HUMAN NATURE
HUMAN SURVIVAL

Brian Medlin

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One of the academic triumphs of last year's Silver Jubilee celebrations was the public lecture, "Human Nature and the Prospects for Human Survival", by Brian Medlin on the evening of 15th August. That lecture now reappears in revised and expanded form as the present monograph. A large, attentive and invigorated audience heard Brian deliver his eighty-minute address. Among the three hundred or so present were many citizens of Adelaide having little (if any) familiarity with our campus, as well as a broad cross-section of the university community.

The success of that Jubilee occasion, reflected as it was by the size and heterogeneity of the audience, owed a great deal of course to Brian's fame and personality. Fame without infamy, as the famous know, is a mantle devoid of many of its human colours and rarely seen in public. The presence of these many colours on the person of Brian Medlin, committed philosopher, was no embarrassment—especially to Flinders University. On the contrary...

Undoubtedly the collective memory of Brian's audience that night brought to their reception of his paper a knowledge of him as the Professor of Philosophy up-front and in gaol because of his active role in the anti-Vietnam War movement. To many Australians during that era of turbulence—especially confused, disgusted, moralistic patriots—Brian Medlin was infamy personified. Opposed, however, to this selective image of Brian's identity was and still is the idealistic version of him as a philosopher dedicated to testing, applying, fulfilling philosophical theory in practice, and in the process offering society the lessons of himself, of his 'experiments with truth' to borrow the admirable Gandhi's admirable phrase. Lessons offered with courage, daring, rigour, vigour, and munificent dicacity; lessons acquired through suffering if needs be, but in the pursuit of enlightenment and justice.
The idea of the lesson, of course, is essentially pedagogic, but it also has an honourable (though much abused) affiliation with various traditions of morality. Brian Medlin has always been committed to the value of teaching philosophy, of practising for the greater good (of the mind, body and body politic) the viable and worthwhile principles which rationality is capable of adducing. The idea that action proceeding from rationality can produce good effects, however pragmatic or subjective, indicates the moral value of the teaching of philosophy in accordance with such a principle or idea.

Moreover, Brian has always argued trenchantly for the indivisibility of teaching and research and the present monograph, I believe, is an eloquent testament to the validity of that cause. To learn indispensable lessons from research derived from the disciplines of rational analysis and discourse—like the crucial lesson of survival behaviour—is to apply knowledge to real situations for the greater good of the world and its inhabitants. But that, as Brian warns, may be the best possibility in the best of all unlikely worlds; the present crisis facing the planet could be of such horrendous magnitude as to promote mere survival to the top of the optimistic list of priorities. None of these issues can or need be divorced from the power and art of persuasion; in Brian's philosophy, the persuasion of rational argument. In this sense Brian (like Jane Austen) is an unrepentant persuader.

These along with many other aspects of Brian's professional and personal history provided a kind of tacit texture within which the text of his Silver Jubilee address glowed with life, purpose and meaning. His infamy may have faded because, retrospectively, his philosophical position on Vietnam and War now enjoys 'respectability' (not a term in Brian's vocabulary of praise, I suppose, but such is the way of revisionism). However, the old intensity and urgency—albeit in a modified timbre—were fully present, fully felt, as he tackled the "Ecological Crisis":

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Bad enough. But, as we all know, much worse.

I shall assume that you believe with me that the whole planet is in crisis; that unless we correct our behaviour, human beings are unlikely to survive for much longer, while human civilisation is almost certain to perish. I have argued for this position elsewhere.* In doing so I employed the Principle of Rational Action mentioned above claiming that it required us to assume that extinction is hard upon us, avoidable only by strong aversive action. I am always embarrassed when I have to argue for this: in the present state of human knowledge, to do so is to insult the intelligence and integrity of one's audience. And I shan't do that on this occasion.

Yet such argument is widely needed...

In introducing this monograph to readers (an honour for which I am unqualified) I have endeavoured rather to introduce its author. For many of you this will be a superfluous task. As David Askew, Dean of the School of Humanities, wrote in his citation (1988), on behalf of the proposal that Brian be accorded the title of Emeritus Professor, "For a period, he must have been the best-known member of the Flinders staff". However, in keeping with both the spirit and ideology of the Silver Jubilee, I have decided that a brief resumé of Brian's career at Flinders is an appropriate inclusion in the Foreword. This career, to quote David Askew once more, is that of "someone, above all else, who consistently supported the intellectual and cultural values that he saw as central to university life".

My abundant memories of Brian Medlin at Flinders University are dominated by his participation in and contribution to the life of this place as an intellectual, humane and creative community; his agile riding through debates about the Philosophy of Science, the intricacies of Marxist-Leninism, the Politics of Art and Literature, the sustainability of the Planet, that we need careful thought to avoid...
and indeed the role of the continuum hypothesis in establishing a human relationship:

Once I was drunk, and there's no doubt  
We did embrace and even kiss.  
But then I told her all about  
The continuum hypothesis.

(from his poem "Yesterday I called around...")

These concerns are addressed in Brian Mcclin's papers and publications. His current research interests are indicated by the titles of some of his recent papers and monographs: "Objectivity and Ideology in the Physical and Social Sciences", "Ideology for Extinction", "Objective Despair: What it is and is Not; How to Beat It", "Ecological Crisis and Social Order", "The Critique of Reason, Pure and Practical", "Mortality and the Meaning of Life", etc. I am delighted to see that in the last of these Brian has once again brought philosophy and literature into creative conjunction in the form of a highly unusual 'Essay'.

Brian is a fine poet and when he writes on literature he does so with the authority of the poet-practitioner as well as the intelligent reader. Throughout his career as Professor of Philosophy he was one of the great supporters of the Student Literary Societies in our School, and contributed many readings and performances. And it is with this image of Brian as poet that I close this resumé with an extract from his recently published "A Love Poem", lines which I associate with Brian's contribution to the vitality of our School:

... For I have held  
For half my life hard to the faith  
That a clear mind can do something with  
Any known phenomena  
And everything that can be done  
Will be done if only we're able  
To render the world intelligible.  
In this faith I have written well  
And for it lost the clumsy skill  
Of setting down upon a page  
Those inarticulate cries of rage.

(The Flinders Jubilee Anthology, CRNLE, 1991, p. 156)
Finally, returning from that Yeatsian note in another Jubilee publication to the present one, I should like to pay tribute to the Board of Research. In publishing Brian Medlin's monograph, the Board, I believe, is setting an inspiring and entirely appropriate precedent, as well as contributing to the Silver Jubilee in a lasting way which brings credit to our institution and helps to unlock this particular academy.

SYD HARREX

Reader in English

Director: Centre for Research in the New Literatures in English
The following essay, though not meant to be beneath the notice of philosophers, is aimed first at a general audience rather than a specialist one. It is offered as a serious piece of philosophy, yet I am sure that it can be followed by any cultivated reader, even by one without philosophical training. This doesn’t mean that every such reader can expect to understand perfectly every word from now on. Here and there I assume a bit more than general cultivation. Mostly I have indicated these places and invited you to press bravely on. And even where I have not, you may give yourselves the same excellent advice. I hope that in the end you will be rewarded with a pretty good understanding of the work as a whole and with something worth either your acceptance or rejection.

The main text has been kept as lean as I can bear it. At the same time I have allowed myself to enjoy myself in a rag-bag of end-notes and appendices. In the latter, especially, I provide additional explication, illustration, evidence, argument. By doing so, I hope to render the contentions of the main text more perspicuous and plausible. I realise that I may instead, or as well, irritate some readers. I hope not. More ambitiously, I hope that you will find these addenda luxuriant rather than extravagant. Yet that isn’t my main worry. My main worry is that the essay is still neither as fully argued nor as concrete as I would like. To cover the ground, I’ve had to pull on my seven-league boots.

I am grateful to many people for many services, but notably to the following. — To Syd Harrex, for chairing the original Silver Jubilee Lecture, for his stout and effective support prior to the occasion. To the Silver Jubilee Committee of this University, and to its successive chairs, Professor Ted Martin and Professor Faith Trent, for organising the lecture. To David Askew, Dean of the School of Humanities, for setting us up with
food and drink for afters and, more importantly, as an administrator of great style and competence, for improving my life over many years. To The Adelaide Review for publicising the occasion, to the Flinders University Public Relations Bureau for promoting it. To the Board of Research for publishing this monograph and again to Syd Harrex who got them to do so. To Syd yet again for continued support during the process of publication. To Sally Fraser and Karen Gordon for word-processing this essay—to Karen for long, ungrudging hours. To Som Prakash whose formatting skills, good will and patience have turned a mere document into a real book. For making the cover, to Annie Newmarch, comrade and collaborator through many enterprises in which we have shared success and failure. To my wise and witty old friend, Douglas Muecke, for editing my text. I hope, for all his labours, for all my gratitude, that he has failed to curb my excesses. To my solid mates, Bob and Ivy Hawkes, on whose hospitable property Tolka I have so often found room to walk the mind. The final draft of this very essay was produced in my camp on Meath Billabong of that same property. To Bob especially, for so staunchly befriending me early in those days when, as Syd tells it, I was “infamy personified”. To Christine Vick, friend, counsellor, companion for over a decade, lover and beloved, who more than anyone else has ensured that, in an adverse world, I have remained philosophical enough to philosophise. Penultimately, to students, colleagues, friends and comrades of many years, multitudinous, valued though invaluable. Finally, to enemies over the same period, fewer perhaps, feeble I hope, but no less prized.

Go litel book, go litel myn comedie.
In our age politics has ceased to be the Art of the Possible and become the Art of the Necessary.
1. THE ARGUMENT

I begin by presenting a diversity of comment on the nature of philosophy concluding with my own preferred account of what philosophy is.

I single out certain mainstream philosophical ideas which have become prominent over recent centuries. These ideas are somewhat unflattering about human nature. Yet they are optimistic, rationalist, pro-scientific and liberal. At the same time they are objectively pro-bourgeois. They were advanced as part of a conscious attempt radically to change the world.

In spite of countervailing intellectual tendencies, these ideas have been of extreme practical importance.

They have not, however, produced the New Earth envisaged by their authors. Instead capitalism has produced, on a global scale, both social and ecological disaster. (The regimes intended to replace capitalism have done at least as badly.)

In consequence, more recent pro-bourgeois ideas tend to be even less flattering towards human nature, representing it not merely as too selfish, but also as too aggressive or too irrational or too stupid to resolve the current global ecological crisis.

It is maintained that such views of human nature constitute a threat to human survival and that yet they are not known to be true. Some sample views of this kind are examined and shown to be confused and without foundation.

It is claimed that, since we don't know such views to be true, it is rational to assume that they are false, though we may not know this either. Along with this it is claimed that, even though we do not currently know how to ensure human survival, the rational course of action is to set about ensuring it.

I stress the urgent practical importance of philosophy: unless we get our philosophy right enough and quickly enough, we perish.
I want to talk first about the nature of that most practical of all intellectual activities—Philosophy.

I shan’t admit you to what philosophy really is. That would be like cutting an arbitrary road through a linguistic rain-forest. People mean many things by the word “philosophy”—and who am I to say them nay? (In fact I use it ambiguously myself throughout this essay.) Let me give you a few examples:

* "What is your aim in philosophy?—To shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle" (Wittgenstein, 1953, 103e).

* A common response to the news that one is a philosopher is a glazing over of the eyes and a gushing, "Oh how interesting!". To this a certain colleague of mine, a religiously narrow linguistic philosopher, used vehemently to reply, "Not the way I do it!".

* Another colleague has been lucky enough to overhear the following on a bus, "You’ve got to be philosophical. Just don’t think about it".

* An Australian army officer, returning home years ago from Malaysia on the same ship as brought me back from Europe, declared, "I always thought a philosopher was a bloke that sat on top of a gate and when anybody reckoned things were crook he shrugged and said, ‘So what!’".

* Then there was Oliver Edwards, the man who had tried in his time to be a philosopher; "but, I don’t know, cheerfulness was always breaking in" (Boswell, 1946, 230).

* Edwards himself declared Samuel Johnson to be a philosopher, seemingly on the strength of such things as the latter’s remarking that the life of a conscientious clergyman is not easy (ibid., 229).

* Only somewhat less plausibly, King Lear (Shakespeare, William, III, IV) says of the naked lunatic, Tom (as Edgar presents himself), "I will keepe still with my Philosopher".
* And the faith healer, Louise Hay, describes herself, though not as a philosopher, yet as "a metaphysical counsellor, teacher and healer" (Hay, Louise, date unknown).

(It appears that a metaphysician is one licensed to replace evidence and argument with the simple operator, "I believe".)

* "Philosophy, the anxious connecting of one thing with another, the satanic proliferation of programmes of conceptual dominion, the doubling of an already doubled world, had long seemed to him like the pointless journeying of insects" (Murdoch, Iris, 1974, 106).¹

* "Philosophy—too hard for humans" (Murdoch, Iris, private communication²).

