*Freerangin' on ------ 'Wising Up ---- or ---- Dumbing Down - ?'  Part One (of two)*

*–   some explorations into 'enlightenment' territory     Mike Robin*

*'Man is a thought-adventurer – by thought we mean of course, discovery'*

(D.H.Lawrence, English 20th century author)


*Author's note :*

Although 'expanded', 'higher awareness' states (i.e. the 'wising up' states) amongst people may be relatively rare (some, though, argue that they could be a bit more common than is commonly realised), and modern materialistically-based cultures may not be over conducive to their existence, an interesting question is whether or not such states may be 'natural' to people, part of their natural development as it were, given  'right' conditions. A possible potential barrier to 'direct experience' of any such expanded awareness states could be the volume of communication that occurs in modern times, in that, as one eastern mystic was want to say, 'thinking about something' (involving then 'words'), is not the same as 'direct experience' and  the potential pitfall then becomes that ' the menu is eaten', rather than the (i.e.'direct experience'), food itself.

 Words are of course necessary; perhaps the rejoinder needs to be that there is experience 'beyond words', and so the 'limitations' of words need to be borne in mind - ? One way to put such 'word economy' into practice, for instance, could be to read works such as this in a 'rationed manner' and combined with practices like meditation and/or mindfulness practice that encourage individuals to 'go within', to their centres and gain experience of  their 'inner selves' 'directly' - ?

This work, and that of Part Two  seeks to explore  the possibility that states of 'higher awareness' could be 'natural' states for people,  whilst making  no claim to an exhaustive 'covering of the ground', which anyway may not be completely finite - ? Part One offers an exploration at the more general level, whilst Part Two seeks to explore the possibility of the individual's self-work leading to the 'expanded  awareness'  states, (also variously described as 'transcended consciousness' and 'enlightenment').



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**Pre-amble**

*Although some may say that 'higher awareness states', 'enlightenment and suchlike are just a 'load of old hooey' (not quite sure though, how they might know that so definitively?), there's still a lot of interest and copy in this area. Not perhaps surprising really when such states purport to offer the welter of goodies that they do – joy, health,bliss,energy, happiness, love – the whole caboodle really, and often readily confirmed by those who've experienced such states.*

*Such positive attributes are naturally attractive to many , but does the sheer weight of potential benefits with the added 'nirvana' tag then create its own problem, in then creating (over?) strong desires in people to be able to access such states - ? Too much 'wanting' could in fact in itself become a barrier to accessing any such higher states, in that these states some would say are a natural phenomena rather than a 'man-made' achievement, and hence are 'discovered' rather than striven for? 'Wanting' can also create the 'running before walking' situation – maybe the old Dorset farmer who exclaimed  'Tek yer time boyo, tek yer time --- ',  had a point?*

*A sequence such as 'Heart > Head > Will' might be useful in tempering any 'over desire ' efforts, in that the 'head' and 'will' stages automatically suggest more than desire is needed, and that time too is needed for natural processes to develop (see later) Pressure in the modern world might too have built-up the 'desire' level, on the basis of modern cultural shorter-term traits and practices, and for some, the need to find positive alternatives to perceived negative modern trends.*

*One way of looking at any 'enlightenment'/'transcendence' process could be to follow what might be called the  'old time' path of man 'losing her/his way', becoming then embroiled in a maze of 'modern man' developments including such diverse elements as technology, organised religion , materialism, heavy commercialism, organised terrorism, multi media facets, governmental pressures – and all the conditioning elements of all these and more. It could be a testament to the resistant qualities of humans that people still have to a certain extent levels of sanity, survivability and  some of their own unique personality, with the  sheer quantity of extrinsic influences and pressures acting upon them -----?*

*Some at least, then, may likely feel the need in today's fast-paced world for less perplexity, less confusion, and  more simplicity, along with a deeper understanding of both themselves and of life itself. It's said that such understanding is available via 'holistic knowing', gained through what's called 'direct experience' , such as, say, feeling compassion for a 'wrongdoer', which could be likely to be then experienced after the work of 'de-cluttering' accumulated conditioning effects - ?*

*The idea of this piece is to follow Lawrence's notion of 'exploration', rather than aim for any type of 'perfection blueprint', which anyway may not be appropriate, considering the scale and degree of 'human diversity' - ?  Abraham Maslow, reportedly the first psychologist to research 'human mental health' (i.e. as opposed to mental ill-health), was apparently surprised to note how many of his 'mentally healthy' research subjects were reporting the occurrences of  'peak experiences', during which they experienced joy, health, bliss, compassion and suchlike.. This lead to his further research in this area, leading to a further publication (*The Farther reaches of Human Nature*), and to his collaboration with the author Colin Wilson, also interested in the possibility of 'higher level' human experiences, and publishing his own work  (* New Pathways in Psychology).

*The 'enlightenment' game appears to be these days a considerable 'business', presenting 'seekers' with something of a maze to negotiate. In some internet research into 'what's available' there could appear be something of a schism, with some teachers/gurus/ mentors being criticised as providing 'ego massaging' under the guise of, say, spiritual enlightenment, with other 'guiders' insisting that any 'transcendent' states occur as a result of the individuals own personal and unique journey, the individual encountering 'the self' and developing expanded understanding and experience via the journey.*

*It appears too that some more modern takes on religion have been tailored towards modern tastes, espousing for instance, wealth accumulation and 'power over others'. As older traditions emphasise 'going beyond 'normal' human desires, may such modern self-serving takes even be 'in-built self-defeating' - ? One modern author (Michael Foley) has pointed out that in today's world, individuals may well feel 'unempowered' to 'enquire for themselves', and even feel afraid to take such a step, due to the existence of such a strong 'mass' level of power in modern cultures, linked also probably to the 'largist' nature of cultures, comprising of many large and powerful organisations, tending to promote a self-nurturing 'big is best' environment - ?*

*As ever, 'freerangers' will (via hopefully summoning up the necessary courage) likely exercise their own judgement, innateness and intuition in helping them find their way - -------*

### Intro ------

In modern western-style materialistically-focused cultures, success tends to be seen as an externally (i.e. to the individual) rated condition facilitated by wealth and power accumulation, which may not be too much of a surprise in modern self-gain focused cultures. Whilst such conditions may hold good for mainstream, (in the sense that many will likely be 'carried along'), others may need a somewhat more multi-dimensional definition of success, incorporating, for instance 'being' factors as well as 'having' elements.. One of the limitations of a 'wealth and power accumulation' approach to life could be the narrowing of outlooks that vested interest positions can tend to produce, particularly given the high degree of self-interest built in, as it were, to such a paradigm. For some, though, it can be useful, though, to escape such narrow parameters and do some exploration, one of the 'essences' of freeranging --------

One of the 'exploratory' thoughts put forward in the past (eg. by, for instance, Robert Pirsig in his work of renown *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*), is that in times gone by, there existed a tradition of 'individual excellence', which could only be attained through the process of individual questing (the business guru Charles Handy also refers to this in his notion of the 'honourable individual'). Then, though, it goes, there came the rise of organisational power, which following the well-known path of 'big must be better', size being then used as an instrument of 'control', meaning then that the power/importance of the individual waned to the point in today's culture where largist organisational power either in government or business corporate form, looms, well, large , rendering the individual virtually 'powerless' (and often actively 'dis-empowering' individuals - ?. The modern author Michael Foley, for instance, writes about individuals experiencing 'un-empowerment' in modern cultures ( *The Age of Absurdity)).*

The interesting question then, can then become, particularly maybe relevant for freerangers, whether such an organisational onflux has then rendered the attainment of 'expanded awareness' level human states (attained via the individual's own efforts and questing) to be more of a 'no go' area, and the corollary, whether the individual, rendered then more powerless in such an

organisational era, is yet important as the instrument by which any 'higher states' are accessed , and that therefore the notion of , say, some sort of 'D.I.Y .Enlightenment' (or 'expanded awareness states') might not be completely far-fetched - ? (and by possible implication , could this be a /the 'missing route' for 'man's salvation' - ?)

Exploration of such an extensive topic area may well have been to some extent limited by modern materialistically-leaning western-type cultures – some might hold, for instance, that over-chasing material wealth and power could be a cul-de-sac-type of 'pitfall' in terms of reaching fuller life fulfillment - ?

*'Reaching full potential brings bliss for a person ----- '*        (Eastern mystic)

Any cultural  'de-focusing' effects, along with the case that for many, a process such as 'enlightenment' may be for many a too nebulous proposition, 'unconcrete' and somewhat removed from 'normal life', could likely mean that self-exploration then by default becomes of lower focus and priority. Cultures, though, differ, and are varied - what might be for instance, 'in fashion' at one time , may fall out of focus at another time. Some might argue, for instance, that because  the focus-beam on material life and gain has been in recent times so strong, that already the seeds are sown for a counter surge of more interest in 'being' territory - ?

Pursuing the 'being' route rather than the 'having' way , could then these days (2017) be something of a 'minority route', which, though, as above, does not necessarily in itself render it per se unimportant ----- . Whilst this current would-be  ' author explorer' can lay claim to having some experience, knowledge and understanding within this field, he would want not to lay claim to any 'complete' or exhaustive comprehension of it – 'blueprints' might not for instance' be relevant within such a dynamic area -  and considers that given the conditions outlined above, it could be validly considered to be  'exploration territory' --------

### 1 ---- *'Exploring the ranges ----- '*

There has long been the idea that there exists a state of being that transcends 'normal'  life patterns, in which the individual lives in a state of bliss, energy and joy beyond everyday desires and trials. Some though  might suggest that such a notion is 'pie in the sky'  - ?. One of the key case history figures featured, 'H', (see later), might  demur, and suggest that it could be a case of practical personal experience – a sort of 'don't knock it before you experience it' type of situation - ? Buddha, for instance, likened it to the wind, something not 'see-able' but nevertheless real , and something that could be experienced, felt ------- Maybe logic and scientific thought have produced an over finite arena - ?

### *'Back to the garden ----- ?'*

Over time too there's always  been the 'lingering notion' that humans are 'out of territory', finding their way, and the job is to make it back to the 'homeland' ('we've got to get back to the garden'), to find then 'total connection', 'wholeness', 'oneness', and  - bliss, which according to at least one eastern mystic, is the 'right and natural' medium in which animals exist – bar most humans - -----. It could be part of the reason that many feel the urge to connect to  the ' bigger' - the connection people feel with nature, for instance, could be an example -   limiting then the scope of conclusions drawn only from the 'small self' - ? Humans, whilst obviously pretty clever, are presumably still relatively restricted - there are living organisms with bigger brains, for instance.  It may then be

wise to employ the 'freerange' approach and aim to follow D.H's dictum and keep the mind open –
and then, who knows ------ ?

It's nevertheless probably fairly safe to say that such 'expanded consciousness' type of exploration,
given current human conditions, could be of interest to a minority rather than the majority,
especially in modern materialistically-leaning times , in which many - most? - appear to be busy
pursuing the 'having' rather than the 'being' route - ? Over time more than a few, though, have been
drawn to the notion that life can be a 'development journey' ( and that therefore to get side-lined into
allocating too much life-time and energy to the ' gaining/ having' mode could be a pitfall - ?) Quite
a few, no doubt, though could currently be on the 'being' path, a mode which  developmental
psychologists in the past such as Abraham Maslow would appear to support (see later) .

