

There is a lot of exegetical work to be done on ACIM's view of "the world." It is a topic which is of particular interest to me and I've done quite a lot of work on the topic already, though that's not to say the work is finished.

The most common observation of ACIM's teaching on "the world" is based on the line "you made the world as an attack on God" and similar statements in ACIM, culminating in "there is no world." Using the most common definition of "world" as "Planet Earth," the logical inference is made that what is meant here is "the physical universe." Rather obviously, if "you made Earth" then Mars and Venus must have been made the same way. No one suggests that we made Earth but God created Mars! So the conclusion is reached that the universe itself is the work of the Ego, and not created by God.

While we can readily see how that logical inference can be made, it has a few problems, not the least of which are the numerous statements in ACIM where Jesus flatly asserts that "God created" variously, the universe, space, time, and matter. Then there are all the "real world" passages in ACIM where "the real world" is described as a most divine place, characterized by peace, love, harmony and joy and even as "the gate of heaven." We go to heaven from the "real world." If heaven is where we want to be, we must first reach the "real world" for that is "heaven's gate."

The problem is complicated by the fact that for many, their first introduction to ACIM was through the 1975 Abridgement in which the "two worlds" material Jesus dictated to Helen is massively re-written where it isn't entirely missing. Thus they grew familiar with ACIM without having the advantage of many of the numerous clear, unambiguous affirmations of divine creation of the material universe with which Jesus provides us.

Further, in the original dictation we find that "world" is defined ... Helen is directed to look up the word in the dictionary and to ***not*** use the most common definition, "planet earth" but rather the "natural grand division" definition. This definition refers to our mental habit of conjuring "grand divisions" among our perceptions, such that we can speak of "the world of Psychology" and "the world of Physics" and know that these are "two different worlds" which are "quite separate" and yet no one would suggest that these two worlds don't exist on the same physical planet! We can however see that they "do not exist" ***except in our minds***. There is no material distinction between the Physicist and the Psychologist. They are made of the same stuff, and even inhabit the same universities. Any "difference" is only "in our minds" ... that is we mentally project demarcations, or "grand divisions" quite aside from anything God created.

This is "the world" of which Jesus says "you [re-]made [it] as an attack on God." This is the Ego literally re-making God's creation as an attack on God in rivalry with what Jesus claims is the "real" purpose of the physical universe: God's purpose which is the training of our minds.

The Holy Spirit is frequently described in ACIM as one who "corrects perceptions." The Ego is frequently described as one who "misperceives." A very frequent literary device of the Author is to contrast the view from Ego with the view from Spirit, in order to help us

discern which is which so that when we choose, as choose we must, our choice can be an informed one.

Out of these two levels of perception, the "Physical Eye" of the Ego and the "Spiritual Eye" of the Spirit come two entirely different views, or as with the definition Jesus offered us, "grand divisions" or as it is often expressed in the New Testament and ACIM "two worlds." Not two different planets, but rather two different ways of perceiving and interpreting and understanding and looking at this one planet.

"There is no world" means that the world generated by Ego from the input of the Physical Eye doesn't really exist. It is an imaginary world full of pain and fear. It is no more real than the child's "monster under the bed." Who hasn't tried to convince a 4 year old that there "really" isn't any monster under the bed? Pretty hard to do isn't it??? So Ego's "unreal" world of fear appears just as real to us as the monster does to the child. We need massive reassurance.

"There is no world" means "there is no monster under your bed." It doesn't mean "there is no bed." It most certainly doesn't mean "there is no planet."

Now the Holy Spirit corrects our misperceptions and sees "the world" as it "really is" and shares these "correct perceptions" with us as we offer Him "a little willingness."

If it were true that there "is no world" in the sense of "world=planet" then what would "correct perception" of nothing result in? Nothing of course. Viewed "correctly" if it is true that "there is no planet" the planet would simply vanish from our sight. We would see no trees, no flowers, no mountains, no sunsets, no rivers, no cats and dogs, no sunshine, no stars at night, no nothing! "True perception" of "nothing" would be "nothing."

But that is not what the Holy Spirit shows us, in the teachings of Jesus. The Holy Spirit shows us something quite different. When Fred punches Tom the Ego sees "attack" or maybe "defence." The Spirit doesn't see "nothing" (which is all it could see if "there is no world" means "there is no planet") but it sees "a cry for love." It doesn't NOT SEE the punch, it doesn't say "the punch isn't there." It says "the punch isn't REALLY the attack defence that Ego perceives it as, it is REALLY a cry for love which requires a response of love, and not a response of attack or defence."