* "The uncompromisable difference that separates the philosophers from all others concerns death and dying. No way of life other than the philosophic can digest the truth about death. Whatever the illusion that supports ways of life and regimes other than the philosophic one, the philosopher is its enemy". (Bloom, Allan, 1987, 285)

There is point to this remark by Allan Bloom, as we'll see.

* Some years back, I was foolish enough to confess to a young woman in Broken Hill that I was a philosopher. "Oh", she said, "I'm really into philosophy. I'm always reading bus tickets".

So much for what others think about philosophy. Let me have a rough stab. Take me seriously enough, but not too seriously.

* Philosophy is the commitment to thinking about the whole of life, the whole universe animate and inanimate, the whole of living nature, human and non-human, about fact and value, about what is and is not, about what might and might not be, about what may and must be, about what ought to be and ought not:

* All this (and more) together with the commitment to uncompromising rationality:

* This latter commitment being to rationality in action as well as in thought, the two being not rationally separable:
The commitment extending further to the rational ordering of desire and feeling: for

* The philosophical life is not cold, unemotional, dehumanised; only a passionate, compassionate person could hope to achieve it:

* Philosophy is not a trade, a craft, a skill, though it involves craft and skill, though people are paid to profess it:

* Philosophy is a way of life, a passion, an obsession—for those in its grasp, a duty and a right.

That brings down to earth not only a cloud of academic midges, but also some towering eagles. Rousseau and Nietzsche were both irrationalists—especially in their early work. So, at rock bottom, were William James and Weber. There is no shortage of irrationalists. In recent times, without even looking at the French, we can include the sparrow-hawks, Popper, Feyerabend, Lakatos, Kuhn (Stove, David, 1982). Well, so be it.

Yet my preferred account does make sense of history, where philosophy appears as the study of conflicting world views and the participation in their conflict. Mainly, the rational study, the rational participation.

And my preference reveals the point (not the truth) of Bloom's remark. For death and dying are the most obdurate and indigestible facts of human life, those which most systematically generate the afflatus of irrationality, and which issue most noisily in evasion and myth. Only the philosophical mind, therefore, is likely rationally to confront these central facts. Without that mind, courage is mediated by delusion.

The obduracy of fact, the versatility of hope are what make religion, especially, a powerful tool for social control. Confronting fact makes philosophy the enemy of all regimes based upon illusion—to the extent that they are so based, of all regimes to date.

My preference expresses values important to me—and I hope to you. If not, I am sorry for it, sorry for you, sorry for all of us. I shan't attempt,
though, to change your heart and mind here. Even Heracles undertook only one labour at a time.

I don't present myself to you as a perfect exemplar of the philosophical ideal. Nobody can be that—which is why the ideal is so useful, by the way. This is the point of Murdoch’s remark, “too hard for humans”—though she had in mind also the formidable intellectual difficulties confronting the serious philosopher. Nobody. Not even Socrates. Yet he is still the opening bat for the premier eleven of a division few of us can get a game in. (The captain, of course, is Russell and the vice-captain Hume.) So, however passionately, let us espouse the philosophical ideal, as realistically we all must, with a seemly modesty. Yet, however modestly, espouse it, as we all ought, with proper passion.
Now some potted, simplified history. In this section, I shall highlight a few main philosophical ideas of the last four hundred years.

(I find that this historical job has been largely done already. I commend to you—wrong-headed, reactionary, exciting, instructive—Allan Bloom’s extended essay, quoted above, *The Closing of the American Mind.*

As right-minded people, we have all nodded in sage agreement with the following remark (Marx, Karl, 423):

> The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.

Does this claim really mark a point of departure in Western thought? Marx (dare we say it?) got it wrong here: The Eleventh Thesis is false, indeed a libel. The point is to change the world. Marx, proceeding from a new interpretation, proposed a new direction and kind of change, different methods too. But that is not inventing the idea of change.

If it needed to be invented, that idea was the invention of the bourgeoisie and the great bourgeois philosophers. The latter generated that constellation of ideas by whose light we have steered toward the modern world.

Of course this means *change* in Marx’s sense—*development, progress*—rather than a steadfast medieval mutability. The latter notion treats history not as a moving, growing current, but as a standing wave. Human life, in the sublunar, mutable world of medievalism, was the resultant of chance and destiny, its overall shape fixed beyond human control. Progress, on the other hand, was to be *achieved.* It was to flow from human agency and intention. It was to be the reshaping of human life. Mutability, an obsessive theme before the bourgeois era, is amply presented by William Dunbar in his great poem, “Lament for the Makaris” (1932, 20):
Our plesance heir is all vane glory,
This fals warld is bot transitory,
The flesche is brukle, the Fend is sle;
Timor mortis conturbat me.

The stait of man dois change and vary,
Now sound, now seik, now blith, now sary,
Now dansand mery, now like to dee;
Timor mortis conturbat me.

No stait in erd her standis sickir;
As with the wynd wavis the wickir,
Wavis this warldis vanite;
Timor mortis conturbat me.³

The bourgeois philosophers proposed the systematic manipulation of non-human nature for "the relief of man’s estate"—in Francis Bacon’s phrase⁴ (Bacon, Francis, 1605 but any decent edition, I, v, 11). This has required the development of technology and science, both of which they envisaged.

That human science should have proved possible was, in advance of the event, not a foregone conclusion. To suppose that a medium-sized terrestrial animal was going to prove able so spectacularly to map the universe into itself demanded imaginative audacity.

Two large related assumptions were needed. The first was that, for all the complexity of phenomena, the universe had an underlying simplicity.

The second, an assumption about human nature, was that human beings were capable of the kind of intelligence and rationality needed to perceive this simplicity.

Both assumptions were contentious. Yet each was the rational assumption to act upon. This claim is justified, not by hindsight, but by what I have called elsewhere (1991, 209)

A Main Principle of Rational Action:

We must act with regard, not only to relative probabilities, but, along with these, with regard also to the magnitude and value (whether good or bad) of the possible consequences of our own assumptions.
So that in considering whether or not to act upon a certain assumption, we must take into account not only how probable or improbable it is, but what consequences are likely to flow from accepting or rejecting the assumption and how good or bad these are likely to be.\textsuperscript{5} The point here is that if everyone had rejected the possibility of science, then there would have been no science, whereas if we had assumed that possibility and science had indeed been impossible, then we should have lost only our labour.

Other assumptions about human nature are still with us from that time. Notably in Machiavelli and Hobbes, human beings are assumed to be basically selfish. I would argue that the same assumption is involved quite generally in Social Contract theory. So that it is widespread indeed.\textsuperscript{6}

(If you haven’t heard of Social Contract theory, don’t worry about it. Allow me to be the first to congratulate you.)

All this has political consequences. The relief of man’s estate, the material prosperity projected by Bacon, demanded the manipulation of non-human nature. This was only to be achieved by a developing science yielding a developing technology. In the long run, science, demanding objectivity, demands also the untrammelled intellect.

This, in turn, demanded \textit{first} the eventual liberation of the unfolding bourgeois societies from revelation, from all forms of religious dogma and \textit{second}, an even more sweeping liberation, the release of the intellect generally from political and economic domination. The establishment of the authority of reason. The modern liberal university has been a fairly successful attempt to institutionalise that aspiration.

These requirements were not necessarily clear to all at the time. Hobbes, for example, was an absolutist. Bacon, for example, declared (\textit{op. cit., II, xii, 13}), though perhaps with more far-sighted prudence than short-sighted piety, that

\begin{quote}
All good moral philosophy is but an handmaid to true religion.
\end{quote}

Indeed, the intellectual history that was subsequently spun out by these requirements proved much more tangled and ravelled than my brief, abstract
remarks are likely to suggest. A pervasive notion, then, in the new philosophy was that human society is founded upon a fortunate coincidence and rational accommodation of selfishly pursued objectives. Notice here a generalised version of Adam Smith's doctrine of the Invisible Hand.

(And if you haven’t heard of the Invisible Hand, again don’t worry. Just think of it as the doctrine that if dog eats dog, all dogs grow fat.)

Too hard-nosed for a new heaven, the bourgeois philosophers contented themselves with the promise of a New Earth.

They were concerned to change the world. They did believe that human nature could be improved. Remove the old tyrannies, basic human nature would emerge. Rational self-interest would do the rest.

With hindsight, after Marx and Darwin, we can see that their view of human nature was dogmatic, muddled, fundamentally wrong. We have evolved as social animals. Human nature is socially constructed. What each human being inherits is the capacity to become a human being, a social animal—the kind depending on the kind of socialisation. (This doesn’t abolish genetic determinants, nor yet establish an indefinite malleability.)

It does mean, however, that the kinds of human nature generated by particular societies can’t be regarded as fixed and definitive and, in particular, that bourgeois human nature, the kind found in capitalist societies, need not be fastened upon us forever hooray. More than this, not only did the bourgeois philosophers mistake bourgeois nature for general, genetic human nature, but, as I shall show, even bourgeois human nature is misdescribed by them. (As, less excusably, by their modern talking dolls.)

Against them, Marx realised that to achieve the New Earth of the philosophers, it was necessary to change, not only non-human nature, but at the same time quite radically to change human nature. To achieve this second objective, more was going to be needed than a mere moralising eloquence. It was going to be necessary once again to revolutionise social organisation, and especially the social means of production. Capitalism had
to go almost as soon as it had arrived. Capitalism was institutionalised selfishness, an order maintained partly through a celebration of selfishness. Along with this celebration went a description of human nature consisting of two tangled threads— incompatible and both false. The one represented selfishness as fundamental to and pervasive throughout human nature. Contrariwise, the other represented selfishness as a trivial and accidental quality to be controlled by simple cajolery and cant.

Further, though Marxism presents itself as a liberating doctrine, it is opposed to bourgeois liberalism. The destruction of capitalism, the remaking of human nature, would require a revolutionary repression. (Notice that the bourgeois order and liberties were themselves brought into the world by violence: we don’t have here a difference in principle between liberalism and Marxism.)

Since Marx there have been those, amongst others, who believe (often unconsciously) that capitalism is a natural expression of human nature; and, amongst others, those who have conceived of a regenerate human nature to be achieved through social revolution.

The liberal program of the bourgeois philosophers was shot through with difficulty and contradiction. Take the establishment of the authority of reason. A noble ideal, and yet an *ideal*. Never fully achieved. In the end, there can be only one authority, namely authority.

For the ever-present possibility, the frequent fact of uncertainty and disagreement is of the essence of rationality. We are not, like ants, creatures of instinct. We are creatures adapted to dealing with novelty, to working out novel ways of doing so. Hence we get things wrong as well as right. And so we will often disagree, often need to persuade one another. Often persuasion will be impossible and often, too, over urgent practical matters. We cannot always agree to disagree. Decisions have to be made. So—as Hobbes saw too clearly for his own good—every society, however liberal, must provide for power, authority, the means of acting, reasonably or not, in the face of disagreement. The need for authority is part of the fact that we are rational animals.
This general contradiction will take its particular form within each particular social order.

The capitalist order characteristically demands escalating production, hence developing technology, hence an ever-growing science, hence, rationality, objectivity. I have discussed these relationships more fully elsewhere (1989). So capitalism has nurtured the ideal of objectivity as has no other mode of production throughout history and, in consequence, science has become, for us, the cornerstone of human life. Yet this has failed to resolve the antagonism between philosophy and power, reason and authority. The philosophic and the bourgeois mind\(^{10}\) may indeed make alliance, frequent but uneasy, and even in the one brain and breast. The results may often be fruitful. Nonetheless, the motives and objectives of the allied parties are entirely different and, in the long run, utterly opposed. It is only the philosopher for whom objectivity is an ideal, an absolute, for whom truth is important in itself and for its humane benefits. For the capitalist, objectivity is useful, when it is, only as a means to an end—namely her own economic advantage. Often enough, objectivity would frustrate that advantage. This presents bourgeois intellectuals with a choice to be made and remade throughout a lifetime. A choice clear enough conceptually, but typically confusing in day to day affairs. Shall we side with the philosophers or with the bourgeoisie, with reason or authority? In this context science has performed imperfectly, while the performance of professional philosophers has not always matched that of Bertrand Russell.

Part of this contradiction, in its early form, was familiar to Bacon (op.cit., I, v, 11):

Howbeit, I do not mean, when I speak of use and action, that end before mentioned of applying knowledge to lucre and profession; for I am not ignorant of how much that diverteth and interrupteth the prosecution and advancement of knowledge...
4. SOME TENDENCIES CONTRARY TO THOSE FOREMENTIONED

The Marxist rock ruffled the current of bourgeois thought. Some of the eddies, though, were internal to the stream and notably the Irrationalism of Rousseau and Nietzsche. Moreover, even within the rationalist, scientific tradition, we find epistemological doctrines that clash with the scientific world picture. The principles of Cartesian epistemology led smartly to a self-stultifying solipsism. So, less rapidly, did those of British Empiricism. The Kantian rescue operation was an over-equipped, expensive disaster.