*' This ---- and that ---- '*

Aren't though, the two modes of 'having' and 'being' yet compatible, in spite of a seemingly strong
thrust in modern times towards the 'having' mode - ? The potential limitation of such strong
emphasis/focus on the one area is then that by default the other area gets 'short shrift', and is
'underdone'  - ? Maybe as in  many areas, the key is 'balance', and that to arrive at balance, in this
case the appropriate blend of 'having' and 'being', dynamic moves happen. If 'having', for instance,
is being over pursued to the detriment of 'being', then 'forces' will act (if unfettered) to restore a
needed 'natural balance' and so that ' working balanced situation' will be arrived at - ? In eastern
thought and tradition, such universal, natural forces exist and are referred to as 'Tao' (pronounced
'Dow').

Such 'forces' in this instance would perhaps most likely act through humans in the form of a
stronger inclination and movement arising to promote the 'being' mode, all of which would appear
to be in line with one of the key elements of 'natural' energy – as above, 'Tao', which  has it that one
of the main natural operating planet strategies is that of  'equanimity' – i.e. natural earth energies act
to move things towards balance and equanimity (which is itself  a dynamic rather than static process
– the 'pure balance' position, for instance, is in actuality rarely arrived at - ?).

*'Heaven ----- and hell ---- '*

Maybe, though, there's an 'end game'  human position of 'equanimity' which leads then to a 'peace
and  bliss' state in which the individual has become 'resolved' and 'whole and healed' – free from
any internal conflicts - ? There is then the tantalising 'glimpse' that there might be  routes which can
offer some needed and 'ok' positives – peace, fulfillment, bliss, joy, love and such .  A common
theme too has been the need 'to get back to the garden' i.e. find the way back to 'the  natural 'full and
sorted' self', which also may mean having to accept in the meantimes a current state of 'less than
perfection' and that actions and behaviours can potentially have both  positive and negative effects.
(might, then, a feeling of 'mild dissatisfaction' prevail for some – sensing their 'incompleteness' - ?)

*'Man acts ----- and creates heaven or hell'*        Richard Feynman, renowned US scientist

 *'We should take care not to make the intellect our God. It has of course powerful muscles --- but no
personality'*       Albert  Einstein, scientist


Difficult though the notion of 'imperfection' may be for some, the potential good news would be

that there is then scope for movement and improvement -i.e. all is not lost, and whilst the world as a whole, for instance, may be some way off getting its positive act together, the individual can 'embark on the journey' by working on his/herself ----------

*'Work out your own salvation. Do not depend on others'*    Buddha

*'A  life unexamined, is not worth living ------- '*    Socrates, philosopher

### Playing the longer game ------

*'The journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step'*    Anon

 More good news could be  that the individual  can do this work , by themselves, with care and love, accepting that often they may be 'battered goods' from the maelstrom that is life as is currently known ( and recently describes as 'life on steroids ' ---- )  Some – many-?- may well be  somewhere around the point of having become dissatisfied with the current world (and to some extent themselves too) and may well be ready to embark on the journey to 'better things', and   hopefully may find within this piece some support, some sustenance and some pointers for such a journey. For those already on the journey, hopefully the piece may be of use to act as affirmation and support, and given that any 'route to Nirvana' may well involve, according to some, taking an individual 'lone' path, it maybe  something of a lonely journey, particularly in cultures that may not especially value or support such individual development work --------

( *for those suffering from anxiety incurred from a 'jarred and fractured' world', some initial balm and respite may well be effective. Support books for instance, (eg. Claire Weekes  Self-Help for the Nerves) can help considerably, as can meditation/relaxation practices.  Claire Weekes herself, for instance, renowned for her work in aiding and supporting troubled souls, can act as a highly effective support and mentor, helping individuals to face up to and handle their often troubled and imperfect situations, then to be able to progress on a restorative route, whilst also providing needed support and empathetic understanding for the individual's position.)*

### Author interest ------

 Colin Wilson, the well-known author, developed an interest in this area of  'what's it all about', reasoning not unreasonably that it was important, and that a reasonably clear understanding and perspective of existential issues  could have a practical effect to the individual – i.e. it could weigh in, in terms of the individual's personal harvest of life fulfillment.  Abraham Maslow (developmental psychologist, reportedly the first psychologist to investigate human health factors) became increasingly interested and involved, spurred on by the surprising result (to him) of many of his 'psychologically healthy' research subjects reporting 'peak' experiences of bliss and deep joy (he went on to write about this in his further book, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature)*.  Wilson and Maslow communicated between themselves, presumably influencing and inspiring each other, to the extent that  Maslow wrote the book above, and  Wilson  wrote his *New Pathways in Psychology* work.

### Eastern promise  ------

 It could be remiss not to introduce the fact that much eastern-origined writing has emerged relating to the 'human soul' and man's higher awareness and spiritual development, much of it interesting and relevant to any work such as this, aiming to explore to some extent, 'man's farther reaches'. A

particularly relevant aspect origined from eastern thought and experience could be, for instance, the idea that any 'higher' experience (eg,. higher consciousness), relates to 'holistic' experience, rather than say, a 'head knowledge' experience, and is gained by 'direct experience' (i.e. the individual 'going through it', and 'being there'). This may already sound somewhat esoteric to some - maybe the following eastern-origined tale might convey a clearer picture :

*A learned professor had studied virtually all the texts and scriptures relating to 'higher human consciousness' and 'enlightenment' and consulted with many of the sages of the day, but remained resolutely stuck in his normal, 'everyday' consciousness. In some exasperation, he decided to make a long journey to consult with a mystic of some renown who lived in a remote fairly inaccessible wooded area. As the professor travelled through the woods his unease grew - these surrounds were alien to him, and he felt his fear growing. Just then though, he came across a rough-ish peasant-looking character , busy chopping wood.*

*The professor asked the woodchopper whether he was close to the mystic's base - the woodchopper though responding by fingering the edge of his axe and asking the professor to see how sharp it is. The professor started back, only to have the axe thrust even closer to him with a request for him to feel the blade, At this, the professor fled, shortly though to come across a dwelling with some people around, who confirmed that this was indeed the house of the mystic. The professor related his 'narrow escape' tale and then asked to see the mystic. 'But you've already met him' he's told - he was the guy cutting the wood. He was showing you how 'in' he was, how conscious of his surroundings he was, how he was in 'direct experience''.*

( *in : The Path of Paradox*, Osho)

' Book knowledge' has been called 'eating the menu' – never, maybe, as satisfying as the real thing ------ ?


### *'How canst thou ----- ?'*

Is there, then, a route to be taken to arrive at a 'higher consciousness' state, involving "wholeness', peace, bliss, freedom from earthly concerns and so forth - ? One of the inherent constraints may well though lie in the problem of trying to consider and understand 'higher level' experiences, from a 'lower' level base - ? One way of 'handling' such a situation could be to treat it as 'exploration' on the '*is there anything there?'* basis, which undoubtedly many who feel the existential 'itch' do, keeping their minds open to possibilities.

### *'Multi, multi ------'*

Life is, it's said, 'biodiverse', so following that thought might lead to the notion that there could be more than one - many, maybe – possible routes to 'higher pastures' (one book exploring this type of territory for instance, referred to the possible different levels of existence as 'meadows' (*The Second Meadow* , Archie Hill). The arts, for instance, have long been known, for instance, as potential 'door openers' to higher level experiences, as has the practice of meditation. 'H"s case-study – see later) introduces the idea of 're-build' - renaissance man shaking off the layers of past and current conditioning, linked maybe to the 'individual path' route of self-examination and knowledge. Again, some have suggested that in the pursuit of the ultimate human state of 'full consciousness', individuals may have lead many lives - there's talk, for instance of 'old souls' – and are therefore at varying 'stages of the path' , which could help to explain why and how people can differ so much - ?

Who knows - ?

**' The real deal ----- '**

This work then is in pursuit of 'the real thing', as opposed to 'eating the menu', and exploring , or attempting to explore, to some extent 'those farther reaches'. As words are the mechanism of communication, undoubtedly some of the ground covered could be called 'theory' but hopefully then prompting 'direct experience' – the 'menu' as a prelude to the real experience -? There is probably some useful 'theory', as long perhaps care is taken not to 'overdose', and there's some live case-studies of people who appear to have experienced 'higher consciousness' states - again aiming to bear in mind that such experiences on reading become then 'second-hand'. If though, someone's experiences and/or understanding then resonates within someone else, such an experience can act as support and affirmation for their own journey.

**'Into the void ----- ?'**

Exploration of such areas mean too a possibility/probability of 'voyaging into the unknown', which could bring its own degree of reticence, as well as maybe for some , a representation of 'perfection', against which some might have concerns that they might not 'stack up', and so feel somewhat inhibited - ? Nevertheless, in the spirit of 'freeranging', and 'thought adventuring', the impulse to explore the potential life areas and layers exists, and some will no doubt relish such 'exploration'. As in any exploration, the likelihood is that it may be incomplete, wrong turns maybe taken, blind alleys may be experienced, and so forth, and perhaps the point should be made  that blueprints may well not suit and could be counterproductive, given the individualistic nature of 'the journey'------ It may also be useful to mention that the individual's own sense of self,  intuition and 'innateness' may well need tp be employed in any such search (some have said that such 'innate' sides of people have been curtailed somewhat in a materialistic, scientific age - ?).

**1b*:  'Exploring the Ranges Further ------- Cultures Not Conducive ----- ?'***

'You're born, you amass wealth and power ----, you die' can seem to be the way of things in modern western-type cultures nowadays. Such culture types could be said to be 'outer directed' in that people are lead to respond strongly to 'external' prompts (i.e.external to themselves), for instance(s) 'heavy' government intervention,  strong and copious commercial messages, culture 'success' wealth and power objectives and indicators,  'human norming/trending' processes, for instances , which then by default it could be said leaves less scope for  individuals own 'internal'  'inner' self-direction (essentially the core of 'freeranging' – the exercising of freewill and individual freedoms to be able to practise responsible self-determination - ?).

*Some modern religious movements which could be described as being 'man made', appearing to support  wealth accumulation and 'control over others' - maybe missing though an essential 'beyond man' aspect  ---- ?*

The more and the stronger the 'mass' external influences and powers become,  (Michael  Foley for instance in his book *The Age of Absurdity*, suggests that the modern culture creates its own strong 'flow' of conforming pressure, against which individuals have a hard time resisting), by default then the less able in terms of personal strength and 'personal space' people could be to be

able 'freerange' , and, as some have indicated, such could be the current situation - ? Such a 'majority' position is presumably  influenced by the current culture 'mores' and  foci,  strongly affected presumably by rational thought in 'the scientific age', but still not necessarily covering all the ground - ? One of the potential difficulties lies in the fact that 'things spiritual' are nor readily identifiable, rather in their pure form they are 'felt' at the individual level, and therefore are both 'non-definable' and 'non mass' - ?

