



Eucalyptus rubida

10TH BIRTHDAY

Newsletter of The Centre for Ecology & Spirituality,
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Newsletter No.39

Summer 2010

Echidna (spiny anteater) roams among the trees.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN PT.2 A Reflection

This question was asked in a previous edition of Rubida. Now, as I sit beside a dry creek bed in the Flinders Ranges, it is time for me to revisit the question and ask for your comments also.

Here in the chair is a self-reflective human - over there, ancient river red gums E. camaldulenses are lined up among the rocks that have been uncovered along the bed of Wokkerwilla Creek. These rocks of the Trezona Range contain fossils of stromatolites that were the early producers of oxygen on the planet - maybe 550 million years old. The trees themselves are the fruit and model of a very patient allurement that nature constantly offers us.

You know we humans think we are in charge, and are running the planet. In fact, reflective though we may be, we spend most of our time in a wasteful automatic mode, allowing our learnt or unconscious drives determine what we do. We do a lot of things unconsciously or semi-consciously like when driving a car, breathing, eating, or reacting to the buttons people press for us. This is not to mention the immense effort and work done for us by our metabolism, our immune system, our regulatory hormones and so on. These latter mirror the ecosystem services provided by Earth on a constant basis to regulate things like air, water, climate (!) etc.

In some traditions, to live reflectively or with awareness is quite central to their wisdom. To live like this is to become human. We don't become human automatically. It is not enough to be born human; becoming human is not just a DNA function. Becoming human entails an immense physical/somatic/cultural learning beginning in the womb, and then absorbing all the pre-verbal, verbal, non-verbal learnings of our childhood, adolescence and maturing years. To stop at any of these stages is to stop becoming human.

In the creek bed there is a young magpie following the parent bird squarking loudly. They seem to have no time for me, parent and child fully absorbed.

It seems to me that to be human is not just to learn as the trees and birds do, but to be reflective about these learnings, and with the integration of the universe's teachings, transcend the purely unconscious to that unique state of awareness that we are alive

I see a kangaroo resting from the heat in the shade of a bush halfway up the hill, its head and ears etched against the light background. I think it sees me.

...and this matters to a universe in searching for its soul. Along with the



trees, birds, and kangaroos together we build the soul of the Universe, a Universe sacred in its knowing.

The unconscious, instinctual primal animal in us is moving as a culture almost imperceptibly, and sometimes dysfunctionally into a new manifestation of what allurement can create.

Kangaroo gets up and hops away before I can photograph her. Magpie has gone too. Red Gum remains, waiting for the next flooding of Wokkerwilla.

Once again I am alone with *camaldulensis*, its patient waiting teaching me a lesson. I have returned to this spot every year for nearly a decade now, and *camaldulensis* will still be here long after I am gone. I guess some of my exhaled breath has

been captured by these noble gums, and will persist for another hundred years or so. The magnificent Orrooroo tree is said to be around 500 years old.

What it means to be human (to me) is to spend our usually less than a hundred years on this evolving planet set beautifully in an expanding evolving universe. My task: to be a functional member of the great community of life; to gather in a host of wisdom generated before us, using the elements of our planet to process this wisdom, some instinctual, some learned, be custodians of it, nurture it in love, and pass on to the next generation of life a more beautiful and loved Earth.

I am not blind to the chaos of life, but I am a participant in it, not looking for blame but pushing ahead through the chaos and through the joy, believing that the Great Attractor is by its name the embedded Love source and Love destiny of our Cosmos. If I cannot understand it, it matters not, because I feel it, am it, and will eternally be it whatever happens.

It has been raining heavily this late November day. What a blessing!

Rain is unspectacular for us at this time, but once it fell for the first time and everything was changed. This epocal event was like the supernova: it changed everything forever and we are still part of this one beautiful evolving event that is drawing everything together, and this is what makes life so special and so numinous. Every speck of love must be reaped, milled and transformed into a higher expression of what makes the world go round.

What does it mean to you to be human?

Trevor Parton

Picture: Rice Mandala made during the Earth Retreat