Those tendentious claims demand of general readers more knowledge than I can expect of them. All you have to accept, though, is that, somewhere amongst themselves, the philosophers just mentioned made a mess of things. There are many contemporary philosophers who would disagree with some of my claims. But nobody could consistently disagree with them all. And that’s all I need for my point to be made.

There is plenty of excuse for these great and original thinkers, but little for modern authors who ignorantly repeat their epistemological errors, representing them as new scientific discovery. The academic psychologist Susan Blackmore (1991, 27) provides a recent example.

With clarity come insights which modern science is only gradually revealing in its particular way. The most obvious is the constructed nature of the world. Most of us assume that there is a real world out there and that we see it in some sense directly. Psychology reveals this to be an illusion—what we perceive is a mental construction.

That is John Locke—Locke on the way to Berkeley—on the way to Kant. Like Locke, Ms. Blackmore confuses the fact that we perceive by means of a mental representation with the falsehood that we don’t really and directly perceive such things as real tables and real chairs and real people—only our
own perceptions. That is like saying that a camera can never photograph a landscape—only a negative image; or that we can never sit upon chairs—only upon postures. Like Berkeley she concludes from this that there are no such things as real tables and chairs. For by this doctrine, we could know only the workings of our own mind. (What would follow is something that neither Berkeley nor Blackmore appreciates, namely, that we could have no basis for the belief that people in general can only perceive their own perceptions. We would know nothing of other people.) Like Kant she moves from the fact that we perceive by means of a constructed image to the falsehood that what we perceive is that very construct.

Such thinking is too common—especially amongst scientists enjoying a well-earned intellectual vacation on the shores of the wide, unfamiliar ocean of humane thought. Consider the following passage, breath-taking in its smug confusedness, from a recent book by Ornstein and Ehrlich (1989, 72-73).

The world seems to the ordinary observer to consist of discrete objects, cats and chocolate cakes, shoes and ceiling wax, even cabbages and kings. But think about it. How could a cat, or an image of a cat, get inside the brain? The “big” outside world doesn’t enter in directly.

One: Perceptual representations are dynamic neural processes\(^1\), neither cats nor still photos of cats. In 1992, we know very well how they get into the brain. Two: If we never perceived cats, as Ornstein and Ehrlich seem to think, then we could have no basis for the belief that we perceive cats imperfectly. That we do so perceive them (in the trivial sense that there is more about a cat than meets the human eye) is one of the few truths from which Ornstein and Ehrlich, as well as Blackmore, draw their bizarre conclusions.

Blackmore (ibid.) is able to be both Locke and Hume (and again Kant and indeed Nietzsche\(^2\)) in consecutive paragraphs.

Most of us, for example, assume that we are some kind of solid self—a real, acting, deciding, powerful entity which
goes on and on through an entire lifetime and perhaps beyond. Psychology is now revealing more and more of the constructed nature of the self. The self we value so much is a mental model we have developed through a lifetime and which perhaps has no persistence beyond its similarity (but definitely not identity) from one day to the next. (My emphasis.)

What is the principle of identity for each of our transitory selves? By what right does Blackmore talk of a temporal sequence of things resembling one another from day to day? To whom is she addressing her words? To me? Me yesterday when I read her article? Today? Tomorrow? And who is she? Who or what has developed this mental model through its lifetime? The absurdities in Blackmore’s passage are not merely near the surface. They poke through like compound fractures. And yet she seems to derive from them satisfaction rather than the pain they would cause any sensitive thinker.

In the real world which we all inhabit and perceive, selves are people. All of us possess constructed images of ourselves, partly correct, partly incorrect, and those images do influence the kind of people we are. But we are not images of ourselves. We are people. And, whatever else, people are physical bodies like tables and chairs. However unlike as well, people are like these familiar and perceptible objects in being tangible, audible, visible, taste-and-smellable. If you cannot hear me, for example, I shall simply speak up. And even if you can’t understand me, I shan’t attempt to shuffle the fleeting ideas in your momentary selves. Instead, I shall try to explain in lucid, audible, temporally extended speech—hoping that (without changing into someone to whom I have not so far been speaking) you will hear me out and remember tomorrow.
What has been the fate of the philosophers’ aspirations?

Do thoughts grow like feathers, the dead end of life?

asks the poet Auden (1953, 268). In spite of Auden’s belief that “poetry makes nothing happen” (65), the answer is “No”—the philosophers’ ideas have indeed been effective. But have they produced the New Earth?

Some opinion is favourable. Allan Bloom says (1987, 97) of the United States

Our story is the majestic and triumphant march of the principles of freedom and equality, giving meaning to all that we have done or are doing.

This utterance achieves both logical and historical absurdity.

If the principles of freedom and equality give meaning to all that all of us do, then they give meaning to nothing that any of us do. All would be free and equal with natural ease. There would be no need, no grip, for those principles. They are principles that involve standards, that function in conscious struggle. The Civil War was certainly, amongst other things, a struggle for liberty. It derived that significance from what Walt Whitman termed, in the relative innocence of those days before Hitler and Stalin, “the foulest crime in history known in any land or age” (1943, 283). Similarly, the more recent Civil Rights Movement could have occurred only in the context of white supremacism.²

The historical nonsensicality is equally obvious wherever we look—provided only that we can free ourselves from the bourgeois perspective. Let’s take an Indian view. Speaking of the 1870s, Young Joseph, otherwise Heinmot Tooyalaket, of the Nez Percés says (Brown, Dee, 1975, 254)

The white men were many and we could not hold our own with them. We were like deer. They were like grizzly bears. We
had a small country. Their country was large. We were contented to let things remain as the Great Spirit made them. They were not and would change rivers and mountains if they did not suit them.

Recalling the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890 (so late!), Black Elk of the Oglala Sioux says (Brown, Dee, op. cit., 353)

I did not know then how much was ended. When I look back now from this high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young. And I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud, and was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream ... the nation's hoop is broken and scattered. There is no centre any longer, and the sacred tree is dead.

The expansion of Europe, and with it capitalism, has brought disaster worldwide upon indigenous peoples and devastation upon continents.

Witness Australia. The devastation of the continent is neatly illustrated by the following two companion facts. The Australian Federal Government plans to plant one billion trees throughout the continent during the current decade. A recent CSIRO estimate of the number of new trees needed to halt the progressive degradation of the Murray-Darling Basin alone produces the figure twelve billion!

The destruction of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia is conveniently summarised with deplorable inhumanity, but admirable candour by J. E. Liddle (1955, 99-100).

Many wild nigs were hunted down,
And others left, cleared right away
Into the bush; soon all were gone;
Few there are seen unto this day.

Since Liddle's time, white Australians have grown perhaps more humane, but certainly less candid. The aboriginal, Jack Davis, however, has no tendency towards mealy-mouthedness (Davis, 1991, 2).
Father was taken away from his tribal mother at an early age and given to a family called Davis. He worked as a stockman from the age of eight. He remembers holding his boss' horse outside the Roebourne police station while his boss went to obtain a permit which gave him permission to shoot troublesome blacks on his property. The cost of the permit was one shilling.

For all its productive power, capitalism has failed till now, as it will fail hereafter, to solve the problems of war, poverty, inequality, oppression... Liberal democracy, but equally certainly fascism, is a natural product of capitalism, with each condition tending constantly toward the other. This instability expresses, amongst other things, that contradiction concerning objectivity and intellectual freedom observed earlier near the heart of capitalism.

This may be news to some, living fortunately amongst our personal computers and air conditioners in that quarter of the world's population which consumes three quarters of its primary energy (United Nations World commission on the Environment and Development, 1987, 169) and unable to raise their imagination beyond the horizon of a smug suburbia.

Iris Murdoch's character Bradley Pearson, for whom the world is "a place of horror", has news for them (1973, 298-299).

This is the planet ... where people regularly and automatically and almost without comment die like flies from floods and famine and disease, where people fight each other with hideous weapons to whose effects even nightmares cannot do justice, where men terrify and torture each other and spend whole lifetimes telling lies out of fear.

Those who are cosily safe from Bradley Pearson's madness are dangerously insane.

Even the prosperous, industrial, liberal democracies have failed to solve these basic problems. They have failed within themselves, and externally they have been amongst the most rapacious oppressors of the colonial and neo-colonial world. Even intellectual liberty has failed to be a totally liberating force. Confronting bourgeois ideology, in the face of
bourgeois authority, it has failed to deliver a general objectivity, a determination to think and act well and effectively about the whole of life. It has tended towards a purchased and partial objectivity, a servile scientism. A remark made in this city illustrates the failure: “I’m an ecologist, not a breast-beating conservationist”. This tendency can be expected to worsen as the concept of private intellectual property gains ground, as universities get tied tighter and tighter to the tail of market forces and become increasingly enslaved by private funding.

A yet darker prospect opens before us: that the large capitalist enterprise should eventually find itself able to dispense entirely with academic research. From that time on the concept of objectivity will be a mere ideological bauble, beads for the natives. The bourgeois philosopher will have joined the Sioux Nation and the Nez Percés on the shrinking reservation.

Marxism has proved no match for bourgeois power. Far from transforming human nature, the socialist state (in person of the party bureaucrat) has inherited, and often intensified, the old bourgeois vices. Revolutionary repression has become tyranny, intellectual freedoms being suppressed along with others. Consequently, the new society has deprived itself of the objectivity necessary to solve even the most elementary problems of production. To talk the jargon, the productive forces have been hung about with new and heavier fetters. Hence the resurgence of capitalism in Eastern Europe.
Bad enough. But, as we all know, much worse.

For all that non-human nature might seem more obdurate than human nature, our manipulation of the former has been strikingly more successful than our efforts to reconstitute ourselves. This combination of success and failure now brings us to the edge of extinction.

I shall assume that you believe with me that the whole planet is in crisis; that unless we correct our behaviour, human beings are unlikely to survive for much longer, while human civilisation is almost certain to perish. I have argued for this position elsewhere (1991). In doing so I employed that Principle of Rational Action mentioned above, claiming that it requires us to assume that extinction is hard upon us, avoidable only by strong aversive measures. I am always embarrassed when I have to argue for this: in the present state of human knowledge, to do so is to insult the intelligence and integrity of one’s audience. And I shan’t do that on this occasion.

Yet such argument is widely needed. Consider one J. R. Spradley (1991, 8), U.S. delegate to a conference on the Greenhouse effect and global warming addressing the delegates from Bangladesh.

This is not a disaster, it is merely a change. The area won’t have disappeared: it will just be underwater. Where you now have cows you will have fish.

Consider the following local editorial opinion (The Advertiser, 1991a).

Australians are concerned about the environment; but we have other concerns too. We expect more from politicians than obsessions on a single issue such as the environment to the exclusion of all other concerns.

On the assumption of competence, the first of these editorial statements is meant to imply that we are sufficiently concerned. That is an irresponsible
falsehood. The rest is literally true, but conscientiously couched in language designed to conceal that there is no other single issue such as the environment. Once we have eaten the bark off the planet, an enterprise currently well advanced, and one championed by the proprietor of *The Advertiser*, then, quite simply, there will be no other issues.

I assume also that you also agree with me that our extinction would be a bad thing. Again this position is not universally held. For Bob Hawke, say, extinction would carry the welcome consequence that, by the year 2090, no Australian child will live in poverty.

Some other people talk as though the fact that we are bringing about our own extinction implies that we have a moral obligation to do so. We have been so unkind to the planet Gaia that she will have to get rid of us to defend herself and her own. To place great importance on human survival is mere speciesism. Such people assume the high moral ground as of right. In reality, their views are both trivially confused and pernicious. Extinction isn’t an abstraction. It would be the death and slow dying, not of the abstract Platonic form *Humankind*, but of billions of concrete, sensate, intelligent human beings, a process to be consciously endured. The last to go would have to witness, like Black Elk, the breaking of the hoop and the dying of the sacred tree. To contemplate that process with indifference, to blind oneself to its nature, even with an accompanying consciousness of virtue, is less to occupy the high ground than to wallow self-indulgently in a moral slough.

Worse yet. The human species will not be cleanly removed from a planet left otherwise unchanged, as might be a lobster from a restaurant tank. To begin with, the removal of a major predator from the globe would have large consequences at present unforeseeable. And even worse humankind will perish, if it does, because we have perturbed the whole biosphere, exterminating and endangering those species upon whose well-being our own depends. That is the likely price of our self-congratulatory virtue. Objectively, the supposedly objective position is profoundly speciesist, buying as it does a modicum of subjective human self-
satisfaction at the peril of non-human populations.