 'Feeling' and the 'heart dimension generally have, for some at least, been over relegated in the recent age of logical thinking and scientific enquiry. A quote in the book *The White Lions* (Linda Tucker) from John White suggests that because man has been so focused on rational,. scientific style thinking, by default little room of opportunity has been  left for non-specific elements such as, say, spiritual aspects ------

   In bygone days, the idea and actuality of 'individual excellence' was apparently supported and sought after, but at some stage became, the story goes, superceeded by organisation, and organisational 'big' power, then by default relegating and diminishing  individual focus and importance, thereby de-valuing 'individual questing'.  Some ( eg. Robert Pirsig, of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* renown) have argued that the individual was/is the repositary of 'quality' and that with the waning then of individual influence and the waxing of 'big' organisational power, there has been a switch to a 'quantity' based approach in which 'might then becomes right', 'big then becomes best', and more 'care-full' influences diminish, leaving a colder, harder, harsher, more competitive world in which 'feeling' type influences such as 'fellow feeling' and compassion don't necessarily particularly thrive.

 '*In a world that understands power as external, the intellect often functions without the compassionate influence of the heart. This creates situations in which intellectual power is often used as a weapon to harm others, to exert willpower without tenderness. The intellect is mean't to expand perceptions, to help you grow in perceptual strength and complexity, and not to do harm'.*

 Gary Zukav,  *The Seat of the Soul*

Such a situation could represent another potential barrier to the individual doing their own 'freeranging' ,  maybe even painting a background to some of the modern problems in the world - ?


 *'Is this it  ------   ?*

   So is life to be just a 'chasing the dollar' exercise of 'getting one over' on others? ( some 'heavyweight  financiers' themselves have recently commented that people heavily involved in the financial culture, whilst thriving materialistically, don't seem to be finding fulfillment or happiness - ?). If a culture has been highly competivised and its people lead up the '*there's no such thing as society*' garden path, as it were, then the likelihood  could be that the result will be that  'small self' self-gain rules, and 'fellow feeling' social aspects plus any 'higher' spiritual-type aspects can then tend to 'wither on the vine - ?

Again, if a competitive, hostile culture is produced, then will life then likely take on aggressive and abrasive facets, likely too then causing quite a bit of aggravation, confrontation  and other problems along the way - ?( ref. (at 2016/7 )  the level of violence on TV, and 'live' violence in the world - ?)

There's also been reported instances of people 'making it' to Valhalla, the 'promised land' of wealth , leisure and opulence, only to experience the  '*is this it/*' moment and realising in that experience, that

it is '*not it*  --------. ( a useful experience to have?)


### *'Simple minds ------ '*

  Some could/would argue that the '*it's all about money (and power)*' approach is in actuality a simplification which could then hinder rather than help, as such a definite and sweeping assertion then tends to inhibit further exploration/examination and treats 'complex life' at a too simplistic level - ?  (eg. one study of rural entrepreneurs,  for instance, found sixteen important business/life objective areas were relevant/important, compared, say, with, a single 'making max money' scenario).

 No doubt the developmental psychologists of yesteryear would assert too that life in reality is complex , based on the fact that human needs are diverse and layered. Abraham Maslow ,for instance, allegedly the first psychologist to research into 'human psychological health' factors, identified a range of human needs, ranging from basic existence needs – food and shelter, for example, through security needs to social needs ('man is not an island'), to recognition needs, and then on to personal development needs – the need, for instance, to develop to full potential (he called this area 'self-actualisation' – (see  'Wising Up ---- part 2).

 In a society/culture in which social exchange is often facilitated by money, the gaining and accumulation of money is then important to the individual for a 'survive and thrive' lifestyle, the danger maybe being, though, that the 'glint of gold' then becomes an over key element, then over simplifying life situations  -? Anyone who's worked in a 'payment by results' work environment could probably testify to how 'cloying' and 'alluring' financial inducements can become - ?


### *'Enlightened non-enlightenment ------?'*

 The word 'enlightenment' representing the higher consciousness /transcendence levels of being probably has both useful and not-so-useful connotations –  the 'useful' indicating a state of consciousness that has 'surpassed' any ordinary day-to-day living concerns and anxieties , enabling 'light' rather than 'heavy' living, and has enabled 'the light to be seen' in the form of attaining an overview via understanding.. Again from times gone by, people with such 'overview' were often called 'see-ers', and individuals with this capacity talk about it being 'overview brought about by understanding'. The potentially 'un-useful' aspect to the word could stem from the fact that it could well carry 'baggage' for many people ,  in that it's perceived to be 'something else', maybe slightly weird, not relevant to 'life as we know it' - too 'far out', too 'removed' -------

It may not have helped that traditional religion and spirituality has tended to be presented as somewhat distant to ordinary life, as have spiritual states, God being 'up there' rather than 'down here', as, say, in Zen-type teachings, which holds that spirituality and 'divine-ness' is 'all around', and that 'God' is a potentiality within 'man' ----. ( and to be found by the individual questing and seeking mentioned earlier - ?).   Such a situation could also have well contributed to individuals not feeling 'empowered' to take up their own questing, not being of enough value, being worthy enough, to seek any 'bigger picture' - ?

  *' ---- that sense of unworthiness, it seems, comes out of being talked out of, trained out  of, conditioned out of trusting our natural being. It is the result of being turned away from ourselves, being taught to distrust ourselves. ------------ ( and 'exagerated' ego behaviour is a compensatory mechanism trying to disprove unworthiness ---- ')*

*(*in the UK the past cultural conditioning for instance, 'discounted' individual achievement – it was 'un-ok' to be 'good'. Religious conditioning also sought for instance, to 'negate' individuals : 'we are all sinners' for example).

### *'Lightening the load ------ ?'*

 As above, any talk of so-called  'esoteric' subjects such as 'transcendence', 'expanded consciousness', 'enlightenment' and such like can at times seem to be uncomfortable for some - maybe many - ? They are  subject areas pretty remote from 'normal life', and presumably if 'normal life' is somewhat problematical – the austerity recent times here in the UK are reported to have caused difficulties for quite a few – then such 'esoteric' areas may well seem pretty remote and irrelevant to everyday life.   In practice, though, it's been said that 'enlightenment' in terms of accessing higher consciousness levels can be to some extent an ordinary and natural experience, even though it may be comparatively rare, and that individuals so 'resolved' continue to lead ordinary, satisfying lives, gaining much satisfaction and enjoyment from 'ordinary life'. They are so to speak, 'sorted' and 'whole and healed', having then no need for  'fame and fortune' - -----  They have developed the ability and  inner strength to live by their own values, to 'dance to their own tune'--------.

 This work also attempts to explore the territory and notion that in fact such 'higher consciousness' states may be more accessible to so-called 'normal, ordinary' people than maybe has been hitherto thought, (and such 'higher consciousness' states of being will then have  been experienced  by folk within 'ordinary' life ), and looks at various relevant aspects and some relevant case-studies of individuals' direct experience. In no way is it claimed that there's full coverage of the 'ground' - as usual, it is one (interested, and with some direct experience) person's take, some of which might in some cases hopefully prove interesting and even possibly useful.

### 2 :  *The 'Fuller Development' Route '*

 This 'fuller development' section here seeks to explore the possibility that a route to 'transcendence' type experiences exists via resolving satisfactorily the fulfilment of the 'normal' run on life needs, inspired by the 'peak' experiences the psychologist Maslow recorded as experienced by his 'psychologically healthy' research subjects. A relatively modern take on the development of the individual came from Abraham Maslow , prompting him to formulate his 'hierarchy of human needs' theory which stated that a normal, 'unhindered' development of a person involved satisfying basic levels of survival needs (eg. getting food to eat), to progressing through a series of socially-related needs, such as social contribution and social recognition, to then a 'higher' series of individual development needs, such as reaching full potential, and for some at least, personal spiritual needs. Such an approach chimes to some extent with the eastern-origined sequence , for instance,: *'mass  > individual  >  spiritual'*,  which can also suggest, for instance, that personal spirituality is a natural development 'extension', to be 'accessed' by individual effort and questing - ?

### *'Closed gates ------ ? ''*

Within a modern more 'out-for-self'  self-bound culture, does the by default lower-powered focus

on, say, social needs, then imply automatic 'barrier-ing' to the higher level individual development needs - ? Does any form of 'transcendence' (eg. 'enlightenment') potentially happen when all the development stages have been largely 'satisfied' - ? Maslow himself was relatively surprised by the frequency of 'peak experiences' quoted by his 'psychologically healthy' research subjects, (i.e people who may well have been likely to have had good levels of 'stage development' and fulfilled needs), reporting experiences of intense joy and 'bliss' states.

### ' The individual is yet important ----- ?'

Within organisation-focused and powered cultures such as those in the west tend to be, by default the ultra small and 'power-naked' individual and her/his needs (and therefore fuller development) may well get 'under focused' to the point of detriment to the possibility of the fuller level of individual development - ? Basically, the conditions for fullest development and the attainment of any 'higher', transcendent being/higher awareness states are then not over conducive - ?

If , say, the 'transcendence' experience/state is available after the fuller development of the individual, then this potentially implies that the micro-small power-less organism that is the individual , is yet though important in terms of possible human access to the 'higher' forms of living, which might be relevant to the attainment of forms of longer-term happinesses such as fulfilment, (which, as the argument goes, can only be accessed via the individual), and therefore too, in the longer-term, to a wider 'social stability and cultural well-being' - ?

' Individual empowerment' was apparently known and recognised in ancient times, but with the rise of 'big' organisational power (eg. originally ,say, organised religion) is thought to have been suppressed/eclipsed, with 'perfection/fulfilment' then becoming an organisationally influenced concept, external rather than internal to the individual – quite a sea-change and even possibly a root cause of on-going culture/people problems - ?.

The 'waste potential' of cultures which do not nurture the fuller development of their participants could presumably be considerable , given the spec. (see below) of the fuller developed individual as drawn up by modern psychologists, ( Prof.Cary Cooper, et al). 'Self-actualisation' is often described as the stage where the individual, if unhindered and 'unbarrier-ed', reaches their fuller/fullest potential - they are, as it were, 'fully formed', and the self-actualised person is then able to operate at a 'high' level, exhibiting then a formidable array of personal skills and strengths, as below :

The self-actualising person :

*1*      Perceives people and events accurately, without undue interference from their own

         preconceptions.

*2*      Accepts self and other, including imperfections, but seeks improvement where possible.

*3*      Is spontaneous - especially in their thoughts and feelings.

*4*      Focuses on problems outside self, rather than being insecure and introspective.

*5*      Is detached, so that they are not unduly thrown off course by awkward events.

6       Is autonomous, and remains true to self in spite of pressure to conform.

*7*    Appreciates good and beautiful things, even if they are familiar.

*8*    Has peak experiences of intense positive emotions of a sometimes mystic quality.

*9*    Has close relationships, but only with a few carefully chosen people.

*10*    Respects others, avoids making gratuitous fun of people and evaluates them according to their inner qualities rather than race or social class.