So with forgiveness we are told "forgive your brother for what he did not do." This doesn't mean he did not punch you. You need not forgive him for the punch, you need to forgive him for your perception of the punch as an attack. The moment you understand the TRUTH that the punch is a cry for love, you cannot NOT respond to that cry with love, and in that loving response to a cry for love there is nothing remaining that requires forgiving. What your brother DID NOT DO is "attack" you even though both he and you thought he did. That doesn't mean he didn't punch you. The punch, when understood as "a cry for love" is not seen as an attack and requires no forgiveness.

Do we "blame" the small child for her fears of monsters under her bed? Do we need to

"forgive" her for such fears? Of course not. We understand what's happening there, and we respond with love and reassurance and without blaming, shaming and guilt and soon the child graduates to more complex monsters :).

So you see I think there is a lot of confusion about "world" in Course interpretation, and that the equation of "world" with "planet" only works for three or four of the many dozens of "world" references in ACIM. Most of the time "world" is either one of "the world of Ego misperceptions" or "the real world as God created it and Holy Spirit correctly perceives it." One or the other of those two worlds is the intended meaning, I believe, of almost all "world" references in ACIM and for that matter, in the New Testament.

In many cases a single sentence such as "you made the world as an attack on God" can be understood either way. It makes literal sense to understand "world" as either "planet earth" or "the world as EGO misperceives it." So just how can we tell which of the two possible meanings Jesus intended?

One approach is to test each meaning against the rest of the text. If we find the implications of one reading flatly contradicted too many times elsewhere, we must begin to suspect we've chosen the wrong one. If we find that our choice resolves many other anomalies and generates no new ones, we've got a very likely candidate for "correct interpretation."

Now the idea that Ego made the physical and God didn't generates huge numbers of anomalies in ACIM and in the Bible, while the other idea, that God did it but EGO misperceives it, not only doesn't do that, it actually resolves some unrelated anomalies and problems: notably the age old theodical question: "how could a good God create a world where there is so much bad?"

Answer: God didn't, the problem isn't with the planet, but with your perceptions and definitions of good and bad, just like it says in Genesis: "the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." In short, negative judgements. It is THESE, which are all Ego, which cause our perceptions of "bad things" in the world.

Our perceptions generate "worlds of perception" which, if informed by God The Holy Spirit, lead us to "heaven's gate" in "the real world" and if informed by the Ego lead us to project onto the real world, a very unpleasant world of monsters "made to attack God."

One thing which attracts me about this interpretation is that it fits the Bible and the Course and my own experience, not to mention the "perennial philosophy" and the teachings of most spiritual traditions with no anomalies or contradictions. Nothing has to be thrown out. In contrast, the Wapnickian interpretation which suggests the physical planet is itself made by ego and has nothing but illusory existence, is flatly contradicted by a great deal of material in the Bible and in ACIM. I therefore conclude that Dr. Wapnick erred in selecting that interpretation and has been struggling ever since to try to make the square peg fit into the round hole ... which it of course never will.

The "illusion" isn't the tree or the mountain or the planet or the solar system or the galaxy or

the universe, the "illusion" is our partial, limited, biased, misinformed, distorted, mistaken misperception of the tree or the mountain or the planet or the solar system or the galaxy or the universe. In short, "the illusion" is our failure to grasp the divine purpose in everything, a divine purpose and essence which Jesus assures us IS THERE ... "God is in everything." The illusion, however, isn't a thing, and God is not in the illusion. What is in the illusion is fear. As St. John says in the New Testament, quoted by Jesus in ACIM "There is no room for fear in love" and "perfect love casts out fear." God is perfect love and therefore cannot "be" in an illusion without vaporizing the illusion. "Everything" therefore refers not to illusions, but to "real things." ACIM goes on to denote some of them, including "the waste basket." Ok, so the wastebasket is real. It must be for "God is in it" yet it doesn't vaporize! It's not an illusion, however many illusions I may generate about it!!!

And so on and so forth there are many many many examples of problems and contradictions generated by Wapnickian theory which are resolved by this one. The idea that it is the physical universe itself which does not exist is not only flatly contradicted by ACIM and the Bible, it is inconsistent with most of the teaching of both. The illusion isn't the physical stuff, but our misperceptions of the physical stuff and all else as well! The purpose of the physical stuff is explicitly stated in ACIM as "a teaching device for your minds." That is why God created it.