And so the position stands revealed as even more wicked than that attributed to the U.S. general quoted (Cohen, David, 1991) as being angry at being misquoted.

He never said that the end of life on the planet was acceptable. He was making the obvious point that 500 million dead was an acceptable level of casualties.
7. SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Too often these matters are discussed as though objectives can be achieved independently of social organisation. Not so starry-eyed is Senator Walsh who reportedly claimed in April 1991 that most environmentalists had a hidden agenda which included the destruction of industrial capitalism (Viscovich, Mary, & Milne, Chris, 1991).

Well, he flattered us beyond our worth. Yet, commendably, Senator Walsh seems to see, what many environmentalists do not, that the overthrow of the capitalist system is necessary for halting the progressive degradation of the planet. Where he goes wrong is that he seems to think that the environment is a bit of a luxury. "The environment" comprises our conditions of life. For me, at any rate, the agenda is not hidden. The destruction of capitalism is a necessary condition for human survival—as Senator Walsh half sees. (A necessary, not a sufficient condition.)

I shan't argue for that view here—since you don't have to share it with me for us to collaborate. Obviously (I hope obviously) the operation of capitalist enterprises progressively degrades the planet and this has to be halted. Halting it will surely halt the endless growth of human economies. Obviously too, capitalism is institutionalised selfishness. Capitalist ideology systematically represents selfishness and other undesirable human qualities as primary and natural while at the same time promoting them into virtues. The corruption of human nature by bourgeois ideology has to be stopped.

I believe that achieving these things and with them a sustainable global economy would entail the destruction of capitalism. You may believe otherwise and good luck to you. You are only likely to prove yourself right, though, only going to struggle with sufficient determination, if you are prepared to be proved wrong, if you put the preservation of the environment before the preservation of capitalism. In any case, whoever proves right, the achievement of our objectives will amount to a social
revolution more profound than any historical change to date.

Another reason why I am not going to argue this point with you is that at present neither I nor anyone else knows how to get rid of capitalism. Not only has capitalism proved unable to produce the results promised for it, but the methods of classical Marxism have proved inadequate to replace capitalism with an acceptable alternative. They have produced social orders, the worst of which rival the worst produced by capitalism.

Moreover, even successful, Marxism would have been ill-equipped to halt environmental degradation. For historically Marxism has envisaged increased production as the solution to major social problems. In this respect Marxism is itself a species of bourgeois ideology.

These problems are not confined to Marxism. They arise for any movement seeking to establish a tolerable social order. That isn't going to be achieved without repression. Standardly, peaceful revolution that looks like succeeding will be opposed with whatever counter-revolutionary force can be mounted. Moreover, successful revolution standardly has to deal with both internal subversion and hostility from without. The fundamental problem for the next kind of revolution will be to find, for the first time, ways of defeating that original force and, subsequently, those internal and external dangers, with a revolutionary repression; and defeating them while yet establishing and preserving freedoms even more extensive than those of the most liberal capitalist democracies. Solving this problem will include preventing those who exercise the repression from constituting themselves as a new exploiting class.

Elsewhere (1991, 212) I have called this problem, this set of problems, the fundamental political paradox of the age. I don't know how to solve it and neither do you. This shouldn't surprise us, since Lenin couldn't solve it either. Don't say it can't be solved, though, because the solution to this fundamental paradox is a necessary condition for human survival.

And don't agree with me lightly. Conservative people can take easy comfort in the claim that we don't yet know how to destroy capitalism,
equating this with a dolled-up acquiescence in the *status quo*. Understand me. On this matter I am still unreconstructedly with Marx and Engels (1848 but any edition) who almost one hundred and fifty years ago addressed the bourgeoisie thus:

... you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend to do.

Understand also that right now there is plenty we can do—not enough, but plenty we can do to ensure that capitalism shall not destroy *us*.
8. IDEOLOGY 1: GENERAL

I have also argued elsewhere (1991) that the Principle of Rational Action requires us to assume as well, what we don't know for certain, not only that successful social revolution is possible, but also that we can indeed and will indeed find ways of resolving the ecological crisis and of preserving the human species.

First mooted by the bourgeois philosophers, transformed by the disappointment of great hopes, now promulgated as scientific truth and formidably opposed to this enterprise, stands the bourgeois view of human nature. This view would imply that, by our very being, we are too aggressive, say, or too selfish, too greedy, to save ourselves. Even too stupid or too irrational—for it has been the rationalist tradition that has disappointed us.¹

These claims are not known to be false. But neither are they known to be true. Nonetheless, our agnosticism ought not to paralyse the will. Assuming these claims to be true is the surest way of making them true, the surest path to extinction. Assuming them to be false is the best first step towards making them false. Hence, by the Principle of Rational Action, the rational practical assumption is that these claims are indeed false.

That none of these claims about human nature is known to be true is a large claim itself and not to be established here. I can render it plausible—though not here as thoroughly as by S. A. Barnett (1988). I select a couple of positions and examine their support. I shall ask you to consider for yourselves, perhaps after reading Barnett, whether similar positions are not just as lamentably supported.

Apart from the utterances of John Keats, my cases are drawn from popularisations of science—at least in the sense that they come from documents addressed to general audiences. This is because I want to indicate how pervasive are the views I challenge. It might be thought that I have
carefully selected straw men. But not so. There may be more sophisticated thinking, along the same lines, than the work I criticise. But I believe that, for all the sophistication, this thinking is not better, not clearer, more logical, more cogent. It is rather more evasive and more cannily obscure, more specious. And its conclusions are equally absurd. For inductive support for this claim see not only Barnett (1988) but also Stove (1982).
9. IDEOLOGY 2: SELFISHNESS

The following claim has recently been advanced by Michael Archer (1989).

One of Darwin's most insightful notions was that of the struggle for existence. Psychologists, biologists and geneticists alike have come to understand that every fibre of our being is selfish, every act committed in self-interest and every thought reducible to the notion of the need to survive at whatever cost to the rest of the world.¹

I bet that Professor Archer has never thought this matter through in concrete terms, has never considered any particular person in the light of his claims. Let us consider him. He would probably wish us to take him seriously. That would make him, on his own testimony, selfish throughout: not to be trusted; not to be believed without corroboration. If Professor Archer were indeed what he claims, as I am sure he is not, then it would be irrational of him to tell us so.² And even more irrational if he is not what he claims.


Love and knowledge, so far as they were possible, led upward toward the heavens. But always pity brought me back to earth. Echoes of cries of pain reverberate in my heart. Children in famine, victims tortured by oppressors, helpless old people a hated burden to their sons, and the whole world of loneliness, poverty and pain make a mockery of what human life should be. I long to alleviate the evil, but I cannot, and I too suffer.

If Archer is right, then the fate of others would have been a matter of indifference to Russell—the unbearable pity he avows perhaps just an illusion, perhaps hypocritical. The sacrifices throughout his life, seemingly to relieve suffering, were really undertaken out of some quite different and self-interested motive. As an admirer of Russell since May 1944—I can't give you the day—I find this obvious consequence of Archer's position both ludicrous and offensive.
And the more ludicrous for the distortion of evolutionary theory upon which it relies. Those characteristics will tend to be perpetuated which, on the one hand, are hereditable in some measure and, on the other, improve the individual’s chance of leaving progeny. And, since altruism is a common human characteristic, a capacity for altruism probably satisfied those two conditions during the early evolution of *Homo sapiens*. Absolute selfishness, as described by Archer, is manifestly not a characteristic that has received or could receive favourable selection amongst human populations. To start with, humankind is a parenting species. Those of us who are solely concerned to survive at whatever cost to whatever, imperil their own progeny. The determination to produce and sustain progeny entails a measure of unselfishness. And in any case, as we know and shall shortly remind ourselves again, not even this determination is absolute.

Clearly if we had *no* regard for our own interest, then individually we would not survive for a single day and our species would vanish overnight. Clearly too, a regard for one’s own interest does not constitute selfishness and regard for the interest of others is a pervasive feature of human life. I have elaborated on this matter elsewhere (1991). This is not to say that people are not often enough uncooperative, often enough selfish. But while such qualities are common, they are not of the very essence of society. Cooperativeness and altruism are—*of the very essence*. Those of us who have encountered utter selfishness will know what a socially disabling affliction that can be. (Don’t fall into the silly, slipshod error of saying that this means that altruism is really selfishness after all.) Even the most intensely competitive and uncooperative human activity, warfare, demands for its prosecution the most intense cooperation and altruism.

This last fact is often remarked. Consider C. R. Jury on the dead of World War One (1939, 141).

**Epitaph**

You who shall come, exalt these childless dead  
To be your fathers, from whose life you are bred.  
The dead beget you now: for now they give  
Their hope of sons that you their sons may live.
Jury himself served on the Western Front, carrying away a wound unhealed for the rest of his life. To my knowledge, he fought believing that he was serving human civilisation, and fought reconciled to death in that service. Are we to say, on the wisdom of Michael Archer, with his silly howler about the theory of evolution, that Jury and a multitude like him, were simply wrong about their own motives? Or that they just lied about them? In fact the boot is on my foot rather than Archer’s: for a man like Jury, or for that matter my own father, I can imagine no merely selfish motive strong enough, misguided enough, to have enlisted him into the horrors of Flanders.

For good measure, A. E. Housman (1953, 144):

Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries

These in the days when heaven was falling,
   The days when earth’s foundations fled,
Followed their mercenary calling
   And took their wages and are dead.
Their shoulders held the sky suspended;
   They stood and earth’s foundations stay;
What God abandoned, these defended,
   And saved the sum of things for pay.

This is, along with much else, an eloquent, ironical comment on the smart endemic cynicism of such people as Archer.

It is not to the point that the view of the war taken by Jury and Housman (and by many on both sides who fell in it) was incorrect. Not to the point either that people fight for other reasons. Neither is it to the point that evolutionary theory may demand an explanation of the efficacy of altruism. For, first, this is now easy to provide in outline. And, second, altruism, like selfishness, is such a visible phenomenon that a judicious person would have to challenge any theory which might purport to ban it from the universe. The motives offered us by the poets are intelligible and, if they are intelligible, then they are real. They are real because they are commonplace and obvious. Once we see that, then altruism reappears where it has always been—throughout human life.
It is not to the point either that such motives are often exploited, nor that they are often dissembled. Bluntly, if they were not real phenomena then, as I have argued elsewhere (1991), they could be neither exploited nor dissembled.

Archer doesn’t rely solely on theory. He offers empirical evidence too. Referring to two children apparently raised by wolves in India and discovered in 1920, he says (ibid.)

The amoral, ‘inhuman’ nature of these ‘wolf-children’ may have been a rare opportunity to look into a mirror normally visible only in our darkest, deepest dreams. The ‘civilised’, human attributes we seem to require for survival in crowded communities are almost certainly a veneer imposed by cultural conditioning on an amoral primate brain, one with potential for considerable alternative programming. The raw unadorned human, one freed of the ‘normal’ conditioning, is probably very close to the basic, aggressive, defiant animal that raced across Rev. Singh’s moonlit yard.

The confusions in this passage are truly astonishing.

First, with the exception of neonates, the “raw unadorned” (that is, utterly unsocialised) human being is at best a hopeless imbecile. Genetically, we do not have a determinate nature on which other natures are imposed as mere veneers. Genetically, we are the possibility of human beings—of creatures socialised in one way or another.

Second, wolf-children, having been socialised by wolves, are not raw and unadorned. In a lucid moment, Archer is aware of this.

... for all practical purposes by the time they were found they had become wolves in mind and behaviour.

Third, amorality is not the same thing as selfishness. Affection is a source of morality. Yet amorality is compatible with affection which frequently generates behaviour in the interests of others. Wolves are doubtless amoral, yet certainly affectionate. Again Archer seems capable of seeing this.

... Kamala and Amala had had a loving wolf for a tutor.
In fact, on the supposition that the children had indeed been raised by wolves, it would seem that not quite *every* fibre of *every* being is selfish.

On this last matter, affection, alas for Michael Archer, there is a more recent account of a wolf-child which makes mince-meat of his dogmas. Writing in 1978, Bruce Chatwin tells of his visit to the Mother Teresa Mission to see another wolf boy, Shamdev. He was accompanied by the man who claimed to have discovered the boy and who had subsequently cared for him.

Consider (Chatwin, Bruce, 1990):

> When the sisters brought in the boy, he stood tottering in the doorway, screwing up his eyes to see who it was. Then, recognising his old friend, he jumped into the air, flung himself around his neck, and grinned. (237)

> ... (The discoverer) asked meekly if he could come again. He seemed very upset when it was time to say goodbye. So was Shamdev and they hugged one another. (238)

It would seem that Shamdev, wolf though he were, was nonetheless capable of what the human psychopath is not, what the novelist calls (Murdoch, Iris, 1966, 238)

> that free impetuous movement toward another, that human gesture which makes each of us most wholly himself.