*11*    Has firm moral standards, and sense of right and wrong, though these may be different from many other people.

*12*    Is creative.  This is perhaps the most fundamental aspect of self actualisation, and is seen as the result of the other aspects listed above.  By being open-minded and open to their own, actual experience, the  self-actualising person sees things in novel ways and can draw innovative conclusions from established information.

*13*    Is not  'enculturised'  i.e. retains individual assessment and judgement.

( Arnold et al, *Work Psychology*)


 The individual thus 'fully developed' is then positioned to get a considerable 'life harvest', and being then fully secure within their own 'skin', could then be in a position to become open to larger, 'universal' type influences and forces -?

All the characteristics/attributes on the list could be seen as advantageous and indeed the person with such a profile might not only be  an impressive person, but  'naturally powerful' in the sense of having  real personal strength emanating from a deep and real sense of worth.  Such a profile is  that of an operating individual, who is nevertheless socially orientated in terms of respect for others and particularly in acknowledging, and with respect for, the views of others. Perhaps it is the 'real' confidence brought by a real sense of individually-gained self worth that incubates open-mindedness and enquiry?  - i.e.  the individual is not having to protect and defend due to any inner insecurity - ? (and so would appeasing any such insecurity be more of a 'dumbing down' type of move - ?)

 Does, then, such a 'developed position' then 'open the door' to the possibility of accessing the 'higher' levels of consciousness?  – i.e the argument could be that the individual goes through life adding to their development and to their stock of knowledge, skills and experience (as of course many  individuals do), to then end up in a position to 'go clear and whole' and so unencumbered by internal conflicts and strife are then able to 'tune in' to higher wavelengths and experience a 'transcendence' - ?  Eastern 'Tao' forms of thought, for instance talk about the  'unified individual' then being able to merge with 'universal oneness', then experiencing joy, bliss and holistic fulfilment – a sort of 'flowering of the individual' experience.

 *'All of creation exists in bliss ---- except for man ---- '*  (eastern mystic)

  Interesting  prospects on which to speculate, and maybe the more modern accent on 'organisation importance', then potentially diminishing individual importance, has mean't that such areas of exploration have developed something of a 'taboo' reputation , and  people having felt 'small' in the face of 'large' organisational power and influence, then feeling 'un-empowered' to 'quest and

explore'- ? As too, the author Michael Foley has stated, there appears to be a strong 'mainstream' force created by western-style cultures in which people feel they are swept along, relatively powerless to resist and 'losing' then their own strength and individuality - ? Maybe then it's fortunate to have, say, been 'swept aside' into a 'backwater', then having the time and space to recover somewhat , with 'the mist then clearing' - ?


### *Conflict ahead?*

The question might be then, though, as to whether such self-empowered individuals may not be out of vogue, out of place in, say, current 'small self' focused society - ?  Many (Ritzer, Schumacher et al) argue that the current level of 'massness' in society, allied with the noted trend of 'dumbing down', with its non-questing, non-questioning, non-critical implications, allied with a possible 'homogenisation of people' trend, is leading to ever-increasing standardisation strands within society, with recent governments taking a 'parental' as opposed to 'equal adult' role.

 The heavy use of standardised quality systems creating homogeneity, the use of performance related pay creating a Herzbergian 'jumping for the jellybeans' syndrome, the creation of a 'hit' culture via the use of socially-conforming measures such as league tables,  and the establishment of a 'control' culture via 'Big Government', the 'hit' on people's security via non-secure workplace situations (short-term contracts, having to re-apply for own job, zero-hours contracts), and  further workplace control measures via targets, for instance  - could  all be quoted as indications that there has been/ is a trend more towards a 'moulded'  mass homogeneous 'control culture' society which then, by definition and default, could be less tolerant of individual diversity - ?

.If there is some validity to this type of argument, conditions may not be then optimable for freeranging and freerangers, which does not necessarily, though, render such questing as an automatically 'no go' area –  rather the nature of exploration can be such that the territory being explored is then relatively sparsely populated - ?  There are at least some who might consider such exploration as a natural human need , as in D.H. Lawrence's statement :

   *'Man is a thought adventurer – by that of course we mean, discovery --- '*

 Robert Pirsig, (of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* renown*)*, for instance, argued that the rise in power of logic on the one hand, and the waning of the individual's status and power and influence on the other, has led to an overall imbalanced position where 'logic' (i.e.via organisations) rules and 'small' ( i.e. individuals), are disempowered. , with then a  reduction in the balancing effect of 'quality', which, according to Pirsig, resides in individuals, in favour of 'quantity' i.e. the 'large-scale'  'big is best' approach.


### *Possible conclusions ------*

On the one hand, then, there's Maslow stating that the gaining of peak human mental health is about the individual being unhindered in reaching the highest (pinnacle) need area – self-development, self- actualisation,  then becoming empowered and encouraged to quest and develop 'individual excellence', along with Pirsig arguing that the individual is the font of 'quality'. Then on the other hand, there is the possibility of current 'mass' based cultures with standardisation/norming trends then  by definition working against Maslow's self-actualisation process, possibly even impeding it (e.g. measures in recent years to reduce employee security (eg.s temporary contract working, zero hours contracts) having a 'blocking' effect on reaching 'higher' need levels) .

A conclusion from such a type of analysis could be that a current modern materialistic -type culture could be then hindering rather than aiding longer-term human health as defined by Maslow, which may itself imply that more human ill-health, both mentally and physically, could be expected. Some notable social commentators, for example Erich Fromm, have already pointed out awhile ago that modern Western man does not  necessarily seem to be notably long-term fulfilled in spite of the plethora of material benefits available as did some of the new senior managers of financial institutions a year or two back .

Ritzer, too, sees this as the problem and is pessimistic re the outcome, seeing mankind propelled by largely commercial motives on a 'road to nowhere', as it were.  Schumacher too, sees modern society's 'progress' rather as a boulder increasingly hurtling out-of-control downhill.  He is not quite as pessimistic as Ritzer, calling, along with Pirsig, for a 'Stop and look  re-examination of values' – values being the force behind the objectives and goals people set, defining then their actions.

### 'Small' rather than 'large' culture could be an answer - ?

Western economics calls for 'maximisation' in that. maximisation of profits equates with the most efficient use of resources, hence profit maximisation has long been an active business objective promoted by economists, companies and governments et al.  Some argue that economists and others may have promoted basic imbalance by promoting 'maximisation' which is a relatively modern notion,(and could have initially occurred as a hypothesis in an economist's model?) leading to a 'more, more' culture,  in earlier as well as current times, and as Heider's modern interpretation of Lao Tsu's words below indicate, may have been taken as a ' green-light doctrine  of greed' :

'.... *a society based on materialism and the conquest of nature works to overcome these (natural) cycles.  If some is good, more must be better and an absolute glut seems best.  At the same time, those who have little get even less.  While (good) leadership follows the natural order of events - and does not take the consumer society for a model'.*

Lao-Tsu (5th century BC)
(Heider (1985))

Politicians here in the UK have been heard in relatively recent times to utter the immortal words 'greed is good' ----


### 'Steady, Eddie ------ '
,
'Moderation in all things' used to be the cry, probably indicating to some extent that life was multi-dimensional and multi-faceted, with a balance then needed between the various strands. It's this 'balance' which in more current times may seem to have been somewhat diminished, with maybe the heavy emphasis on the free-market 'maximisation' trend being one of the major factors - ?  It could, though, seem likely that such a balance cannot be ignored over a longer-term and that currently (Feb. '16), there's indication of the start of a 're-balancing' natural trend, with the new wave of top financial men, for instance, indicating that the over self-interested ways of the financial institutions will not be suitable for, or sustainable in, the longer-term future, and that they themselves will need, for instance, a wider, more balanced and self-disciplined approach to their business .

If such a moderated, balanced culture then came about, the argument could then be that conditions would naturally exist for the  fuller development of individuals, bringing benefits of there then being more self-directed and self-responsible people within a particular culture, and  leading then to more possibilities for individuals to experience 'transcendent'-type 'total fulfilment' experiences
 But then, on another hand, some ancient eastern masters/sages were wont to say, '*the door is always open, a person just has to step through*' (i.e 'into the light'), suggesting that the long-ish development route might not be a sole 'route to transcendence' - ?  The door may be open, but would modern man's at times considerable baggage though be a barrier to the ability to 'pass through' - ?

It could certainly be useful, though, as 'thought explorers', to look at other possible routes   -----

### 3      ' A  're-birth, re-build, renaissance route' - ?

**'Far away ------ ?'**

   'Enlightenment', though, could be one of those concepts, notions that might seem fairly remote from the lives of many, and if there's an everyday struggle for existence,  maybe not too surprising, and so  can remain a somewhat edgy topic of some mystery, hence getting sometimes the 'cold shoulder' treatment , particularly perhaps within western-type 'hard copy' materialistically-focused cultures- ?  Have, too, individuals been 'dis-enfranchised' in the sense that larger organisations developing 'big power' and 'bigness', thereby inhibited 'small' (eg the individual) to be able to act and quest for their 'true selves' - ? ) That well-known individualist, Oscar Wilde, for instance, customarily  not holding back, was of the opinion :

 '*Most are merely carbon copies of others'*

 Maybe part of the process involves individuals (re) gaining true internal strength (see self-actualisation spec. above) to be able then to quest and traverse what Maslow called 'the farther reaches' - ? In practice, though, could  there be more examples of individuals experiencing 'expanded consciousness' levels than may be commonly thought - ? ( one book, *After the Ectasy the Laundry,* Jack Kornfield,  quotes a number of individual 'transcendent' experiences, for instance). 'H''s (and others) experiences of it (see below), suggest that such a state can  offer quite a lot – joy, health, energy. love, bliss – the actual states in fact that some if not many, might strive for - ?

One of the purposes of this piece is to explore the possibility that even though probably currently rare,  the 'enlightenment' state might be a perfectly possible 'higher' state of being which. under certain  conditions, can occur for some if not quite a few, and that there then might  be the possibility of a 'D.I.Y' process of self-enlightenment - ? (which of course might be 'naturally' happening for some individuals, in spite of any  'non-conducive' 'mass' cultures - ?) An analogy could be that of an oil painting being restored – with the layers on it left by time being 'stripped away' to leave the original, pristine article - ?

 (see  'Wising Up' --part II   for more on 'self-work' transcendent processes)

One person who has experienced 'transcendental' state living is 'H', who's outline story is told below, and who can then represent an example of 'reconstructed/renaissance' man :

***'H''s story ---***

     H is a professional-class middle aged male who initially was somewhat reticent to talk about his experiences, as they seemed so 'out of the ordinary', as he put it. In the end though, he told the whole tale, on the proviso that he didn't necessarily understand it all or necessarily have explanations for all of it, although some realisations had come concerning the experience, and that he retained anonymity.