To fit the Wapnickian view in there, you'd have to ascribe our illusions to God ...God created our illusions to attack Himself in order to train our minds.

Yes ... that is just slightly problematic.

Either that or you have to start cutting out large chunks of the actual text of ACIM, which, of course, is what Dr. Wapnick actually did in 1974 when he quite correctly recognized that the actual words on the pages of ACIM and what he believed were a very poor match. What to do in such a situation? Change the Course or change your belief? Dr. Wapnick chose to change the Course.

The impact of that change has been substantial because the idea that the physical universe was created by Ego, or at least not by God, has been represented as the "teaching of the Course" by many people after Dr. Wapnick began to do that. A superficial reading provides many quotes which appear to support that interpretation, most notably the "you made the world as an attack on God" quote, and others of a similar nature.

What all these readers failed to do is notice that there is an implied subclause, which is sometimes explicit, in all such statements. A few appear with that implied clause intact: "You made the world as Ego perceives it." Then the next 100 references won't include "as ego perceives it" since it is now implied, in context. Take out the ONE antecedent, and you make it easy to misunderstand the whole chapter. Take out the definition of "world" and you make it much easier to misunderstand all subsequent references to "world."

As Jesus said, if you don't understand the first few dozen pages of ACIM, the rest will not be understood correctly. It is just those first hundred or so pages which are substantially

missing from the 1975 Abridgement, along with the definitions and some of the antecedents which, in fact, are essential for the rest to really make sense without huge numbers of contradictions.

It' s not so much the total volume of material that is missing, but the significance of the particular material that is missing. Most significant here is the definition of "world." Without that we can' t help but assume Jesus means "planet earth" when he says ' world.' not only doesn' t mean that ~~he~~ **he says he doesn't mean that!** At least before the editors removed the statement.

Well, I' m out of time for today.

All the best,

Doug

To begin with, let's consider why some Course students hold the view that 'we made the world'. Here are some quotes that I've taken at random from the Urtext that support this view (each version of the Course has similar statements):

"It is as needful that you recognise you MADE the world you see, as that you recognise that you did NOT create yourself." (Urtext)

"He does NOT realise that HE MAKES THIS WORLD, for there IS no world outside him." (Urtext)

"The world you made is therefore totally chaotic, governed by arbitrary and senseless "laws," and without meaning of ANY kind. For it was made out of what you do NOT want, projected FROM your mind, because you were AFRAID of it." (Urtext)

Now these quotes seem quite clear and unambiguous don't they ? These passages from the Course are clearly reading that we made the world. At least, they do if we read them in isolation and don't pay attention to this very important quote from the Urtext:

"Since the Separation, the words "create" and "make" are inevitably confused. When you make something, you make it first out of a sense of lack or need, and second, out of a something that already exists." (Urtext) (emphasis mine)

An interesting statement isn't it? 'Create' and 'make' are being contrasted here and we are told that one of the differences is that when you 'make' something you make it out of something that already exists.

It would be quite right to say that this passage on it's own is most definately not enough proof that God is Creator of the world. Clearly those of us who allege that God is creator must present quotes that clearly and unambiguously state that God is the Creator of the World. Statements of that nature are in an abundant supply:

"The world WAS made as "a natural grand division," or a projecting outward of God. That is why everything that He created is like Him" (Urtext)

"And this universe, being of God, is far beyond the petty sum of all the separate bodies YOU perceive. For all its parts are joined in God through Christ, where they become like to their Father." (Urtext)
"And you will see me as you look within, and we will look upon the world as God created it together." (Urtext)

"God created time so that man could use it creatively, and convince himself of his own ability to create. Time is a teaching device, and a means to an end. It will cease when it is no longer useful for facilitating learning." (Urtext)

"The bridge itself is nothing more than a transition in your PERSPECTIVE of reality." (Urtext)

"The end of the world is not its destruction, but its TRANSLATION into Heaven. The REINTERPRETATION of the world is the transfer of ALL perception to knowledge." (Urtext)

"The acceptance of the Atonement by everyone is only a matter of time. In fact, both time AND matter were created for this purpose." (Urtext)