There is yet another misfortune for Archer. He relies for all his information on a single book by Charles Maclean (1977) published more than fifty years after the events described by the Rev. Singh. Maclean in turn relies on Singh's diary, the original lost by the time of his investigation, but presented in Singh J. A. L. & Zingg, Robert M. (1942).

Well, *First*: For the matter of affection again, the Singh-Maclean account itself conflicts with Archer’s dogmas. It is true that in the early years of her captivity, the elder girl, Kamala, treated her captors mostly with indifference and sometimes with hostility. It is not true, however, that she lacked affection.
On occasion, seeing (the wolf girls') regard for the pet animals of the orphanage and even more their affection for each other, which became evident in any attempt to separate them and in the touching way they would cling together when frightened, (Singh) wondered whether he had done the right thing in bringing them back from the forest (124).

Kamala was devastated by grief at the death of the younger girl, Amala (135-139). She was eventually restored largely by contact with kid goats and particularly by her friendship with a hyena cub (137-139).

... after the usual ceremony of mouth-licking, pawing and sniffing, they would follow each other about all day.

Quite generally except for Amala, during those early years, Kamala preferred the company of other animals to that of the more alien human beings. Objects of her affection included the wolf cubs with whom the two girls had been captured, dogs and puppies, a cat, chickens (79, 91, 94, 122, 138).

And Second: Maclean's treatment of Singh's account is, to put it mildly, judicious. He speaks of Singh's "amateur and sometimes fanciful observations" (81), of the "tendency to exaggerate" "common to all his writings" (82). Even the question of the origin of the children is not conclusively settled—though the balance of probabilities is that they were discovered in a wolf-den. At one stage, Maclean says that he was inclined to believe that the Singh diary was "at least partly a work of the imagination" (293), that he "had to come to terms with the idea that Singh was a liar" (294). Further investigation led him to accept "the Reverend Singh's story more or less as fact" (293). In the end, though, he concludes (302)

I am inclined to believe, and have written this book in the belief that the Reverend Singh's diary account of what happened in the forest is true, though perhaps not the whole truth.

An author equally punctilious with Charles Maclean would have been more cautious in using his work radically to rewrite human nature than has been Professor Archer.
10. IDEOLOGY 3: INTELLIGENCE AND RATIONALITY

There has always been a strong tendency opposed to rationalist optimism. There are plenty of reasons to worry about human intelligence and rationality.

* In Australia, over seventy-five percent of people surveyed said that watching television was their number one recreation and entertainment activity (Turrell, David, 1991, 5; no source given).

* A quarter of all U.S. college graduates hold to the belief that we have been separately created by God (Diamond, Jared, 1991, 1).

And what about the proponents of Adelaide's future Multifunction Polis?

By reclaiming the swampland at the mouth of the Port River the site itself is meant to be an example of urban development for the 21st Century (Anderson, Ian, 1991, 8).

One fears that it will indeed be such an example. More swamps destroyed and yet more urban Canutes with their feet in the rising ocean? (What prior possession makes this reclamation, by the way?)

Yet discouraging though these facts may be, horrendous as is the state of the world, we do not know that human beings lack the competence to redeem themselves.

1. Intelligence

I shall look briefly at what seems on the face of it to be one attempt to establish that we do. It is an attack on the rationalistic scientific program from within the scientific camp.

Recently two Australian scholars have discovered and commented on some remarkable homologies between the brains of rats and those of human beings (Paxinos, 1992 and appropriate references therein). One of these scholars concludes, in a challenging paper, that the human brain is the wrong “size”—too “big” and too “small” (Paxinos, 1992). We are not
intelligent enough to solve the problems we generate.

It can be fairly rigorously demonstrated that every brain is too "small" to solve all the problems that it is "big" enough to generate. This is not an empirical matter, as Professor Paxinos seems to think, but an easy consequence of a simple theorem known as the Map Paradox.

Paxinos does make an empirical claim, namely that we are incapable of resolving the current ecological crisis. This conclusion is described as "inescapable", yet the method of reaching it is grossly wrong-headed.

For suppose that the rat brain and the human brain were indistinguishable? Nothing would follow concerning human intelligence. Human beings are known to be intelligent because they behave intelligently, known to be transcendentally more intelligent than rats again because of behaviour. No amount of neurological investigation is going to alter that. Certainly we don't know that we are clever enough to evade our looming extinction. We will never find that out by comparing the human and the murid brain. You might as well go back to rummaging through the entrails of sacrificial animals. We shall only evade extinction by setting about evading it. That we shall never do if we are not bright enough to see through rotten argument claiming to establish our invincible stupidity.

Well, it might be thought that my presentation of Paxinos' position is unfairly oversimplified and that even to this oversimplification my reply is too simple-minded.

For first, Paxinos remarks clearly "that pursuing (the objective of a sustainable society) should be considered essential given what is at stake". It might appear then that his position is not all that different from my own, namely, that though we do not know that we are capable of surviving, the Principle of Rational Action requires us to set about ensuring that we do survive.

But not so. In the whole of Professor Paxinos' paper, only one brief paragraph—that containing the above remark—offers any suggestion that there might be some possibility of our surviving. Moreover, even this suggestion occurs in the following dispiriting form.
I think that while the chances of succeeding to construct a sustainable society are negligible, pursuing them should be considered essential given what is at stake. (My emphasis.)

To the extent that those chances are thought negligible, they will be neglected in favour of making hay while the sun shines—and rationally so neglected.

Professor Paxinos’ paper is a salutary attack upon human hubris. “Not since Narcissus fell in love with the reflection of his own face has there been as much adoration of a bodily organ as there is now of the brain.” But he goes far beyond this. The whole of Paxinos’ argumentation is directed towards establishing that the chances are indeed negligible, towards confirming his “inescapable” conclusion that we are caught in “an evolutionary vice”.

Second, it might be said, that if, per impossibile, our brains were to prove identical to those of rats, then this would show that rats and human beings were of corresponding intelligence. After all, the racists were wrong about the intelligence of materially primitive peoples such as the Australian aboriginals. It required just as much intelligence to live the life of a tribal Australian before white settlement as it did to live that of an English gentleman. For anyone of open mind, a simple experiment should be convincing. Just sit down on an old aboriginal campsite in the Strzelecki Desert, surrounded only by those artefacts to be found there, and work out where your next feed is coming from. The result ought to be an enormous respect, even reverence, for the people who could make a living in that area so equipped. But if that isn’t convincing, then the fact there there are no significant differences between the European and the Aboriginal brain should clinch the matter.

True enough. But that clincher doesn’t alter the fact that the concept of intelligence is fundamentally a behavioural one. Intelligence is what manifests itself in intelligent behaviour. It is only because we can recognise such behaviour and can produce a rough ranking according to degrees of intelligence that we have been able to arrive at the knowledge that
the brain is the bearer of intelligence.

Now suppose that there were creatures whose behaviour was comparable to that of rats. We should be right to regard them as less intelligent than human beings. Now suppose also that we were to discover that their brains were identical with ours. We would be wrong to conclude that they really were as intelligent as us or that we really were as dim as them. Instead, we should have to rethink the relation between brain and brightness. We might even find ourselves driven to what, in our actual world, is a most implausible position, namely some sort of non-materialist theory of mind.

Bearing this in mind and bearing in mind that rats are very different from ourselves, how do we square the homologies between their brains and ours with a common-sense materialism (a position that I share with Professor Paxinos)? Well, easily. Homology is an evolutionary relationship and no guide to function. Swim-bladder and terrestrial lung, for example, are homologous—as are bird's wing and human arm. The materialist position doesn't, therefore, constrain us to acknowledge the homologies as abolishing the visible behavioural differences. Not even to down-playing them. In so far as it might seem so to constrain us, the materialist position would itself come under threat. Which God forbid.

I repeat then, with undiminished confidence, that here we have just one more case of a doctrine not known to be true yet tending nonetheless to be self-confirming. The argument for it is so bad, that our very acceptance of it would confirm the conclusion—namely, that we aren't clever enough to save ourselves.

2. Rationality

Finally, I shall look briefly at Irrationalism. (You may, if you care to notice such things, observe that Irrationalism vacillates sometimes between being a normative and an empirical doctrine, sometimes between the logical and the empirical. And if you don't care, no harm.) This is not another
doctrine claiming support from empirical science. It is explicitly anti-scientific. It is a dangerous doctrine indeed and especially so at the present time. We are not going to evade our peril without careful thought. Not without setting our philosophy in order, without rethinking and refeeling our own nature and our relation to the rest of the world. Nor without strenuous and disinterested scientific enquiry yielding a sensitive technology.

Someone who thought differently was John Keats. Anticipating Nietszche, echoing Rousseau, he cried (1939, 212):

... Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture, she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy would clip an angel’s wings
... etc.4

Normative enough, it would seem. To understand the world aright is somehow to degrade it—Descartes and Newton were somehow wicked to have produced an objective account of the rainbow.

In 1817 Keats wrote to Benjamin Bailey (1948, 67)

I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the heart’s affections and the truth of the Imagination—What imagination seizes as beauty must be truth—whether it existed before or not.

This last remark embodies an epistemology bordering on the insane. (You’ll recognise “beauty is truth”, together with “truth beauty” extolled for its profundity by generations of bemused chalkies.) Perhaps this doctrine is meant to be a logical one—or perhaps the beast simply defies taxonomy.

In the same letter Keats avers—though with some misgivings5 (68)

... I have never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for truth by consequitive reasoning...

This apparently empirical position would permit him to reject whatever
doesn't take his fancy.

Well, and why not? Surely novelists, say, and even poets, can teach us things not easily learnt from scientists—or even philosophers. Shakespeare understands the human heart at least as well as Freud; the twenty-two year old Carson McCullers, better than B. F. Skinner.

Perhaps Coleridge is right (1962, 10), as against Keats, that

\[
A \text{ poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to the works of science, by proposing for its } \text{immediate} \text{ object pleasure not truth...}
\]

For my part, I doubt it. Be that as it may, Coleridge himself is aware that there is more to the matter (9).

...and though truth, either moral or intellectual, ought to be the \textit{ultimate} end, yet this will distinguish the character of the author, not the class to which the work belongs.

I believe that Iris Murdoch's Bradley Pearson, though vague, is nearer the mark (1973, 329) than either Coleridge or Keats.

How little in fact any human being understands about anything the practice of the arts soon teaches us. An inch away from the world one is accustomed to there are other worlds in which one is a complete stranger. Nature normally heals with oblivious forgetfulness those who are rudely hustled from one world into another. But if after reflection and with deliberation one attempts to create bridges and to open vistas one soon finds out how puny is one's power to describe or to connect. Art is a kind of artificial memory and the pain which attends all serious art is a sense of that factitiousness.

I can't offer you a philosophy of art. That would be too hard a job for a mere philosopher. I wouldn't go all the way with R. K. Narayan (1985, vii) for whom all theories of writing are bogus: I do know that the usefulness of literature depends largely on the large fact that intuition is often the better road to truth.
This ought not to surprise us. That large fact concerning reason is associated with another concerning human knowledge. This latter fact is well illustrated by the following passage (Sacks, Oliver, 1991, xxvii).

So when I came to Mount Carmel, I did not just encounter 'eighty cases of post-encephalic disease', but eighty individuals, whose inner lives and total being was (to a considerable extent) known to the staff, known in the vivid concrete knowing of relationship, not the pallid abstract knowing of medical knowledge.

Hence it would be a mistake to dismiss the irrationalists with the contumely they deserve. For their basic confusion is shared with most rationalists. Both sides tend to identify rationality with mere ratiocination, the latter being (hopefully) rational discourse—Keats' consecutive reasoning.

On the rationalist side this leads to an arid, pretentious intellectualism, violating Aristotle's precept that we must not seek to impose upon a discipline greater rigour than it can bear. Along with this goes an inability to be agnostic, a failure to recognise how little we shall ever know. Often enough this alternates with a wholesale scepticism and often enough in the same person. The identification provides also a ready-made, automatic condemnation of activism as, by definition, irrational.

On the irrationalist side, the identification tends towards a wholesale rejection of rationality—and especially to a rejection of ratiocination. Systematic critique (with the exception of one's own, of course) receives automatic condemnation as "totalising narrative", as "rationalistic discourse", as "male logic", as "bourgeois objectivity"... And here too we encounter an easy dogmatism, an inability to be agnostic—often again alternating with a self-destructive scepticism. And as for activism, action tends to be valued to the extent that it is unjustifiable and according to the passion which informs it.