 'H''s was quite a long and involved story, truncated  though somewhat here for this particular purpose . Basically he'd suffered from considerable continual stress to the point of breakdown, feeling then as if he was in a 'black hole' without escape, a very difficult situation for him. Then by chance or design, help came to him in the form of a self-help book for those caught in 'high anxiety' states. He instinctively knew the book was his lifeline as soon as he opened it, and proceeded to work with the book for about a couple of years or so, gradually regaining and re-learning his own 'strength and being ', as he put it, then quite suddenly 'coming clear' and experiencing a 'transcendence' experience, involving strong feelings of  bliss, joy, love, energy and health.

*'Looking back, it was like a sort of re-birth'* he said, *'and I suppose in a way it was – more perhaps a 're-build' in my case. My own 'operating system' had failed , so I was desperately needing a new one, which looking back, over time and with the book's mentoring help, was built, or maybe rather, re-instated in 'pristine' form'.*

 'H' experienced his new transcended state -' i*t was as if I did have a  'higher life overview'* he said – for several months, for him then to lose it, although he reckoned that with better knowledge and awareness he might have maintained it.

 *'I think I got scared of it, which sounds  a bit stupid now. But I seemed to be so different to everyone else I knew.  Paradoxical really – I had come through so much fear to then arrive at this quite amazing 'non-fear' state, to then get fearful of it itself!'*

 The two prominent features for 'H''s 'transcendent' state to seemingly arrive , appeared to be the re-build process, creating the 'new renaissance man', and in the process, travelling through and then free from, fear  and 'conditioned' states.  Interesting too, that it was his experiences then in 'normal life' which he then thought had been the cause of losing his transcendent 'grace state', which had been in place for a number of months. Interesting too of course to be able to relate to a first-hand account of such a transcendent experience, helping to confirm the possibility of their existence, and then to the effect of  'real world living' on such a state, which might then beg the question as to whether such states can be maintained  'in ordinary life' - ?

 *'You cannot stay at the summit for ever. You have to come down again ---  one sees no longer ---- but one has seen---- and one can at least still know ---- '*

  Daumal : in : *After the Ectasy, the Laundry*    Jack Kornfield

 Another aspect 'H' stressed as pivotal, he felt, in the process which he'd undergone, was the mentoring of the author of the book , who'd practised 'tough love', along with understanding and empathy, by stressing repeatedly the need to 'face'  his situation,  accept it, then allow healing time.

 *' Of course, looking back, '* he said, *'I was doing the opposite of what she advised - I desperately*

*didn't want to be in this black hole, but she was tough as well as compassionate and, via her book, made me face up to the reality of my position, which was pretty difficult to do and took some time, with plenty of setbacks.*

*I suppose then over time a lot of the tension went  (I had started also to meditate at this stage)-I felt some peace and relief and was able to start the recovery process, which again wasn't easy, as 'setbacks' were common. But I had the book to 'lean on' and came to realise through its mentoring and advice that because I was so desperate for progress, that when I did make some, I was tensing up, being so eager for it, and bringing on stress symptoms again  - it was quite a tortuous process , really, escaping the darkness' .*


### *'Reality is real  - ------ ?'*

 So did 'H''s process of having to accept his current 'imperfect' reality, which presumably mean't that he then gained the capacity to operate at 'reality' level rather than at his own 'man-made' 'wish' level, then mean that he then was able to go on to be able to operate at the more general 'reality level' and ultimately experience the '*all the world is in bliss*' general universal  reality that some have said/ might say, is the potential  case - ?

 *(may there then be a case for saying that 'imperfect reality' could be the norm, which could then be accepted in the cause of moving on towards the 'more perfect' reality – man in 'L' plates, as it were - ?)*

Presumably one of the aims/functions of meditation practice could then be to 'align/re-align' with the reality experience via, for instance enhanced self-understanding, leading to greater ability to 'self manage', to then 'open the door' to the potential 'bliss' state - ?  Are Zen Masters , for instance, who give their students, say, a sudden slap, trying to 'shock' them out of their 'tiny mind' and into 'reality' - ? The 'rub', though, would appear to be the need to be prepared to give up the 'small micro mind' of the individual , to then be able to connect to the larger, macro, universal energy complex - ? Jung, for instance, felt that 'enlightenment' was to do with more about 'casting light into darkness' than, say, experiencing some sort of esoteric 'fluffy joy'. 'H' 's position was so desperate and difficult that he readily trod the 'new' 'facing reality' path. Others, though, might anyway willingly travel this path - ?

*In one way*', said H, '*although it was a pretty tough situation i'd been in, it was relatively easier for me to give up my own stuff as I knew I was in a pretty desperate situation and urgently needed to improve/change/ progress, to get better – I had no alternative.*

### *Journey's stages ----- ?*

   Some have said that the individual is on a spiritual journey and has, for instance, many 're-incarnations' , the culmination of which might be the accessing of such a 'bliss' state ----  If such is so, it is a situation that would appear to be 'non mass' – i.e it can only be accessed at the individual level and via individual 'questing', of which there apparently used to be a strong tradition before organisational power 'took over', and any 'big is best' mindset took hold - ?

(*and is a tendency to 'big'; in reality a move to appease insecurity, as Yamate Kunihiro in his work* The Way of No-Mind *suggests, along with the proposition that the authentic way to counter insecurity is for the individual  to work at gaining 'inner security' - ?)*

According to at least to one Eastern mystic, Zen people don't see God or Godhead as a personalised figure 'up there', but rather as a 'potentiality within man', and the 'journey' is one of transforming from 'animal' states, through human states, to 'God' states, and that basically that is a process potentially relevant to all humans, to end up at some stage as a 'being of love' ('God is love'). Such a view could then illustrate for instance, why people can be so different and of differing awareness levels – ?

 It maybe then that the individual's own level of awareness is at a particular position and that experiences are then needed and provided to further enhance the movement towards 'full awareness' -  there's an old saying – *'opposition is friendship*' – which could relate to this - ? Such an analysis could also support the view that 'full awareness' is a 'normal' level of being, notwithstanding any apparent low level of current manifestation , and that  'awareness' might  be a chosen route towards the transcendent state - ?

*( the current 'mindfulness' movement would appear to be, for instance, aiming to work within the 'awareness expanding' territory - ?)*

 The  prospect then is that any current 'not ok' positions can be part of the process then leading to 're-build' positive situations and that dissatisfaction from any current 'incomplete satisfaction' situations then acts as the spur and motivation to move onto the positive 're-build' route, illustrating the role that reality plays -  in this case accepting 'negativity' in the current situation, any denial of which would then thwart the triggering of the 're-build' process.

  ( *n.b*  'H''s initial position was reasonably extreme and he would presumably emphasise the importance in such a situation of the role of  a mentor)


 *4 : 'Awareness -  a path to greater consciousness - ----'*

 The view has been forwarded recently that over-identification with the 'small self' had been the result of cultural forces in recent times ( 'out-for-self', free market type of influences etc.), resulting in a dearth of  'wider awareness', then promoting problems and difficulties in the world.

 Might it then not  be completely accidental that in modern times there's been a resurgence of 'awareness' types of movements such as  the 'Mindfulness' trend, implying maybe, that collective mankind has somewhat taken  'eye off the ball' - ? Living in such a head-geared prolonged rational and scientific age might have mean't that it has been inevitable that 'the head' has become the most prominent centre, but potentially diminishing other important centres such as the heart and the belly - ?

 In days long gone by and in some cultures, the belly, for instance, was seen as a key human centre , and many no doubt might feel that 'balance ', as ever, is a key operating factor, in which case it's then important to identify whether one particular facet, such as, say, the head, has become over dominant - ?  One sequence, useful in small lifestyle business applications, and possibly therefore having wider application potential is :  *'Heart > Head > Will*',  with an implication then that the 'Heart' dimension could have been 'underdone' in modern times - ?

*'Awareness shock ----- '*

  The potentially 'narrowing' effect of  any over 'mind' focus has been known for some time , leading to another aspect of the 'renaissance' route, that of the individual getting a 'shock' to jolt them out of

current mind 'grooves' and onto the possibility of different patterns, much like electric shock treatments seeks to 'shock' minds stuck in negative patterns to then be more able move into more positive areas. 'H's 'shock', for instance, in part 3's case-study above, was finding himself in the non life-viable situation where he then  had to find as a matter of urgency a more suitable 'system'.

 As earlier, Eastern therapy via 'ascended' (i.e. to 'transcendent' consciousness levels)  Masters, also could involve 'shock' tactics, with Masters suddenly slapping a person, or even 'throwing them through a window '(!) The general idea seems to be that it can be helpful if people are helped (at the right time and stage) to escape their customary 'grooved' and 'conditioned' mind patterns, to then be able to open up to other possibilities.  As above, such 'shock therapy' can seemingly happen in a variety of ways - 'J''s story (below) indicates yet another  :


**'*Wakey, wakey ------ 'J's story'***

  One character who had been, as he said, 'out of kilter' with the general culture, which he felt had become over-commercialised and cynical, was J, a middle-aged, educated British male :

 *I went into a sort of downward spiral'*, he said. '*Nothing much seemed to add up. I'd been made redundant, although I realise now I didn't really fit into the highly pressurised work environment I'd been in. I wasn't happy or comfortable with myself, relationships had fallen apart too. I wasn't feeling too good about myself, feeling something of a failure and had started to hit the bottle. Then I got lucky. I met someone, an older chap, on a train and got talking. To my surprise, he suddenly said :*

 'things aren't too good with you right now, are they?*'*

 *His candour , whilst a bit shocking, somehow got to me, and I pretty much told him my story, to which he listened.  '*

You've obviously had a tough time, but I don't think feeling sorry for yourself is really going to help you'.

*Again, you could have knocked me over with a feather - this guy didn't pull too many punches. But then, the effect on me was quite dramatic - it was if a window opened and I suddenly saw quite clearly that he was right - I had been wallowing in self pity. The stranger then opened up with his next broadside :*

 'Have you ever thought that the route you've been on might be the problem, rather than just blaming yourself?'

 'I do feel as though I've never really 'fitted', and that my heart's never been into it, as it were' *, I found myself saying, whilst starting to muse on what he'd said.*

 'It can be a mistake, you know', *he then said ,*' just to automatically go down the self-blame route, as many do, without considering other possibilities. The culture does of course send its own messages of what's 'success' and what's 'failure', together with a sort of 'collective mass pressure', but so what -  who says the culture's necessarily right, or suited to a particular person? The fact that there are and can be, many different sorts of cultures , including plenty in the past that have proved to be ultimately unsustainable., shows that it's perhaps unlikely that any particular culture is going to suit everybody. Maybe you could look at this, and try to see whether it suits you, and where

points of divergence from 'the essential you' might occur - ?'

*'The directness, though, of this middle-aged seemingly prosperous traveller was quite dramatic and even, truth be told, breathtaking. Before I could quiz him as to who or what he was, he was up on his feet, heading for the train's exit as it was stopping.*

 *'Nice talking to you – good luck'*

*was all he said, and then was gone, leaving me with a myriad of thoughts going through my head. From that day on, though, it was like I was sort of waking up and embarking on a journey of enquiry into who I was and what was important to me - it was if I hadn't been fully awake , but was now on an odyssey of 'self – discovery' - a bit scary but at the same time, interesting and exciting.'*

And all through a chance encounter with a stranger on a train ------- or,  was it just chance - ?'