"Father, your Mind created all that is. Your Spirit entered into it. Your Love gave life to it. And would I look upon what You created as if it could be made sinful? I would not perceive such dark and fearful images. A madman's dream is hardly fit to be my choice, instead of all the loveliness with which You bless creation; all its purity, its joy, and its eternal, quiet home in You." (Urtext)

"You believe in a world that takes, because you believe that you can get by taking. And by that perception you have lost sight of the real world. You are afraid of the world as you see it, but the real world is still yours for the asking. Do not deny it to yourself, for it can only free you. Nothing of God will

enslave His Son whom He created free and whose freedom is protected by His Being." (Urtext)

"Think not you made the world. Illusions, yes! But what is true in earth and Heaven is beyond your naming." (Urtext)

Now there is plenty above for you to digest but before I present you with what I consider to be a convincing model, I'd like you to present two key quotes that sum up Course metaphysics quite clearly.

Firstly, we have this passage:

"The world as YOU perceive it cannot have been created by the Father, for the world is NOT as you see it. God created ONLY the eternal, and everything you see is perishable. Therefore, there must be another world which you do NOT see. The Bible speaks of a NEW Heaven and a NEW earth, yet this cannot be literally true, for the eternal are not RE-created. To perceive ANEW is merely to perceive AGAIN, implying that before, or in the interval, you were not perceiving AT ALL. What, then, is the world that awaits your perception when you SEE it?" (Urtext)

The key here is that "the world is NOT as you see it" and "To perceive ANEW is merely to perceive AGAIN, implying that before, or in the interval, you were not perceiving AT ALL...". So what exactly am I and many other Course students suggesting? Well, we believe that yes, we have made the world as an attack on God but (due to our split minds) we are projecting it onto a Universe/world that God created for our salvation.

Secondly, we have this passage:

"Think but an instant on this: God gave the Sonship to you, to ensure your perfect creation. This was His Gift, for as He withheld Himself not from you, He withheld not His creation. Nothing that ever was created but is yours. Your relationships are with the universe. And this universe, being of God, is far beyond the petty sum of all the separate bodies YOU perceive. For all its parts are joined in God through Christ, where they become like to their Father. For Christ knows of no separation from His Father, Who is His One relationship, in which He gives as His Father gives to Him." (Urtext)

As you can see above this universe is defined as being 'of God' and we are told that he did not withhold His creation from us. Furthermore we are told explicitly that our relationships are with the universe but it is not simply the petty sum of separate bodies we perceive. When we perceive it correctly we will see that all it's parts are joined through Christ in God. This goes very neatly with the quote above "And you will see me [Christ] as you look within, and we will look upon the world as God created it together." (Urtext)

Clearly the above passages are indicating that there is an other way of looking at the world. To see it 'as God created it, as the above quote says. Is there any other supportive evidence of this? Yes, there is, quite a great deal of supportive evidence. Aside from the above passages from the Course there supportive evidence of the model I am presenting is provided by those who have given their testimonies of Enlightenment, as you can read for yourself:

"The thing happened one summer afternoon, on the school cricket field, while I was sitting on the grass, waiting my turn to bat. I was thinking about nothing in particular, merely enjoying the pleasures of midsummer idleness. Suddenly, and without warning, something invisible seemed to be drawn across the sky, transforming the world about me into a kind of tent of concentrated and enhanced significance. What had been merely an outside became an inside. The objective was somehow transformed into a completely subjective fact, which was experienced as 'mine', but on a level where the world had no meaning; for I was no longer the familiar ego." (From Margaret Isherwood, The Root of the Matter)

"Suddenly the Thing happened, and, as everybody knows, it cannot be described in words. The Bible phrase, 'I saw the heavens open', seems as good as any if not taken literally. I remember saying to myself, in awe and rapture, 'So it's like this; now I know what Heaven is like, now I know what they mean in church'. (Also from Margaret Isherwood, The Root of the Matter)

"Suddenly, in a flash, the grief, the bitterness, the sense of frustration disappeared; all desire to possess power and glory for herself vanished away, and never came back... She always associated it afterwards with the words of Bernard Bosanquet on Salvation: 'And now we are saved absolutely, we need not say

from what, we are at home in the universe, and, in principle and in the main, feeble and timid creatures as we are, there is nothing within the world or without it that can make us afraid' ." (From Vera Brittain, Testament of Friendship)

