible. I'm too jealous. So you see, if I am to be an extraordinary creature, then I must bow to no authority other than my own reasoning mind. This, admittedly, is a still yet-to-be actuality, in that my acquaintance with the enlightened state is not overly familiar.

Is an authority, however genuine, really a good? Except in the initial stages, it is difficult to believe so.

Re: Woman Essays. I'm going to hang on to them for a while, I think. They irk me. My ambivalence towards them approaches the extreme. Preferably, I want to produce something that I can happily defend in future years, and these essays won't fulfil this criteria. At least sometimes they seem not to; at other times, I think they work well. As I say, I am ambivalent.

Re: U.G Krishnamurti. I had a look for his work in Hobart, but they tell me his book is out of print, and that they have never heard of photocopies of it etc. Tell me, what do these photocopies cost? If his work is of quality, I would be keen to obtain it. Is it feasible for you to organize a copy to be sent down?

Hear from you soon.

David