 All good stuff – and who knows –  maybe  it is for the individual to find out - ?

And  as Socrates said : '*Know thyself* -------- '

and ;

 *' ------ of course the world is full of novelty and adventures. New opportunities come along everyday.     So what - ?'*     Lao-Tsu


**'I am others ----- ?'**

 It was Oscar Wilde who said '*most people are other people*', possibly meaning that as a person goes through life she/he absorbs, via schools, parents, authority sources, media, peer groups and the like, quite a lot of 'conditioning', often not being necessarily in a position to counter it (eg in childhood) or often without necessarily being conscious of it (eg. 'subliminal' media messages), and all of which may leave at times perhaps not too much room for the individual to 'be themselves' - ? Mass cultures too can exert strong influence in themselves over people – some have said, for instance, that there's been a significant  'standardisation' 'norming' effect on people within the UK culture via for instance strong messages of 'political correctness' , via assumed cultural objectives (eg wealth acumulation), and , for instance, the use of social conditioning measures such as league tables, as well of course  considerable modern exposure to a welter and seemingly ever greater surge of media messages.

 One current ( 2016) point of concern to some, for instance, has been the seeming intolerance of some higher learning institutions to alternative views, seemingly conveying the '*if you're not with us, you're against us'* position, which in itself indicates a level of 'self-rightness' and then unwillingness to engage in 'full and frank debate' ( *'opposition being friendship' - ?*) And if such can't happen in the arena of 'higher education', then it could be unlikely to happen within such a culture as a whole, and the narrower self-interested position holds sway – in which 'pinpricks' to kickstart greater/higher consciousnesses are maybe unlikely to thrive, the culture itself  then working against any ' expanded consciousness states' - ---- .

**' Mindfully ----- '**

 Not necessarily completely though, as part of the  culture could be in itself geared to help  and

support greater consciousness in general. Again the example of the current 'mindfulness' movement could be said to be designed to be part of a 'wake up' process for individuals leading them to develop wider and deeper consciousnesses, to be able for instance to understand the prompters of their own behaviours to then develop overview (i.e. greater consciousness) to be able to better self-manage their lives ( particularly, maybe, if there is a 'binning' mechanism for accumulated 'mental garbage').  Meditation practice too, which is reported to have increased in recent times, is also said to have the ability to help people access an  expanded' consciousness ' beyond their own small limits,  gain greater awareness and hence access  a 'bigger' consciousness.

One of the bases to such processes as mindfullness and meditation is to create the ability and conditions for the individual to be able to 'see' themselves', as they are, warts and beauty spots an' all, so developing then a closer experience of 'reality'. Having the freedom to be able to consider the self as it actually is ( rather than, say, having to see it in any 'society conditioned' light, often presented as a  'perfection' position), also gives the individual the time and opportunity to 'see' behaviour patterns that might benefit from change, and such change, being self induced and motivated, can then presumably support a stronger, more settled and satisfied self.

 **P's tale** could be relevant :

 *'Looking back, I was very much influenced and prescribed by the social mores of the day, some of which were pretty conflicting, causing within me quite a bit of confusion. One message , for instance of that era, when I was a youth, which seemed to come over loud and strong from virtually all quarters, was '*you must always think of others before yourself'*. Crikey, no wonder it caused conflict and confusion in a young male trying to make his way in the world, and  the conflict it caused wihin me  contributed significantly, I think, to my having a low self-esteem as I grew into adulthood, which didn't help an awful lot. I realise now that it was society 'en masse' tying to instil such a value into individuals, but I also realise that the use of a form of force (i.e. 'you must ---' ) was actually probably counter-roductive for society and caused difficulties for individuals.*

 *I  became then rather a tense individual as a young man, developing an exaggerated  'rush' approach to life's situations and problems, and such a 'tense' style became rooted within me, if you like, becoming my 'life norm' . It was not ultimately though sustainable and eventually I hit 'the buffers' and had then to try to develop other approaches, helped quite a bit by taking up transcendental meditation.*

*The latter was though tricky – it mean't  meditating for two twenty minute periods a day which in an agitated state to begin with wasn't easy. Gradually though, I suppose my 'system' calmed down somewhat, and slowed up, to the point which I could then start to 'see' what was going on with me, and also with the now slower 'system', now giving me not only time and space to 'see', but also to decide to take alternative action and approaches, rather than being driven down the old tense pattern of behaviour.*

 *Of course it wasn't all plain sailing – there were setbacks, but gradually this new level of self-awareness became stronger, to the point that I had the satisfying feeling that I was now 'driving the show' rather than being driven in those older problematic automatic patterns - very satisfying and very illuminating.'*

Maybe, though, the path to greater  self-awareness is not one-tracked, and maybe original for each individual - ?'

 *'Straight are the roads of improvement, crooked are the bye-ways of genius  ------- '* (Willy Blake)

*' Consistency can be the dogma of small minds -------- '*  (Winston Churchill)

*'Know thyself' ---------*  (Socrates)

Another case-study conveys a slightly differing route :

***'C's' tale -------***

 C was a successful entrepreneur and businessman, a self-made man who'd worked hard from fairly humble beginnings to where he was now, a multi-millionaire having recently sold  a company for a good deal of money. His lifestyle had a cost side to it though, as he readily admitted. His relationship with the mother of their children had failed, as much due to his long-hours work culture, as he again owned up to, as also to his regrets concerning missing quite a bit of the family's formative years.

*'I found myself sitting there in a luxury apartment not lacking for anything, and with lots of money behind me, yet increasingly lonely and with an aura of 'vague dissatisfaction' about me. I started to drink quite a bit, to mask the feelings, I suppose, but then seemed to come to my senses and I decided to analyse the situation using skills I'd built up in business. I started by thinking about the past and how i'd come to be in this position.*

 *Whilst I was still proud of my journey and achievements, I also had to face the 'cost' side, so this lead me to the first glimmer that it wasn't undiluted success, which then started me to question what would 'success' be for me. I found this a bit strange as I was so used to  assuming that business success was the ' b and end all', but at this stage something inside made me determined to continue the quest. I was surprised to find that whilst the business success was important, it wasn't quite so comprehensive as i'd been assuming, and that there seemed to be quite a 'hole' in my life. This then lead me down the path of considering the 'hole' and what I was then in need of to become 'more whole'. In my case it was to do with relationships and I also became aware of a need to contribute, to share my knowledge and experience.*

 *I eventually joined a business mentoring voluntary charity and now spend up to half my time in this area. It's been an eye opener, with the training involved in particular taking me outside my own box and comfort zone.  Not every situation is the best but on the whole it's been a very rewarding process for me and I feel more fulfilled and that there's more now to me as a person - yes, on the whole I feel a deal better about myself, which is a good feeling. Relationships in general have benefited too.*

***' Mass generation ----- '***

Falling into 'automatic' patterns and following automatic 'mass generated' objectives is perhaps not too hard to do – just look, for instance, how strong the mass message of 'entrepreneurialism' has been in western type cultures, linked to the equally strong mass message of 'self gain' – even to the point of public figures saying such words as 'greed is good'. There may, though, as in 'C's' case above, be opportunity at some stage to work out a more bespoke set of individual values and objectives (as many do), which can then translate into a more rounded and fulfilled life. This may occur naturally as the individual grows and gains more personal strength  and 'sense of self" through life, which could then lead to wider awarenesses and even 'transcendent' type of experiences - ?

 No doubt the individual's store of awareness stands a fair chance of increasing as the journey through life proceeds and more experience is gained. Presumably, though, there's also the possibility

of some traits, habits and beliefs becoming too 'settled ', then impeding any further self development progress - ?  Again, though, it's presumably up to individuals themselves to some extent at least to decide the type and shape of their 'life journey' – and whether more 'awareness' is relevant to them - ?


## 5    'Darker' times ----- ?'

*'Enlightenment involves illuminating the dark'*    *(* Carl Jung, psychologist)

(probably implying developing understanding of  situations and behaviour ----?)


 In human terms, then, the 'state of light' could translate into conditions such as understanding, linked to tolerance, linked to compassion, linked to 'a bigger vision', linked to 'the fuller human development', and so on, where the 'darker' state might link to the smaller self-interest condition, then linked to intolerance (of human 'biodiversity', the views and values of others), linked then to self-rightness and over self-aggrandisement, and so on. Such an analysis is of course relatively simple to jot down on paper, but to achieve any 'light'-based society may not be quite so straightforward in practice.

It's been said that humans can be composed of two types of character; -one fairly obviously, the 'human' element, the other a 'divine' element, the degree of which is likely to vary from person to person. This appears to tie in with  Zen-type approach, which indicates that 'God' is a potentiality within man, as opposed to a deity sitting somewhere up in the sky/heavens. Although organised religious orders might struggle with such a notion, the idea is that many individuals do experience something of this dichotomy within themselves, and it's at the individual level where it manifests itself. A quote from Linda Tucker ( *Mystery* of *The White Lions* ) could be relevant :

 *'(the) ----- route to spiritual evolution is clear ----- we all have our own unique journey to walk --- . Until we re-align ourselves with the forces of light, of sunlight, of light energy which breathes life into every life form on this planet, we are aligning ourselves with darkness'.*


 A relevant question could then be '*is modern life , in the form of the 'mass culture', a life lived in the 'darker, less 'knowing' shades' -* ? ( with the positive slant that if 'unknowing' is recognised and accepted, this then leaves room to over time, gain 'knowing' - ?) Recent trends in world cultures, particularly of the western-type model, have clearly focussed on materialism and personal gain in the areas of wealth and power (apparently though not without downsides – a sharp rise in the wealthy seeking therapy has for instance been recently reported ).

 Western -type man has rejected paternalistically-styled religion, the analysis goes, to then as some might say, throw spirituality itself out of the window - the 'baby's been thrown out with the bathwater' type of scenario, the 'godless society' scenario then being thrown open for the 'worship of mammon', particularly in the form of money - ? Over-simplified  'philosophies' such as 'it's all about money' - in reality probably just a form of 'money conditioning' – have it's said, contributed to a generally over-simplification of  what some – many? - might well perceive to be a complex life situation, and then on to a possible over-simplifications of people themselves, again often to do with 'money conditioning' trends. Some might say that a 'wrong, over-simplified road' has been taken and that currently (2017) the world is experiencing adverse effects from that - ? Therefore it could be

necessary to examine current life in terms of its 'darkness' rating and then in terms of the potential for 'light'.

### Short-term -------long-term -- ?

It could be maybe important to distinguish between 'short-term' and longer-term' - many if not most are presumably capable of experiencing the emotion of 'happiness' on the shorter term basis, H' for instance (earlier), experienced longer-term  - a 'transcendent'  'bliss' state for several months. In more historical times,  Maslow reported that many of his 'psychologically healthy' research subjects reported experiencing 'intense joy and bliss' on a short-term basis. Historically there are many reported instances of individuals becoming 'enlightened' ('living in light') on a longer-term basis,  especially in the east, where there may well have been a more general cultural aim for individual spiritual attainment, which then made it easier for individuals to maintain 'transcendent' consciousness states - ? ( an inference being that in modern western-style cultures the strong level of  focus on material attainment might work against the gaining/ retention of any such 'enlightenment' /transcendental type experiences  - ?).