"Then there came on me the hour of revelation, when though savagely hungry, I forgot about breakfast. Scents, sights, and sounds blended into a harmony so perfect that it transcended human expression, even human thought. It was like a glimpse of the peace of eternity." (From John Buchan, memory Hold-the-Door)

"It was a time of mingled feeling and dawning thought. In the coalescence of the new and old Experience inchoate phrases were beginning to shape themselves. A dim impression of the condition of the objective self might be given by a jumble of incoherent sentences. ' Something has happened to me I am utterly amazed - can this be that? (' That' being the answer to the riddle of life)but it is too simple - I always knew it - it is remembering an old forgotten secret - like coming home - I am not "I", not the "I" I thought - there is not death - peace passing understanding - yet how unworthy I -' "... "...and I am absorbed in the Light of the universe, in Reality glowing like fire with the knowledge of itself, without ceasing to be one and myself, merged like a drop of quicksilver in the Whole, yet still separate as a grain of sand in the desert. The peace that passes all understanding and the pulsating energy of creation are one in the centre in the midst of conditions where all opposites are reconciled." (From Warner Allen, The Timeless Moment)

Dr Jean Houston wrote "The Possible Human" in 1982, she had this experience when she was six:

"...Spent and unthinking, I sat down by the windowsill and looked out at the fig tree in the backyard. Sitting there drowsy and unfocused, I must in my innocence have done something right, for suddenly, the key turned and the door to the universe opened. I didn't see or hear anything unusual. There were no visions, no bursts of light. The world remained the same. And yet everything around me, including myself, moved into meaning. Everything - the fig tree in the yard, the dogs in the closet, the wall safe, the airplane in the sky, the sky itself, and even my idea of the Virgin Mary - became parts of a single Unity, a glorious symphonic resonance in which every part of the universe was a part and illuminated every other part, and I knew that in some way it all worked together and was very, very good."

David Spangler wrote "Emergence" in 1984. (The ' presence' he speaks of at the start would be the Holy Spirit to Acim students, as he does not define it as a ' formed' spirit but as a sense of a ' spirit' ual awareness that is all around.) This is what he has to say about enlightenment:

"...floating in a sea of spirit. It was as if I were seeing as this presence saw, and for one instance we were one. In that instant, it was as I were one with everything that existed, every atom, every stone, every world, every star, seeing creation not from some great distance but from the inside out as if it were my very body and being. Even more powerful than this perception was the awareness of the flow of creativity throughout everything I saw and the joyous embrace of life and unfoldment in response; the rhythm was that of a ballroom, with its music and its dancers and the intricate patterns they all created, ever changing, ever unfolding."

Bernadette Roberts, a Catholic Nun for 10 years, wrote ' The experience of NoSelf (1984) in which she writes:

"Finally I turned my eyes to the pine-covered hills behind the monastery and still, there was no division, only something "there" that was flowing with and through every vista and particular object of vision. To see the Oneness of everything is like having special 3D glasses put before your eyes; I thought to myself: for sure, this is what they mean when they say "God is everywhere.""

So there you have it. Going back to your original statement above about taking one quote in isolation I hope I have demonstrated that is most definitely not the case in the ' God created' model. In fact, the opposite seems to be true - to my knowledge those who support the ' ego' as originator of the world have never constructed an argument to support their view that includes quotes that stipulate God as the originator of the world. What I am pointing out to you is that, in my model, whereby I am suggesting that we are projecting illusions onto God' s creation, hence there to be some statement in the Course that suggest we 'make' the world.

Conversely, if we follow your way of thinking about the Course and believe that we created the world then we encounter a problem with the very many statements in the Course that stipulate God as creator of the world and, as a result of this, those who believe that we created the world will only ever quote from the Course using the passages that suggest we created it - and will ignore the passages to the contrary.

Those of us who hold the opposite view don't have to do that! However, your most pressing concern, I would say, is that, as you can read above for yourself, the 'God created ego projected onto' view is in line with the actual mystical experience whereas the 'ego made it's all just illusion' is most definitely not.

I wonder, do you not think there is something decidedly antithetical about holding a view opposite to the actual 'At one ment' experience that the Course is trying to get you to! This question becomes even more pertinent when you consider that the [Alastair Hardy Research Trust](#) in the UK hold roughly 7,000 of such first hand accounts in climate controlled conditions. Are they all wrong and Ken is right? While you visit that page why don't you have a look at the patrons of the trust. I think you'll find that just about every major religion is presented. Haven't they had a lot longer to note down what the Enlightened say about the world and thus make an informed decision? Or do you still think that everyone else is wrong and Ken has got it right?

