

the idea that nothing has meaning and thus cannot be refuted. It also has elements of mental laziness. No need to puzzle out complex arguments your solutions to which will often be proved wrong by experiment. Take a position that cannot be proved wrong.

In a way it is the engineer rather than the scientist who is the front line defender of the rationalist position. For it is the products of the engineer that prove the correctness of the science. If the aerodynamics are wrong, the plane crashes. Or if the software has a glitch, the program will not run. The faults in the aerodynamics or in the software are discoverable and fixable; they do not show variations in the reality of their existence. Thus in my estimation the best exhibit of Enlightenment success is the well known photograph of I.K Brunel in front of the anchor chains of the Great Eastern. You can hear him say: "Here I am, steel real and dirt on my boots. Bugger you doubters, I make it work!" Here is the practical disciple of Bacon and his colleagues.

Can Wheen write? Yes he can, and how! I know of no book that I have found written more clearly or entertainingly, despite the topics being serious matters. He can destroy a nutter with two words or a turn of phrase, and is merciless in this execution. The reader is torn between a feeling of gloom as the recital of crackpot thinking progresses and between great amusement as Wheen demolishes the absurdities. I recommend it to all skeptics and believe you will enjoy it. We have a hard battle ahead, and therefore must welcome Wheen as a powerful ally.

Meanwhile, the world persists in its weird dual acceptance of two opposed philosophies. The products of rational scientific and technical development (television, word processors, aerial transport) are happily used to propagate irrational beliefs, without any perception of incompatibility. Descartes got it wrong. He should have written: "*Credo ergo sum*".



What a Load of Crop Circles

Crop Circles: Quest for Truth DVD and Video. 115 min

From the official web site:

Crop Circles: Quest for Truth is a compelling and provocative feature-length documentary full of never-before-seen footage and interviews with leading Crop Circles researchers and scientists, some of whom agreed to be on camera for the first time. The film is an in-depth examination of prevailing theories about the origin and nature of Crop Circles and the possible implications for us and for the future of Planet Earth.

Crop Circles: Quest for Truth, is a close look at those who believe that strange things indeed are going on in the crop fields of England and other part of the world.

They call themselves 'researchers' but what is evident from watching them in action and hearing their far-fetched theories, is that these people are after only one sort of truth. Crop circles are messages from aliens. (Or the collective human spirit. Or the planet Earth. Take your pick.) Anything is preferable to the simple explanation of pranksters. This 'possibility' is covered for only five minutes and only to give the believers a chance to totally write it off. I doubt if any of them have tried to actually make a crop circle for themselves. But the effort they do put into their research is truly impressive. I'm sure they'll find their secret coded message, whether it is there or not.

This video reminded of my own effort in the field of documentary

film making, *The Mighty Mitta Muster Water Divining Test*. Most of what I did on the day was to set the camera up in front of the diviners and just let them talk. I could never write a script that could match the gems the believers themselves come up with to explain their world view.

Crop circles are, for the most part, quite beautiful and should be considered true works of art. This documentary is full of

stunning aerial photos of best of them. They are however also a form of vandallism, at least when they are created without the permission of the farmer. But there is absolutely no evidence, none whatsoever, that they are the result of anything other than direct human activity.

It was not easy to find this docu-

mentary. I searched many video and DVD shops before I finally found it in a Blockbuster video library. If this film was indeed a revelation about visitations from space aliens or some other amazing phenomena, I'm sure it would found be in everyone's collection. If you are interested in the truth, I recommend you visit www.circlemakers.org. Here you will learn how crop circles are really made and how to make them yourself. There is even a downloadable radio report from the BBC in which the reporter joined the pranksters, helped make a crop circle and turned up the next day only to hear the believers declaring it as 'real'.

Richard Saunders