Certainly ratiocination doesn't constitute rationality—not even where the reasoning involved is correct. For ratiocination, too, is action and,
hence like any other action, subject to assessment as to its own reasonableness. Clearly, there are times when it is irrational to engage in explicit verbal reasoning, even with oneself. (Driving a car, to take a trivial example.) Supposing that the rationality of a performance resides in the discourse that monitors it is stark ergomania. Gilbert Ryle (1949, 25-60 and especially 30) called it more tolerantly the intellectualist legend. He pointed out that it leads to a vicious infinite regress (which I shan’t develop here). This applies to intellectual tasks amongst others. So some rational actions, and amongst them some intellectual performances, will be executed without being explicitly monitored by rational discourse—and will be nonetheless rational for it. Nothing prevents us, then, from acknowledging that some tasks, even intellectual tasks, may be better performed intuitively.

(If you’re not following this consecutive reasoning at the moment, again don’t worry. The important thing is to believe what I say. Let your imagination seize it as beauty!)

Clearly, none of this allows the rejection of consecutive reasoning. As remarked earlier, we often disagree and need to persuade one another. The main (rational) way to resolve disagreement is to start from positions which all parties accept and proceed by means of steps that again all parties accept. (A kind of socialised version of Descartes’ method.) Failing that, the best we can hope for is an agreement to disagree. And that isn’t good enough for the general maintenance of society.

And here you should be able to follow. — Consider especially a claim that, in this area or that, intuition, backing hunches, following one’s nose, is more likely to work than systematic reasoning, ratiocination. How, if it were challenged, would this be established except by systematic reasoning?

This is not a mere academic matter. Keats is alive and well in Adelaide and, I urge upon you, at least as dangerous as Hitler. On the day of my drafting this paragraph a colleague maintained that systematic reasoning always yields absurd conclusions. Fortunately, the unanswerable rejoinder is simply—“Prove it!”.
11. CONCLUSION: STANDARDS IN HUMAN LIFE

We see now the urgent practical importance of philosophy. Unless enough of us get our philosophy right enough and quickly enough, we are all dead. Socrates said that the unexamined life is not worth living (Plato, 38A). That's false and you can ask any dog out for a walk. But for us, now, the unexamined life is no longer an option. (It never really was.) For us, henceforth, the examined life is the only life on offer.

Finally, I hope that I haven't given you the impression that we are likely to achieve a human life without aggression, selfishness, greed, stupidity, irrationality... That would not be human life. We live by standards, moral, aesthetic and intellectual. This is not a casual, incidental matter. Standards are needed because they are needed, because we frequently fall short of them. That is what it is to be moral, rational animals. Show me reason, I'll show you unreason. The saint and the sinner are shackled together by their common humanity. Wisdom and folly are Siamese twins. Imagine a human life without praise and commendation, without sense of achievement. That would be the cost of life without ugliness, wickedness, foolishness and stupidity. The Christian heaven is possible only to lobotomised automata, dehumanised social insects. Angels are merely souped-up flying ants.

The enterprise before us is not to achieve heaven on earth. Yet it would be daft indeed to let the unattainability of heaven condemn us to our present hell. The question is not whether we can eliminate our vices. The question is whether our virtues will allow us to survive by carrying us into a better world. Not a question to be answered by speculation about human psychology. To be answered, not by canvassing the possibilities, but by setting about what is necessary. It is a question demanding action. If we want to know whether we are equipped to survive, the best way of finding out is to make sure that we do.

* * * *
APPENDIX 1

The word "bourgeois" bears a number of senses, only some of which are relevant to this paper.

Let me say first what it doesn't mean here. It doesn't mean sober-sided, mean-minded, cold-hearted, philistine, self-righteous, licentious-and-yet-strict-with-one's-own-daughters.

The relevant senses are mainly these.—

First, as indicating a mode of production, a certain method of exploitation, namely, the appropriation of surplus value by control of capital. You will remember that surplus value is the difference between the value expended in the production process, including that of the labour power employed as well as that of plant worn out and of raw material used—the difference between the value of what is expended and that of the final product. Surplus value is not identical with profit, though it includes profit.

Second, as indicating a social class, the bourgeoisie, the capitalists, those who control the appropriation of surplus value. Notice that class in this usage is defined in relation to a mode of exploitation.

Third, as indicating a certain kind of society, that in which the bourgeois mode of production predominates, in which the bourgeoisie is the most powerful class.

Fourth, as indicating the historical period (era) during which the bourgeois mode of production came and has continued to predominate. During this same era, the bourgeoisie became the most powerful social class. This era had certainly begun by the Sixteenth Century. By the Nineteenth Century, the bourgeoisie was well confirmed in power, throughout the "advanced" countries.

Fifth, as indicating a system of ideas characteristic of the bourgeois era and favourable to the bourgeois mode of production. Such a system is also called bourgeois ideology. Not every feature of bourgeois ideology is bad.
In particular, the ideal of objectivity is a good thing (*pace* the benighted subjectivist, the becalmed relativist).

For example, in the passage (Section 3) maintaining that the idea of change was the invention of the bourgeoisie and of the great bourgeois philosophers, "the bourgeoisie" means the bourgeoisie, but "bourgeois" in "bourgeois philosophers" straddles the fourth and fifth senses.

For example again, where, in the same section, the bourgeois mind is contrasted with the philosophic mind, what is indicated is not just bourgeois ideology but, more narrowly, a way of thinking characteristic of the bourgeoisie. A philosopher of the bourgeois era will not necessarily be a member of the bourgeoisie, though ironically Engels (who was not a bourgeois philosopher) was.

The employment of the word "bourgeois" in all these senses is in accordance with a respectable tradition and permits a certain ease of expression. It need not mislead; though it may. In taking a stand on usage, we must bear in mind that *any* expression might serve a determination to be confused and that diamonds can puzzle the eye no less than opals.

As for confusion, consider the contention that these days the expression is out of date. All that is out of date is the dress of the Nineteenth Century bourgeois, a very superficial matter. We might as well believe that modern academics, because they now wear academic dress quite infrequently, enjoy only a partial reality. Again, the recent history of Europe, the demise of the "socialist" regimes, has done nothing to deprive the word of usefulness. On the contrary, this development constitutes an extension of the bourgeois system, an enlargement of bourgeois power.

It is true, perhaps, that we are all bourgeois in that we are to some extent infected with bourgeois ideology. Yet it does not follow, even from this universal affliction, that the word "bourgeois" is now useless. For it is false that we are all now of the bourgeoisie, or that our interests are now identical with theirs. Such a belief is itself a piece of bourgeois ideology.
APPENDIX 2

Most modern relativisms are anticipated in the brilliant, conscientious befuddlement of Nietzsche. The dissolution of the human agent, being amongst the most grotesque of these, is naturally no exception (Nietzsche, Friedrich, 1956, Preface, XIII).

For just as the popular superstition divorces the lightning from its brilliance, viewing the latter as an activity whose subject is the lightning, so does popular morality divorce strength from its manifestations, as though there were behind the strong a neutral agent, free to manifest its strength or contain it. But no such agent exists; there is no "being" behind the doing, acting, becoming; the "doer" has simply been added to the deed by the imagination—the doing is everything.

That dissolution is an inescapable consequence of the assumptions fundamental to British Empiricism as well as of those at the bottom of Cartesian epistemology. British Empiricism brought this home to itself in the person of Hume (1967, 252-3).

But setting aside metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement ... nor is there any single power of the soul which remains unalterably the same, perhaps for one moment. The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no simplicity in it at any one time, nor identity in different; whatever natural propensity we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity.
Russell made the point against Descartes (1946, 589).

He ought to state his ultimate premiss in the form "there are thoughts"... When he goes on to say "I am a thing which thinks", he is already using the apparatus of categories handed down by scholasticism. He nowhere proves that thoughts need a thinker, nor is there any reason to believe this except in a grammatical sense.

Disregarding the question of Russell’s own position on this matter, he does present an effective *reductio ad absurdum* of Descartes’ basic assumptions.

The modern cart has so frequently fetched up in this dead end because we have tried to harness an initial dualism of mind and body together with a radical epistemological individualism. It is surely not fanciful to suggest that the second especially of these two unruly monsters thrives in the bourgeois pasture.
This Appendix is meant to support and clarify certain observations on capitalism made in Sections 5 and 6.

In case we might think that systematic genocide belongs to the last century:

In Brazil alone, European colonists have destroyed more than 90 indigenous tribes, each with a distinct culture, since the early 1900s (Bird, Chris, 1991).

According to a Brazilian Permanent Representative to the U.N., though, no real genocide has occurred. Jared Diamond (1991, 259) quotes him (?) as saying

... there was lacking the special malice or motivation necessary to characterise the occurrence of genocide. The crimes in question were committed for exclusively economic reasons, the perpetrators having acted solely to take possession of the lands of their victims.

The dispossession continues, of course. In Malaysia the rights of native peoples are “protected” by constitution and affirmative action. Yet here the Dayak communities of Sarawak are being systematically destroyed, mainly by logging. Virulent capitalism no longer needs a European vector. Traditional rights have been converted into Government ownership. Land is now occupied under licence which can be revoked by administrative act. (Pybus, Cassandra, 1991.) Similar assaults are being made on the traditional forest peoples of Indonesia, where again customary right is “protected” by law (Down to Earth, 1990). Here the forced relocation of the Kebu people ten years ago has constituted genocide. The Mentawai islanders are being lined up for the same treatment. (Tickell, Oliver, 1991)

For Indonesia according to The Third World Guide, 91/92 (Bissio, Roberto Remo, gen. ed., 1990, 354) the dispossession is quite general and a
Transmigration, the largest colonisation program in history, is a scheme to move people from Indonesia’s heavily populated inner islands to more sparsely inhabited outer ones. It has brought with it massive destruction from forestry, mining and fishing activities—as well as the wholesale takeovers of tribal lands. Tribal peoples have been pushed aside and forced to adopt new ways of life. Launched in 1979, the program originally mandated the forced relocation of 2.5 million people. In the late 1980s, the Ministry of Transmigration announced a proposal to establish settlements in the heart of western New Guinea (officially, Irian Jaya).

Transmigration has been a principal means by which the Indonesian Government has sought to exert control over tribal areas, part of an attempt to “Indonesianize” the estimated 300 tribal peoples, who are officially referred to as “backward and alien peoples”.

The dispossession, the oppression, have not been confined to subject peoples of different “race” or oversea. Bourgeois property was initially acquired largely by appropriating that of working people at home through, for example, the progressive enclosure of common land in England.

In the same way, bourgeois liberties were founded upon the coercion of the common people. In 1802 William Wordsworth (1896, 347) was able to celebrate

... the Flood
Of British freedom, which to the open sea
Of the world’s praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, “with pomp of waters unwithstood”.

At the same time the sailors of the British fleet were singing songs like (Palmer, Roy, 1973, l6)

As I walked out on a London Street,
A press gang there I chanced to meet.
They asked me if I’d join the fleet
On board of a man o’ war, boys.
The transports were singing in Van Diemen’s Land

To see my fellow sufferers
I feel I can’t say how,
Some chained unto a harrow
And some unto a plough.¹

From Moreton Bay came the complaint of Frank the Poet (MacNamara, Francis, 1979).

For three long years I was beastly treated,
And heavy irons on my legs I wore;
My back with flogging was lacerated
And often painted with my crimson gore.
And many a man from downright starvation
Lies mouldering now underneath the clay,
And Captain Logan he had us mangled
On the triangles at Moreton Bay.

The victims of bourgeois liberty thought more literally than did Wordsworth. Certainly the ocean of their experience would have made a poor symbol of freedom.

The ship that bore us from the land,
The “Speedwell” was her name.
For full four months and a half we sailed
Across the raging main.
No land nor harbour could we spy
And believe me ’tis no lie
All around us one black water
And above us one blue sky.²

That was the convicts. The sailors’ perception of the sea was equally down to earth (Palmer, Roy, op. cit., 8).

There’s a heavy storm arising,
See how it gathers round,
Whilst we poor sailors are on the sea,
A-fighting for the Crown.
Our officer commands us,
And him we must obey,
Expecting every moment,
All to get cast away.
There are tinkers, tailors, shoemakers,
Lie a-snoring asleep,
Whilst we poor souls on the ocean wide
Are all ploughing through the deep.
There's nothing to defend us, love,
Nor to keep us from the cold,
On the ocean wide where we must bide
Like jolly seamen bold.

The suffering expressed in these songs was part of the general misery endured by those unpropertied classes from which the seamen and convicts were drawn, the masses struggling for life in the grasp of the Invisible Hand. This is nicely illustrated (Palmer, Roy, op.cit., 58) by the fate of one John Roome discovered in a state of “abject destitution” forty-one years after the Battle of Trafalgar. Roome had been signalman aboard the Victory and, it was established, had hoisted Nelson’s famous signal, “England expects every man to do his duty”. Clearly, a reciprocal expectation would have been unrealistic.