### ' Modern manacles ----?'

According to some (for example Kuihiro Yamate in his *The Way of No-Mind*  work), pursuit of wealth and power is about trying to assuage 'natural and normal'  inner life insecurity,, amplified it's said currently by estrangement from 'Tao', the universal natural energy force, (according to, for instance, eastern wisdom)., and quite possibly then further strengthened by 'mass collective angst' factors working on individuals. Yamate suggests that such a move (i.e. pursuit of wealth and power) is unlikely to be effective in the longer-run, and could be counter-productive, and that man is better advised to work at 're-connecting' with Tao. If this is the case, the 'reality' ( i.e. even if  'man' denies it), it still leaves an existential problem, in that if man's efforts are misdirected and producing a 'wrong result' - in this case more rather than less insecurity – such a trend can then become 'self-serving and self-  fulfilling' - the greater the insecurity, the greater then become the efforts to assuage it,  then causing further insecurity – i.e .the cycle continues in ever-decreasing and tightening circles - ?


### ' Seeing the light ----- ?'

The only 'way out' of such a conundrum is presumably via developing an awareness leading to an understanding of what's occurring, which then presumably could involves 'man' needing to face up to the fact that he's on a 'wrong road' (and to any fear involved in accepting 'failure)', and then develop the courage to 're-route' onto the 'right road' - in this case the argument is to re-direct to connection with the natural, universal forces known as 'Tao'.  Many individuals may well be on a 'right road' path, but  it could well need 'collective man' to 'see this light' to effect a significant enough shift in emphasis and approach - ?

Without such change of direction, the route to expanded awareness/ transcendental/enlightenment states could probably be that much harder, although no doubt some individuals with sufficient fortitiude and awareness may well be able to make the trip - ? Yamate a  Japanese mystic,  suggests , for instance, that rather than bolster up against insecurity by means such as amassing money or seeking protective power within 'large' groupings, man would be better served by facing up to internal security,  thus developing internal strength (as many individuals undoubtedly do.).

'The door is always open ---- ' is an idea that can crop up in eastern-origined writing, with the

implication that all the individual has to do, is walk through it and lo!, 'Nirvana' , 'living in the light' beckons ---- Maybe,though, modern man has a bit too much 'baggage; to fit through the door and needs to 'unburden' a little firstly - ? Meditation could be one way, slowing down fast 'chattering' minds so that there's then room for 'insights' to come.

A more 'western/' approach would probably be more rational - maybe, for instance following Abraham Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs' concept, in which the individual 'ascends' the needs ladder through life, to then be in a position to 'go beyond the self' and experience universal transcendental energy and states. 'The 'walking through the door' idea would seem to depend too on 'knowing where the door is', which may have been easier for individuals reared in eastern 'personal spirituality' environments, than individuals reared in western-style more materialistically-leaning cultures - ? Again, a 'horses for courses' situation , in which neither approach maybe inherently inappropriate ?

### *Western- type potential inflluences/barriers ----*

The author Michael Foley talks of a current 'automatic authority' force (presumably emanating from a 'largist' geared culture - ?) against which individuals might feel too small and 'overpowered' ( to be then 'unempowered) to be able to think and feel independently and individually. Given a strong 'central' message in the UK over the last decade or so of promoting continuous change, personal wealth accumulation and at times a seemingly incessant 'innovation and entrepreneurialism' message , possibilities for individual's self-gained development could then be hindered and/or even barriered ---- ?'

### *People needs ---- ?'*

This could mean that individuals aren't 'developing', 'relating'', connecting with a larger reality', 'fellow feeling' and so forth, maybe though still important to people, and therefore with a need of some emphasis to be put on these areas - ? One senior UK Member of Parliament for instance more or less stated the same awhile back - that the central message of such a narrow focus on 'personal gain' didn't really fit well with many of his constituents with other traditional values such as those of family , social and community being equally if not of more importance to them - ?

Again, another relatively recent report suggested that whilst religion (in the UK) seemed to have been 'sidelined', that in fact 'spirituality' was still important to many, to a majority in fact. . So another 'effect' of the central 'automatic authority' drive has been that of secularisation, of 'man' going his own way, ditching 'God'. Maybe the seeming reaction against what's been perceived as paternalistic organised spirituality - 'man' wanting to grow up into adulthood, as it were - has then (maybe mistakenly? - again, the 'baby ditched with the bathwater' scenario?) ditched the whole 'spirituality' experience, some suggesting , for instance, that 'true' spirituality is experienced at the individual not the organisation level - ?

Easy perhaps to see how that could/can happened, but the reality then would be that then there's a 'two wrongs don't make a right' type of situation, and that 'man' may still yet be faced with the task of 'getting back to the garden' (for example, relating to and connecting with, Tao) - ? One danger, though, may lie in the strong 'automatic authority' force so conditioning (and 'dis-empowering'' ) people, that such wider and deeper considerations then become 'buried' - ?

**'Wrong road running ------ ?'**

 The full German-origined saying is that 'it's no good running if on the wrong road' – and maybe Fritz Schumacher's exhortation of having a good 'stop and think' – particularly in strongly 'driven forward' times - should be paid heed to - ?  A possible penalty of not doing so and 'hurtling headlong down the ('wrong road' - ?) 'having' route, might be the avoidance of any longer-term 'bliss', which might be unfortunate, particularly if it is as below :

 *'All of creation is in bliss ---- except man ---- '*     Indian mystic

 Some might well point to 'planet earth degradation' as material proof that 'wrong road running' has taken place, and that such a negative result has occurred due to 'man' gorging him/herself on materialism, in an attempt to stave off/subdue existential insecurity, instead, though, producing more of it ------  More than a few might argue that man having 'gone his own way', is separate, disconnected and distant from what has been called ' natural universal forces' ( 'Tao' in eastern spiritual practice/thought). And the idea that man has to find his way back 'into the fold', as it were, is an ancient concept – *'we've got to get back to the garden'*  seemingly being a more modern take on it.

This is obviously taking the concept of man as a collective issue – 'en masse' as it were – individuals no doubt vary significantly in their approach and their ability to 'connect' with 'Tao', the 'larger universal 'natural' forces (many , for instance, patently connect with nature via gardening, country walking, mountain climbing and so forth).  If the 'wrong road' analysis holds up in reality, it implies that 'man' has work to do collectively to make efforts to face up to and then comprehend the current situation, including being 'brave' enough to hold up hands and say 'mea culpa', to then be able to steer to a longer-term more productive way (and, as some have said, if there is no 'God' taking 'responsibility', can 'Man' then avoid it - ?).

 Some suggest that with so many people involved and 'self-serving' such a strong trend, that the notion of collective man carrying out such a self-understanding analysis is in reality, somewhat remote. This may be so, but in which case the individual can then  carry out the work for themselves, and it may be important for them to do so, and then at some stage these 'questors' ('freerangers!') may hopefully come into their own - ?

 There, though, may lie another difficulty, in that people who 'do the work' and develop their own realistic awareness and understanding of the 'where it's at', can then be faced with a 'mass' situation more geared to self-serving and wealth accumulation i.e. the road of such questors is now a less trod byeway. This could apply too to people who then develop 'expanded awareness' which can bring 'overview', who then too may have to tread a more 'lonely' route.  Hopefully the strength such questors gain via their endeavours will help see them through, but such difficulties  should perhaps not be underestimated, and presumably any support  valued.


 *'You get to the stage of needing the peaceful green oasis'*         (Bette Midler, American star)


*6 :  ''Easy' / 'Hard'   road' routes*

 *' E –a---s----y ------*

People reporting on experiences of the 'expanded awareness' state(s) often mention that it's a 'no

sweat' situation – everything is 'nice, easy and natural', like 'being in tune' – it's seen as a 'special' state because it is rare , even though it's reported as a natural, human state.  Many are said to be 'sweating the small stuff' and/or trying hard  'to achieve', or just trying 'to stay afloat', as it were.

 '*The door's always open, and access to the 'higher awareness' state(s) can be immediate'*,  is a statement that's sometimes seen in older texts. Given, though, the giving-up of the current self could be involved, and given that it might be difficult to 'find the door' in modern materialistic cultures, and then even if it's found, the amount of baggage modern man can carry ('*simplify, simplify'*) might well restrict access, the process might be just a little more tricky than it appears to be - ?. Buddha talked  for instance, about 'attachment' and how attachment to whatever, but particularly maybe material goods and wealth, can act as a barrier to accessing the 'higher states'. Some people, though, for instance, can instinctively shy away from ,say, too strong a reliance on the material side of life :

 *E lived in a sizeable village, a good community, in beautiful countryside on the borders of England and Wales, having a small workshop there in which he made high quality Welsh dresser types of wooden furniture.*

'I was never that drawn to money as such', *he would say,* 'I used to think I was maybe a bit strange because of that'.

*One old boy used to stop by for a chat each day, both of then enjoying each other's company. The old boy then died and surprised E by leaving him a very substantial amount of money in his will. Friends and acquaintances advised E that he could now expand the business, taking on a more managerial role, or in fact retire altogether, to live a life of ease.*

 'It seems most seemed to know what I should be doing*' he said,* 'but interestingly, no-one had really bothered to ask me what I wanted to do'.

 *E had long worked out his 'freerange' priorities so was inured to such advice, and determined to continue exactly as before, apart from updating his aged vehicle, doing what he loved to do, making beautiful artefacts.*

 'I reckon I'd be crazy not to', *he said,* 'it's what I enjoy and get so much satisfaction from'.

 E lived a life fairly devoid of luxury or 'flash living' – he didn't feel the need for it, preferring instead his meaningful, interesting and satisfying lifestyle. And as he said :

'*the money left to me, I suppose, is quite nice to have, but to be honest, I reckon I'd be just as ok without it. In fact, I'm thinking of giving a good part  of it away to good causes.'*


**'*Mind you ---- '***

 As earlier, Yamate Kunihir  suggests that besides the possibility that money and wealth accumulation can be a sort of modern, mass 'conditioned' addiction, the foundation impulse for such behaviour was to assuage 'inner  insecurity', which could be said to be  an existential condition, possibly, though, increased by 'mass trends' - ?  He argues, though, that wealth accumulation is more likely long-term to actually increase insecurity at both the individual and the 'mass' level, and that the only real i.e lasting way to counter insecurity is via the 'self-encounter' route to self-understanding – the  Socrates' 'know yourself' path – the 'facing fear/insecurity'  scenario, which some also see as the real route to any higher states of being. (see shortly and *Wising Up* --- pt. 2),

(and a route which can then involve a degree of difficulty).

### *'Taking the 'high' road ------ '*

There has been more recent work suggesting that in fact much of the current effort involved in supporting the 'expanded awareness/enlightenment' movement is in fact more of a palliative geared to assuaging insecurity rather than, for instance, the real deal, and sometimes called 'eating the menu' - i.e. not the real, direct experience. Not unsurprisingly, maybe, some modern religious movements favoured by the 'rich and powerful' have for instance seemingly accommodated modern palliatives by espousing wealth and power creation within their 'designer' creeds. Could they be, though, 'on a wrong road' - ?