In case you do, I shall continue. Aside from testimonies of Illumination there are accounts of near-death experiences still to consider. This interesting revelation comes from Betty Eadie's near-death experience. You might find it quite interesting in relation to the model I am presenting:

"... As we all assembled, the Father explained that coming to earth for a time would further our spiritual growth. Each spirit who was to come to earth assisted in planning the conditions on earth, including the laws of physics as we know them, the limitations of our bodies, and spiritual powers that we would be able to access. We assisted God in the development of plants and animal life that would be here. Everything was created of spirit matter before it was created physically - solar systems, suns, moons, stars, planets, life upon the planets, mountains, rivers, seas, etc. I saw this process, and then, to further understand it, I was told by the Saviour that the spirit creation could be compared to one of our photographic prints; the spirit creation would be like a sharp, brilliant print, and the earth would be like its dark negative. This earth is only a shadow of the beauty and glory of its spirit creation, but it is what we needed for our growth. It was important that I understand that we all assisted in creating our conditions here." (NDE's A Reader)

So, in essence, what I, and many others require from the 'the ego originated the world' lobby are these things:

First, construct an essay using both types of seemingly contradictory passages from the Course to demonstrate your model is inclusive of everything in the Course as the counter argument is.

Second, explain exactly why it is that those who have achieved Enlightenment testify quite clearly to the contrary of your model.

I will leave you with this quote from the Course to consider:

"Again we come to the question of judgment. This time ask yourself whether your judgement or the Word of God is more likely to be true. For they say different things about the world, and things so opposite that it is pointless to try to reconcile them. God offers the world salvation; your judgement would condemn it. God says there is no death; your judgement sees but death as the inevitable end of life. God's Word assures you that He loves the world; your judgement says it is unlovable. Who is right? For one of you is wrong. It must be so." (Urtext)

Shortcut Text	Internet Address
Alastair Hardy Research Trust	http://www.charitynet.org/~RERC/about.html

> the point being i suppose is time
> and the world being illusory how can God create them,
> thanks ariel

This question *does* keep coming up! I feel like I've answered it 15 times, and rather well too :). Perhaps we should develop a "FAQ" file for the list with this, and a few other questions, and pointers to some of the better posts in the past which have discussed the questions.

The question in question fails to recognize that ACIM discusses "two worlds" as does Jesus (and others) in the New Testament. One of the most basic and oft-repeated literary and pedagogical structures in ACIM contrasts "The world as ego [mis] perceives it" with "the real world" which is variously characterized, but always in terms of reflecting (without actually being) the perfection, love and joy of God. There are hundreds of examples, probably several thousand where, within a single paragraph, sentence, lesson or section, Jesus describes some aspect of the world as Ego sees it and then describes that aspect as it "truly is."

Rather clearly then, aside from the direct supporting quotes, we have a picture painted by the author of a "real world" which has most of the attributes of God and Heaven, a world full of joy and peace and happiness and harmony and "the answer to every problem." The Ego, which fails to perceive many things as they truly are, looks on that world and instead sees a world of sin and guilt and death and misery. Believing that perception to be accurate, the ego-directed life lives as if that were the case and essentially *makes it true* within its own perceptions and within those who are successfully "taught" that belief.

Now we could replace the word "world" with the word "story" without changing much in the way of meaning but perhaps adding some clarity. "Worlds" here are "worlds of perception" and not physical planets. The perceptions may be of the physical planet and we may believe our perceptions of the planet actually are the planet, but in fact ... as the word "story" suggests ... the perceptions are stories we tell and learn and believe about the interrelationship between and the meaning of the objects of our perception, including ourselves.

The stories may, or may not be "true." However each and every one of us has some stories about ourselves and the planet which we believe to be true and which we enact and re-enact in our lives in time. Cultures have stories too, which they enact collectively.

A "Story" is a paradigm, a way of organizing and making sense of data, a way of making a dizzying array of mere facts in some way meaningful. A way of "connecting the dots" until some sort of "perception" emerges which

makes some sort of sense to us. A "world" in the ACIM sense is the same thing.

It is always something *we make* of things.