On a global scale, things are getting, not better, but worse. The existence of refugees is not only an evil in itself, but an indicator of more fundamental evils. Globally, the number of refugees is rising (Brown, Phyllida, 1991, 19).

Twenty years ago there were about 2.4 million; by 1980 the figure had reached 8.2 million and this year there are 17.5 million. If you count not just those who have fled across a border, but also those displaced within their own country by civil war, the number doubles again to at least 35 million.

On present trends, we can expect the future to be horrendously worse than the past. Speaking of the likely effects of global warming, Sir Crispen Tickell says (1991, 9)

What then could be the scale of the human problem...? ... If only 1 per cent of a world population of eight billion in 2020 were affected by such events, that would still mean some eighty million migrants or environmental refugees; and 5 percent would produce four hundred million. Even 80 million would represent a problem of an order of magnitude that no one has ever had to face.
It has been remarked in Section 5, on The Modern World, that capitalism, even in its liberal democratic form, has failed to solve the problems of war, poverty, inequality, oppression... and that the liberal democracies have been among the most rapacious exploiters of the Third World. Here we should note as well that these same democracies have been amongst the major creators of the ecological crisis. In that same Section 5, I complained of a servile scientism and observed darkly that things can be expected to worsen as universities get tied tighter to the tail of market forces and become increasingly enslaved by private funding.

With reference to these matters, it is worth noting first the odious and thriving practice of referring to the education industry. Education, we are told, will be amongst the main industries of the Multifunction Polis, soon to be visited upon the sins of South Australia. This infection is widespread, extending beyond education. Recently I received a letter which began:

As a key decision maker/activist in the arts and cultural heritage industry in South Australia you are invited...

I plead "Not Guilty!". It is true that there is an education industry, an arts industry, a cultural heritage industry. It is true that humankind is subject to plague and pox. But education and art are no more industries than is philosophy a profession or good health a job. To suppose otherwise, to employ this usage, is to be either prisoner of, or gaoler for bourgeois ideology.

Such terminology is not mere empty verbiage, as is so much liberal or left rhetoric. Consider the Greiner Government's restructuring of the New South Wales Department of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) recently undertaken (without costing) and even more recently abandoned (at considerable cost). TAFE was to become ‘an independent marketplace provider in a competitive environment’. The head of TAFE was to be its ‘managing director’ and its colleges the ‘primary point of sale’. TAFE was to become 50 percent self-funded within eight years. Growth in student numbers was to be ‘capped’, free and equal access abandoned. ‘Productivity’
was to be improved, management specialists retained to teach staff how to adopt a ‘more entrepreneurial approach’. When the rearrangement was initiated, outside management consultants helped to select new administrative staff. These were hired with attractive private sector-style salary packages. Since August, 1991, when the scheme blew out, many of these have been offered attractive redundancy payouts. The author of this disastrous and uncosted proposal was allegedly paid $3 million for his services to the advancement of learning. (Toohey, Brian, 1991).

Let’s look at an important example of the effects of academic dependence on private funding. Barry Thomas, Keeper of Botany, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, remarks (1991, 47)

> Extinction threatens anything up to 100,000 species by the end of the century and most of them will never be described or named. One thing is certain; an unnamed undescribed plant will never be of use to the world as a whole even if it might be of inestimable value to the local population.

> I have recently heard someone flippantly remark that taxonomists will soon have named all the living plants because all the unknown ones will be extinct. If we are not careful species conservation will not matter because there will be no taxonomists left to remind us of extinctions.

Thomas is not alone in his estimate of our ignorance, of its importance, of the imminent dangers. Chris Bird writes (1991, 33)

> The Kayapo practise a “complex medical science that we are only just beginning to recognise”... The Kayapo distinguish 250 types of dysentery and prescribe a different treatment for each type. ... preparations sometimes have effects that scientists cannot trace to individual components. For example, Ghanaians treat bacterial infections with a preparation made from *Cryptolepis sanguinolenta*. Although the preparation does show broad-spectrum anti-biotic activity, laboratory tests fail to reveal any activity in the individual components.

Earlier (32) he claims that

> Plants already provide us with a quarter of our medicines and
they could produce many more. Yet this great resource is being destroyed while its secrets remain largely untapped. While less than 5 per cent of the world’s likely total of plants have been identified to date, 60,000 species—around one in four of those that have been identified—are known to face extinction by the year 2050.

In the same place (32) Bird says of the indigenous tribes destroyed by European settlement

With them have gone centuries of accumulated knowledge of the medicinal value of forest species.

These claims make Thomas’ opening remarks (ibid.) especially interesting. He is talking of Britain.

There is no doubt that plant taxonomy has declined, both as a subject to be taught and one to be researched. Interest in plant morphology and plant systematics is also on the wane. In this age of consumer-oriented university courses taxonomy simply does not seem an attractive proposition to departmental heads who are trying to attract students, bring in research grants or sell their services to industry. As a result, taxonomy is being quietly and rapidly done away with.

A striking case indeed of how that end of applying knowledge to lucre and profession diverteth and interrupteth the prosecution and advancement of knowledge. Of how the rich storehouse is laid waste, emptied of provender for the relief of man’s estate.
The contradiction between intellectual freedom and the real objectives of the bourgeoisie is only a part of a larger contradiction. The bourgeoisie lives by the exploitation of free labour and in the long run this requires coercion.

Further, as bourgeois, the capitalist values every human activity, not for itself, but as a means to economic advantage. The only thing that can compete with this value is the necessity to wage ideological warfare against the rest of us—to corrupt our values too. For example, Brian Matthews (1991, 30-31) has discussed at length the capitalist ingestion of cricket.

Matthews is one of us with long and bitter memories that we will carry to Kerry Packer's grave (29-30).
You know and I know and so does Matthews why that particular advertisement overran. This was likely to be the last over and the whole nation was watching. That’s not the sort of opportunity to be thrown away on cricket. This one brief incident elegantly exemplifies the contradiction between bourgeois and humane values.

Concerning the assault on humane values, Matthews has this to say.

Why are these kids here?

Well, suddenly they’re not. Two overs before tea, some invisible impulse electrifies the whole group. They stand as one, blotting out the game yet again. Tongues, twining limbs, furtively bared breasts and their counterpart groping hands and God knows what else of his and hers, are all swiftly untangled; buttons are buttoned, shirts tucked, everything generally rehevelled. With a few shouted insults (‘Poofter’, ‘Fuckin’ poofter bastard’) they are gone. Another day at the oval. Emmanuelle at the Test match. (96)

As the tea-break nears its end, someone points to the spot recently vacated by the lemming-like youth; it looks like the backyard of a bush pub; it lacks only a rusting car body or two. Suddenly it strikes me that, unlikely as it may seem, you can get a line on the diverse manifestations and troubled existence of Australian cricket by wondering what those kids were doing at a Test match. They were there partly because they’d decided that it was a good place for under-age drinking; but also because you booze and shout insults and abuse the opposition and its supporters (with banners as well as words) and throw missiles. Television has told them that this is a major form of behaviour at cricket. Their basic lack of interest in the game itself likewise finds a model in television’s restless coverage of everything but the actual process of the game. (97)

I don’t attribute my views to Matthews. (Nor do I forbid them to him.) Yet it may be that he finds these matters more contingent, less systematic than I do (31):

Yes, yes, I know there have to be ads or there’d be no cricket. But if as much thought was put into handling the ads as has gone into transmitting the images, we’d all be better off.
Well, we had cricket long before the ads and sponsorship. Hopefully we will still have cricket long after the tobacco industry is remembered, and that dimly, only by the social historians. What's more, the present dependence of cricket upon advertising is a carefully procured product of the bourgeois social order. Further, much thought does go into the handling of the ads and into the whole presentation of the game. Often unconscious, surely, but thought nonetheless. We have here not only a vending operation, but also a major ideological campaign. In this campaign not only must the image of the game be transformed, the game itself has to be reshaped to conform to and promote the bourgeois view of human nature. It has to be recast as a blood sport in which fast bowlers hate batsmen, with notable exponents of modern sledging amongst those who now preach the values of the game.

Not all the commentators are ex-sledgers, of course. Some lack the wit. Some are too nice. Yet it is idle for any Channel 9 commentator, however urbane, gentlemanly and likeable, to bewail the decline of Test Cricket or the growth of cricket cretinism. Personal style is unimportant. And especially so if it is that of one of the unconscious thinkers, a chief architect of the new image, the new audience, the new game. Such a man resembles the myriad professing Christians whose real god is Mammon. It is the fundamental values, the ones he lives by, works by—not those he projects and sincerely professes, not his merely personal tastes, but the objectively operant bourgeois values—those of the promoter, the bosses' servant—which are destroying cricket.

Allowed to operate indefinitely, such values will destroy more than cricket. Cricket today. Tomorrow the world.
It is still worth calling the new constellation of ideas mentioned in paragraph 2 of Section 8 *bourgeois*, since Irrationalism systematically saps the will to examine and oppose the bourgeois system. It may be interesting to compare four different views of human nature which I shall outline crudely. Other views are possible, of course, and do exist; but enough is more than enough.

The medieval Christian view. We are inherently evil, incapable of living a good life. We are flawed, not genetically, but mystically, spiritually, each of us guilty of the Original Sin of our first parents. Our minds are limited: we are incapable of understanding much about anything without Revelation: apart from trivia, everything we need to know and can know without sin has been revealed to us by The Creator. In fact the Original Sin was our first attempt to enlarge the human understanding beyond the limits ordained by God. By that Sin, life on earth has been rendered an evil and, by that Sin, we are deservedly destined to Hell. Our only salvation is the blood of Christ and we can be saved only by faith in Him and His offer of salvation. This and this only we can do to be saved—have faith. Deserving Hell, we may nonetheless hope for Heaven.

The bourgeois rationalist view. We are inherently (genetically) selfish (greedy, aggressive... the list may be completed according to taste). We are also inherently rational: we are intelligent enough to understand and manipulate the natural world to our advantage. Given a free rein, rational self-interest will produce an accommodation of our conflicting individual desires. The resolution of the conflict of human desire will be a social order in which the natural world is exploited for "the relief of man’s estate". We may, by our own efforts redeem ourselves in this life. By our seeking each her own individual advantage, we may collectively achieve a New Earth.

The Marxist view. We may indeed redeem ourselves in this life, but only if we succeed in shedding those qualities ascribed to us by the second
view. These qualities are socially generated and may be socially abolished. A necessary condition for this abolition is to abolish the bourgeois system and introduce social ownership of the means of production. This new system will have to be protected by means of a revolutionary repression until such time as it has transformed human nature, creating a truly social human animal. From that time, the repression can “wither away”. The bourgeois mode of production, though it is incapable of generating this new kind of human nature, nonetheless generates both an enlarged productive capacity and a greater measure of objectivity. From these spring the possibility of the New Earth and the new humanity and, along with that, the revolutionary resolve to achieve them.

The disappointed bourgeois view. God is dead or at least dead sick and senile. Heaven, like hell, is a manner of speaking. The universe is meaningless and so is human life. The New Earth is a myth. Human beings are too selfish, too stupid, too irrational to achieve it. The best they can hope for is a continuation of the present hell on earth. The best that any individual can hope for is a selfishly maintained corner of comfort and indifference amid the suffering. Since the failure of the attempts at socialism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, this view, while remaining disappointed, has also become smug. The smugness is not universal, however: even The Advertiser (1991b) is capable of some misgivings.

The failure of communism is not, per se, a total triumph for capitalism. There is too much evidence around the world of gross inequity and injustice in our own system for us to gloat at the pitiful condition to which the Soviet nations have been reduced by their experiment with communism.

These views are abstractions; but only in the sense that, apart from the first, they rarely come pure. They are real enough and powerful enough.

* * * *
NOTES

SECTION 1
1. See Appendix 1.

SECTION 2
1. The character to whom these views are attributed is Montague Small, an unreliable judge.
2. The remark is made also by a character in one of Murdoch's novels, though at this stage neither she nor I can find where.
3. Irrationalism, a (species of) doctrine, should be distinguished from irrationality, a way of going on. For more on irrationalism, see Section 10, 2.
4. This beautiful little book shows just how far we can travel in philosophy equipped with intelligence, commonsense, honesty, an eye for essentials, and a passion which includes the love of human, as opposed to academic language. No shorter distance than back home to the good old real world again.
5. Philosophy, like sex, is at once a bonding agent and anarchic.

SECTION 3
1. See Appendix 1.
2. There have also been conceptions of progress as inevitable and as unlimited, receding into an indefinite future. But I did say that this historical account is a simplified one.
3. The following little glossary may come in handy:
   brukle: frail (brittle)
   erd: earth
   Fend: Devil (fiend)
   makaris: poets (makers)
   sickir: safe
   sle: cunning
   wickir: willow.

   The refrain translates well enough:
   *The fear of death confounds me.*
4. What Bacon actually said was that what is properly sought in knowledge is "a rich storehouse, for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate". But the point is unchanged.