Talking of possible 'harder roads', takes focus to *'the harder route',* as mentioned above. The story here is that to connect to larger/higher reality -'universal reality' – the individual needs to find their way to 'reality' in the first place, and that this involves coming to terms with their own reality..

The immediate obstacle can lie in the fact that many – most? – live in self-determined reality, complete with their own conceptions/pre-conceptions. Some for instance, have suggested that with the sheer amount of media influence people are exposed to, along with what some have identified as a strong modern 'norming' strand (i.e. leading away from individual traits and feelings), the chances of pursuing 'the individual reality path' may be slimmer than at any age hitherto – the then new 'darker' age - ? It's argued then, that the behaviour of many is concerned with assuaging existential fear, taking people then along 'unreal', to some extent, self-deluded paths - ?.

*' America is so f-------g confused right now. There is a loss of compassion and decency because the obsession with fame, money and status is out of control and everything has become divided '*

Dave Grohl,    Foo Fighters, ex Nirvana

### *'A  road less traversed ------ '*

Another reason such a 'direct personal experience' route might be called 'harder', lies in the fact that in the process of facing reality, the individual may (well) experience difficulty, in particular, the experience of fear and also the possibility that any 'unravelling' of the personality could involve mental and/or physical pain.  The 'direct experience' idea is that in experiencing their 'essential existential fear', the individual 'unmasks' it and it then loses its behaviour and thought influencing power – a logical process.

*(it's probably also important to say that support and direction to undergo such a journey may often be needed – this author remains resolutely aware that his own journey was facilitated/ guided/supported via a mentor offering essential self – help guidelines).*

### *'Mind watch ----- '*

Much is made of the need to have 'the direct experience' by 'expanded awareness' guides (eg. Buddha), and that great care has to be taken as the mind has considerable prowess in terms of self-rationalisation leading to self-delusion
*(careful 'watching' of the 'mind's machinations' is one of the developing skills deemed to be very useful/necessary on any 'expanded awareness' type of journey  -a type of 'self-encounter' experience).*

Some may in fact be better placed than others within this 'facing demons' scenario, even though they might not necessarily see themselves as particularly blessed at the time. People having for instance suffered nervous breakdowns in which their 'operating system' fails – say, due to prolonged stress experience - are then, with the right mentoring support and help, in a position to build/re-build a new more positive system. It's reported for instance that a fair number of 'breakdown' sufferers then go on to experience 'rxpanded awareness' experiences further down the line.

People who become dissatisfied with 'normal life' (often for instance, particular cultures not, say, suiting too well particular (bio-diverse) individuals) and/or individuals who have become dissatisfied with who they've become, can maybe decide reasonably easily to go for a change – maybe getting to the point of freedom where negative situations can be recognised and acknowledged – and commit themselves to working at a more positive and productive path.

(*this of course assumes that they have enough 'functional freedom' (eg.s domestic freedom, regime freedom) in life to be able to then 'follow their own path'*)

(see *Freerangin' on ---- Wising Up --- or ---- Dumbing Down – ? , part 2* )

### 'Whither ----- ?'.

A final point of consideration for this section may be to pose the question as to whether a search for 'expanded awareness' is a good idea in the first place - ?. It's perhaps easy to see  its lure, when there's talk of it delivering bliss, energy, health, joy and love ----  This is not to decry these attributes as being valid to aim for, rather to suggest that at times they could represent,, maybe for some, over-high targets, and that 'conscious trying' to reach them might in itself remain an impediment to their attainment .

*A monk in the east was very earnest about reaching 'enlightenment, and tried his utmost via his devotions, attentions to the scriptures, and hanging on the words of various gurus -all to resolutely no effect however. In the end even his monumental level of motivation was exhausted -he came to the end of his tether, burnt his books and renounced his search. Having been a monk, he was of course as poor as a church mouse, and so went to live in a ruined temple, fashioning a small cell for himself within the ruins. Awhile later, possibly a few weeks or months, he was sweeping the space in front of his cell with a makeshift broom, when a stone flew of it and 'pinged' against a piece of broken pottery there. In an instant, his consciousness changes, and he could 'see'.*

Maybe all his 'ditching' had emptied his mind sufficiently to then allow in some 'outside stuff' - ?

The road/route to fuller states of awareness might be, for instance, quite long, and a 'wanting to be at the destination', partaking of the perceived 'goodies", when only part way along the route, could in itself be an impediment to progress (the 'running before walking' syndrome). Accepting self, and where self is, however imperfect by conventional judgement that may be, could be one of the cornerstones on which progress can then be made, besides providing 'relaxation' in the form of relief of pressure (for  example., to be 'culturally perfect'), in itself useful to the process.

### 'After the ectasy ----- ?'

' *Know Thyself*'      Socrates  (he might have explained a bit more though - ?)

Another area worthy of some consideration is, given the possibility of attaining to any 'higher 'wising up' state', how will that then 'fit' within the 'world as is currently known' – wherein  it could

seem to involve a somewhat 'alien' experience  - ?

Maybe it's a case of 'those that are ready for it'  are travelling/about to travel  'the roads less traversed', in which case it could well be important that the individual heeds what inner innateness, intuition and 'inner feeling' are saying - ? It might need quite an inner chord  striking, along with considerable 'reverberation' to be felt, before embarking on what could be an arduous journey, even though the potential rewards could be '*out of this world*' ------- ?


## 7 : 'Living in the light ------- '

One line of thought, which could seem to make some sort of sense, especially in terms of  the ability to then understand factors potentially affecting the levels of differentation amongst people, is that there could then be a 'natural' progression of the individual :

*animal  >>  human  >>  spiritual/divine*

(animal – reactive, 'unaware',     spiritual/divine – 'aware';  meditative, 'measured' )

 wherein, the argument goes, many people have a mix of ' animal' and 'spiritual', some closer to 'animal' and some closer to 'divine' ( i.e. personal rather than linked to any organised religion). Those that develop 'transcendent' type states involving feeling 'whole', 'healed' and 'at one', bringing then experiences of bliss, health, energy , compassion and love, could be then said to be operating at the 'divine' level.

 Such awareness could then tie in with  the 'Zen' type thinking that 'God' is a potentiality within man', as opposed to, say, the traditional view of  'God' being an elderly patrician sitting somewhere 'above'. This in turn could then tie in with the feeling that some inclined to Zen ways and thoughts have, that the 'divine' is potentially all around, and that everything can have an aspect of  the divine, so  'reverance' is then a natural everyday feeling and can apply to 'everyday' things and events, and that ultimately, such reverance is the ultimate natural state of man.  There is a school of thought that suggests that there are far more individuals experiencing 'the divine' than is commonly thought ------

 Such thoughts and analyses, unprovable as they tend to be by, say, rational, scientific mind thought, can reverberate internally with some, - possibly/probably those that are already feeling the 'mix' of 'animal' and 'divine' - ? If such thoughts  'strike a chord' internally with people, so the thinking goes, it could be that it's an important area for them as individuals, but again probably in need of some 'inner strength' to stick to any course towards 'the divine', especially in modern cultures with strong 'mass'  and social norming elements such as , say, strong trends towards the secular, and considerable media/ commercial pressures - ? Cultures such as the modern western-type materialistically-based variety may pose problems in that they've tended to go more secular, with then emphasis away from the spiritual, but, as some might argue, maybe 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater' - ?

  One particular effect of any process of, say. 'holistic healing', could likely be that that the individual then gains for instance an aura of 'simplicity' - i.e. becoming 'whole' and 'unified' then brings about the 'uncomplicated state', whereas an 'un-whole', fragmented state can  give rise to complexities. Again, if the 'whole and healed' state also then leads to living in a compassionate state, the 'fit' with any modern-type culture that is, say, competitive and materialistically geared towards mainly self-seeking gain, may then not be for instance complete - ?

The two instances of potential 'unfit with the system' above can serve to illustrate the potential problems and limitations that people, say, with higher levels of 'divine' content, including expanded awareness states, may encounter within the current culture in which they exist. Such potential difficulties have been around for quite awhile, particularly maybe in eastern cultures in which 'expanded awareness' individuals known as 'Bodhisattvas' were known to make conscious decisions to help humanity to higher awareness levels, out of existing high levels of compassion within themselves. Another situation facing the 'expanded awareness' level individual is that of whilst operating from the 'higher' awareness level, there is then likely to be a feeling of not wanting to act or appear in any way 'superior', as with 'wholeness' reached, as it were, there is no real need to support or bolster ego.

Presumably the 'expanded awareness', 'divine' targeted individual can decide for her/his self how best to meet their needs and 'survive and thrive' in their given state., and how to resolve 'everyday life' living. Some might, for instance, might opt for more of a life as a recluse, finding difficulties and 'unpeace' in everyday life, and/or wanting/needing space and peace to suit their natures. Others maybe called to aim to 'bring a little light into the world' -----

   F's strategy, for instance, was to tell his drinking buddies :

*'I'm really a recluse you know – I only come out because I don't want people to know it -------- '*

 One subtle potential difficulty might , for instance, lie in the problem of how to find a way to 'give', a need born out of compassion, and to find a 'level' that works for both giver and receiver. Perhaps rather an obvious way for any 'expanded awareness' individual to 'give' (or 'serve') could be to set themselves up as a 'guru' in order to help others attain to higher awareness levels, a route though which might have the possibility of it being slightly fraught with danger for that individual - ?
*(there have been more than a few reported cases for instance of guru's 'exploiting' their 'power' positions) .*
.Possibly the roles of 'mentor' or 'spiritual healer' may be less at risk to any possibility of 'ego inflation' ----- ?  There are no doubt many other avenues, maybe less conspicuous, by which to fulfill higher level needs such as to 'serve', as many undoubtedly follow.

 There is probably a need then for anyone experiencing 'divine' levels (with the inference being that many do, at varying levels), to 'put things into perspective' and 'square things off'', particularly in relation to any differences between themselves and others. On top of this there could also be a need to recognise that 'mass cultural norm man' is not necessarily the same as individual man, and that of course individual man comes in many variations ('bio diversity') and operates at many differing levels.

To operate effectively as an 'expanded awareness', divine-orientated person within any current culture and its norms could well be a skilfull task and a 'high art', one undoubtedly that often has to be learn't 'in situ' - ? There doesn't seem to be too much literature in this area, but a couple of  useful references could be :

*After the Ecstasy, The Laundry*  Jack Kornfield        *Rider*

*The New Earth : Awakening  to Life's Purpose*        Eckhart Tolle     *Penguin*


   Pt. 2 of *Wising Up or Dumbing Down*  will aim to  focus then/further on exploring whether there's scope for interested individuals to operate on a 'D.I.Y.Enlightenment' path and if so, what could be

the 'mechanics', the 'procedures' involved, which the individual could use, whilst bearing in mind the potential need and use for/of mentors, and the potential pitfall of the 'running before walking' scenario, and the uniqueness of the individual and of their paths.