In ACIM terms there are two basic stories in the universe: The story of the Ego in which "worlds" (or stories) are made by us to "attack God" and the story of the Holy Spirit in which the real world (or story) was created by God as a teaching device for our minds.

We are presented with a choice between these two in every waking moment and between them we must choose and between them we do choose. We can see 'things' (and that means everything) in the light of the story of sin and guilt and death or in the light of the story of love and forgiveness and innocence.

In the view from ACIM, those are the only two choices, and all the seeming infinite variety of manifestations all fall into one or the other category.

So to any question of the sort "did God make (or create) the world" one must inquire "which world?"

Now as for time we are told that God created it. We are also told that the only time that is "real" is "now." While some Physicists are inclined to agree with that statement, as are many Zen monks, NDE survivors, saints and seers, we normally think that the past is "real" don't we?

Think for instance of a criminal court where witnesses present evidence of the 'reality' of what people did "in the past." On the basis of the jury's assessment of competing claims to "Past Reality" the accused is determined to be "guilty" or "innocent."

So there is a "cultural story" or "ego world" in which the "past is real" and so, at least potentially, is the sin and guilt of the accused!

Now for God, and the Real World, whose idea of justice can be summed up in a single word: forgiveness, all this effort to "make guilt real" by "making the past real" is no more than the raving of lunatics.

So in this sense "real time" and our cultural stories about time are poles apart. Did God create our cultural stories about time. My answer is a definite "no." Did God create time well, heck, *yeah!!!!!!!!!!*

"The only time that is real is now." God created that one. All the rest is Ego' s misperception of Creation.

And really, within the dominant western cultural story the idea that the only time that is real is now is largely meaningless. We cannot fit that statement into our dominant cultural "stories" within which the assertion is patent nonsense. That assertion states that the past is in some way ' unreal' as is the future.

Now look to our miracle definitions: "miracles undo past errors in the present (the only time that is real) and release the future (from enslavement to an illusory past)."

Now THERE is liberation!

And it is a story quite "outside of time" and beyond the imaginative capacity of contemporary Western (and generally global) culture. Most of us don't believe it largely because we do not understand what Jesus means, or what "living in the now" rather than in the past or future actually means.

Some people do understand it and have experienced it and describe it as ultimate liberation. It's a new and different "story." Everything comes to be "valued" differently.

In many places, but most clearly in the Workbook, Jesus is asking us to **question** not just our perceptions, but our confidence in our perceptions and to open our minds to the possibility that we might be mistaken ... "that little willingness."

That "little willingness" is all the Holy Spirit needs to 'correct' our perceptions. Whenever we see anything other than love, joy, harmony and solutions we are "misperceiving" through the filter's of the ego's insanity. Remarkably there are those who read the Course and conclude that it is saying that all our perceptions about the "world" being "unpleasant" are "correct" because it says God didn't create the world, we did. Ergo the world MUST be "awful." The Course student who comes up with that conclusion gets half marks. Only half because, this view fails to recognize that there are "two worlds" and the one that is 'illusory' is the one we made and the one that is 'real' is the one God created and if what we look upon is not pleasant it's because we aren't looking on 'reality' but rather on an illusion of reality conjured by the ego.

And yeah, that is **STRONG MEDICINE!** That's why we need the workbook lessons to teach us a new way of perceiving, one that is unafraid of miracles and finally one that recognizes that miracles are the only way out! Nothing we can do from Ego can "save" us, though Ego will always dispute that! At this juncture 'do nothing' makes sense ... and means "do nothing motivated by Ego" or "do nothing but trust in God and teach only love."

The Course, and indeed the whole of the physical universe, exists to teach us how to do just that. The "sleep" or "bad dream" of which ACIM speaks refers to the fact that we do know how but we have forgotten and must "awaken" to what we already know, that love is all that matters. In our "sleep" we "Dream" that "fear matters more." That becomes the story in which we believe and then we proceed to enact it! In doing that we make it

seem true to ourselves and we make of the Earth something resembling hell. When we become completely perverse we teach that the Earth REALLY IS hell, and our perceptions of hell are perceptions of ' the Earth as it truly is.' When we get really really perverse we re-write ACIM so as to more or less support our misperceptions and obfuscate the truth.

And when we get really really really perverse we teach that when Moses said "thou shalt not kill" he really meant "thou SHALT kill."

Welll ... that' s enough for one sitting, :)

All the best,

Doug