5. It may be useful to quote here my earlier remarks (ibid.) about this principle.

If I act on the assumption that no train is coming and a train does come, the outcome may well be disastrous. Hence, the assumption is irrational even though it bears a quite high probability. If I act on the assumption that there is a train coming and no train comes, then the consequent waste of time, energy, whatever ... is likely to be negligible. Hence, this assumption is rational even though it bears a quite low probability.

6. The Social Contract, in one form or another, is implicit in some surprising places. Even Marxism-Leninism is not immune:

The Australian black people lived in the state of society known as primitive communism and were at the stone age level. Their primitive communal life arose from the very primitive methods they had of eking out an existence. They were compelled by the difficulties of nature to band together in tribes, each person being essentially dependent upon his or her fellow tribesmen. (Hill, E. F., no date, 1).

7. See, for example, Gould, Stephen Jay (1987).

8. Some, and notably Rousseau, believed that basic uncorrupted human nature was good. But again, this is a simplified account.

9. The position of this paper is clearly not a crude genetic determinism like that of Michael Archer—Section 9 below. But neither is it an extreme cultural determinism like that of Lucien Malson (1972).

The idea that man has no nature is now beyond dispute (9). ...when one examines the area in which he displays his human qualities ... it is extremely doubtful whether there is anything here which is genetically transmitted (11). (My emphasis.)

The idea that men have psychological "natures" is so riddled with objections that it must necessarily collapse (24).

Malson confuses this position with another which is fundamental
to the present essay.

In the domain of psychology it becomes frankly impossible to make any sharp distinction between nature and nurture (11). Heredity and environment are not two separate things to which human actions are added. They are rather two poles of a dialectic which ... brings into being the human subject (24).

These two positions are further confused by Malson with a third, again correct (13).

The influences which shape a man's life, to which he can submit but which he must also resist, are partly of his own making. As the subject and object of his own history as well as of the history of all, he both creates himself and is created...

This third position is also important for this essay—though I would prefer it in a more social formulation. Malson believes that this process of creation and self-creation amounts to "rising above any attempt to engulf him in determinism" (13). Depending on what Malson means, this too is correct. Yet what is not implied by the third position is any kind of indeterminism. And what is not known, I believe, in spite of quantum mechanics, in spite of current probabilities, is that any kind of indeterminism is true. (Or false.) Be that as it may, it is certainly not implied by the third position that human beings can achieve anything they set their minds to or remake themselves in any way they choose. That they cannot do so, that we do not know well enough, concerning what have become our most dangerous characteristics, in what ways we can and cannot remake ourselves, is another principle contention of this essay.

10. See Appendix 1.

SECTION 4

1. This begs the question in favour of a certain kind of theory of mind, namely Central State Materialism (Armstrong, D. M., 1967; Medlin, Brian, 1967). This doesn't matter, however, since Ornstein and Ehrlich obviously believe that perception occurs in the brain. Even if Central State Materialism were false, we would have an effective *ad hominem*.

2. See Appendix 2.

For Bettina never stepped out of herself. No matter where she went, her self fluttered before her like a flag. What inspired her to fight for Tyrolean mountaineers was not the mountaineers but the bewitching image of Bettina fighting for the mountaineers. What drove her to love Goethe was not Goethe but the seductive image of the child-Bettina in love with the old poet.

SECTION 5

1. See Appendix 3.

2. It is true that slavery was a pre-capitalist institution. But Twentieth Century racism has been an integral part of capitalism. And even slavery played a vital part in the primitive accumulation of capital.

3. Brown’s description of the massacre concludes (352):

   It was the fourth day after Christmas in the Year of Our Lord 1890. When the first torn and bleeding bodies were carried into the candlelit church, those who were conscious could see Christmas greenery hanging from the open rafters. Across the chancel front above the pulpit was strung a crudely lettered banner: PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MEN.

4. For these points see Eckersley, Richard, 1989, and reference therein; Bell, Andrew, 1987, and reference therein; Brett, David, 1990, and references therein; Deane, Dianne & Osborn, Dick, 1991, and relevant references therein. Eckersley attributes the estimate of twelve billion trees to John Ive, Doug Cocks and Chris Parvey of the CSIRO Division of Wildlife and Ecology. The estimate is currently being refined (private communication from John Ive).

5. The disgusting and incompetent poem from which these lines were taken was published in Liddle’s Selected Poems as late as 1925. It begins with the line, “‘Tis true not many years ago”.

6. See Appendix 4.

7. This doesn’t imply that capitalism is responsible for all the ills that flesh is heir to. Capitalism is one form of exploitation
amongst others. The point is that, while capitalism promised humane scholars like Adam Smith to re-create the world, it has—at least arguably—made it worse than ever.

8. Those who are sceptical about this possibility should consult and consider the implications of Fowler, Cary & Mooney, Pat (1990).

SECTION 6

1. See Appendix 3.

SECTION 7

1. For typical example, David Smith (1990) offers a final chapter, “Towards a Sustainable Future”. Though the book is described by the publisher as “a passionate argument for rational conservation...”, this final chapter gives no hint that a sustainable future for Australia (and the planet) will demand a social organisation compatible with zero economic growth. Goldsmith et al. (1990) provide a less striking but equally real example on a global scale. Here current social defects are touched upon, but the reader is left free to think that, however deep they may be, these are problems solely of attitude. (I don’t say that this is the view of the authors: there is no telling what is the view of the authors.) The fact is that organisation and attitude are inseparable.

2. Again, capitalism is only one social order amongst several that have produced environmental degradation. But again, and this time without doubt, capitalism has been the most destructive social order in history. The productive power developed by capitalism threatens to render the whole planet unfit for human habitation. What’s more, capitalism is our social order, the one we have to change.

3. Consider, amongst a wealth of examples, the concluding slogan for a set of National Mutual television commercials:

   For the most important person in the world—You.

4. Amongst another wealth of examples, consider the proposed Yellow River dam.

5. The paradox was, briefly at any rate, a central concern for Lenin (1918 but any edition). Perhaps Lenin was by temperament incompetent to handle this problem. Perhaps history was against
him at that time. Certainly he and his comrades were without benefit of the experience of the last seventy-five years. And certainly the Vanguard Party has proved a disastrous device: no attempt at socialism has succeeded in putting The Party under the leadership and at the service of those masses whose interests are invoked to justify the revolution.

SECTION 8

1. See Appendix 5.

SECTION 9


The world is constantly laughing at us, turning egoistic gold into sand, and altruistic sand into oases of good and prosperity.

Not all laughter, of course. But which position, Archer's or Shevardnadze's, better bears empirical scrutiny?

One trouble with Mr Shevardnadze's article, though, is that, in spite of a certain wise practicality, it falls foul of the first part of his own dictum. To green the world he proposes to replace government with capitalist enterprise. Amazingly, he looks with seemingly uninstructed hope to the Rockefeller Foundation. This organisation powered the Green Revolution that did so much to intensify inequity and to accelerate genetic erosion in the Third World (Fowler, Cary & Mooney, Pat, 1990, 54-98). It is largely bourgeois gold that is turning the whole world to sand.

2. Professor Archer's doctrine is psychological egoism. An even deeper paradox arises for ethical egoism. See my 1957. (This paper was published when I was an undergraduate: it was intended to irritate people whose opinions I have long since shared. I still think, however, that my argument can remain effective while dispensing with the silly subjectivism that disfigures it. Don't take my word for this, though: for a determined and able attack on my paper see Kalin, Jesse, 1970.)

3. A main reason why this looks hard to some theorists is that they are locked into psychological egoism before they begin thinking about genetics.

And as for Darwin's alleged demonstration of the universality of
absolute selfishness, he himself is at pains to show that the theory of evolution by means of natural selection can accommodate the most extreme cases of "unselfishness" that nature provides. (They are actually cases of selflessness.) He was aware that the evolution of the eusocial insects seemed to pose a problem for him (Darwin, Charles, 1926, 214):

But with the working ant we have an insect differing greatly from its parents, yet absolutely sterile; so that it could never have transmitted successively acquired modifications of structure or instinct to its progeny. It may well be asked how it is possible to reconcile this case with the theory of natural selection.

In the discussion of this phenomenon, Darwin (ibid., 212-218) provides, in outline, an explanation which, though non-mathematical, is intuitively convincing and, it would appear from subsequent mathematical developments, dead right.

(My argument here doesn't involve improper anthropomorphising, by the way. It is effective as an ad hominem against Archer, which is all it needs to be.)

For a helpful account of these matters see Alexander, Richard D., et al., 1991. See also appropriate references therein.

4. I am sure that my claims in the text are correct. In fairness to Archer, however, I should point out that Victor, the wild boy of Aveyron, was certainly affectionate and yet Itard (1972, 175) claims of him that he remained "basically selfish", "a total stranger to that selfless helpfulness which considers neither deprivations nor sacrifices". Yet even Itard claims of Victor that he became "responsive to gratitude and friendship" and attributes to him an acquired sense of justice. In view of this last quality he claims to have "raised savage man to the full stature of moral man" (173-175). These apparently incompatible claims, made nearly two centuries ago, can hardly bring comfort to Archer.

5. For wild children, in addition to Chatwin and Maclean, see Curtiss, S, 1977, and Malson, Lucien & Itard, Jean, 1972, and Singh, J. A. L. & Zingg, Robert M., 1942. For the quite extensive literature on this matter see Maclean's bibliography and Malson's footnotes.

6. Malson believes that the account of Kamala (like accounts of two
other famous cases) contains "large elements of fantasy" (1972, 62). For what it's worth, I add my own sceptical treble to this small chorus.

SECTION 10

1. Oversimplification throughout this section may suggest, what is not the case, that I consider intelligence and rationality to be each a single, simple, separate thing, located in or consequent upon some definite structure or condition of the brain. In spite of an unregenerate materialism, my views on these matters are now pretty close to those of Stephen Jay Gould (1984).

2. I am grateful to Professor Paxinos for making his paper available to me in advance of publication. I am also conscious of having rewarded his kindness pretty churlishly. In partial atonement, I have invited him to comment on my remarks above. He has done so as follows.

   My thesis is, that thus far we have not appreciated sufficiently the constraints and limitations of human intellectual and emotional capacities. Because all these capacities derive solely from the structural and chemical make-up of the brain, I have argued that the brain imposes severe limitations to our behaviour especially now that the brain is called upon to assist us in an environment substantially different from the environment in which the brain evolved. In whatever other ways humans may resemble the divine, genetically they are made in the image and likeness of the chimpanzee. A better appreciation of our heritage and limitations may aid us in the path of constructing a sustainable society.

3. Cicero says somewhere, what we should never forget, that he cannot understand how two augurs can meet in the streets of Rome without bursting out laughing.

4. Douglas Muecke writes (private communication)

   Awful rainbows. I take your point, but there were people going round (and still are, especially in the boardrooms of the multinationals?) saying that poetry is for kids, sentiment is foolish. Hence Wordsworth's reaction to the "reasoning,
self-sufficing thing, an intellectual All-in-all” capable of botanising on his mother’s grave. Hence Dickens’ reaction to the utilitarian who couldn’t see horses, only gram-inivorous quadrupeds. I don’t see the reactions as any more unconsidered than the ‘actions’.

Apart from the fact that one’s mother’s grave, nicely grown over, might be a splendid place to botanise, Dr. Muecke’s point is well taken in turn. Certainly Muecke shows, more than I have done, a proper sympathy for that marvellous young genius, John Keats. And certainly, his remarks raise a relevant issue that I have ignored, namely, the tension between reductionism and holism. Nonetheless, the point he takes is pretty much the same as mine in the above subsection.

5. He adds to the remark I quote, “And yet it must be so”.

6. “Could anyone have understood the human heart as badly as Freud?” (Smart, J. J. C., private communication).

7. Or, in Muecke’s boardrooms (n. 3 above), an arid anti-intellectualism.

8. He maintains that I have misinterpreted him abominably. I have not interpreted him at all. I have merely repeated what he said.

SECTION 11

1. For a fuller, but still not full enough, discussion of this point as well as of rationalism and irrationalism see Medlin 1992.

APPENDIX 3

1. From the traditional ballad, “Van Diemen’s Land”. I quote from memory. I don’t know where I learnt this version, but it is the best of a good lot. I shall happily provide a complete text and tune to anyone who applies.

2. Ibid.
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One of the academic triumphs of last year’s Silver Jubilee celebrations was the public lecture, “Human Nature and the Prospects for Human Survival” by Brian Medlin on the evening of 15th August. That lecture now reappears in revised and expanded form as the present monograph.

. . . the text of his Silver Jubilee address glowed with life, purpose and meaning . . . the old intensity and urgency . . . were fully present, fully felt, as he tackled the “Ecological Crisis”.

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