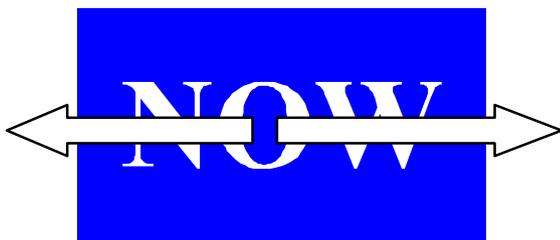


Issue 155—August 2011



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Next Harding Meeting—Early September date to be advised

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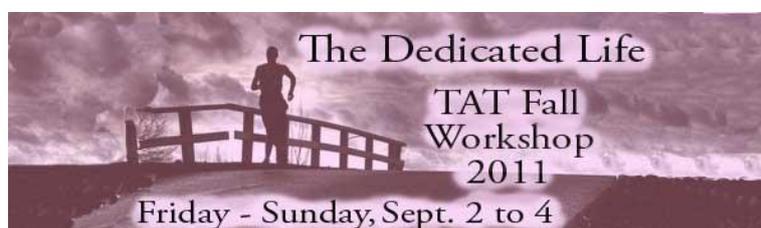
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Art Ticknor asked me to remind readers of the upcoming TAT Workshop.  
Full details at [http://tatfoundation.org/fall/tat\\_fall\\_workshop\\_2011.htm](http://tatfoundation.org/fall/tat_fall_workshop_2011.htm)

## Passage to India 2011 from Trisha English

The Krishnamurti Study Centre at Rajghat Fort in Varanasi, India, is situated on the banks of the river Ganges, arguably the most sacred river in India and possibly the world. People believe that the Ganges has mystical powers and bathing in its waters can assist the soul to achieve moksha, or liberation from the wheel of life and rebirth. For the devout Hindu the dead body is cremated at one of the many ghats and the remains consigned to the river so that the soul will go directly to heaven.

My recent stay at the Krishnamurti study centre was quite remarkable in every way. In the first instance, I was assigned the most marvellous cottage, set high on a ridge with an almost 180 degree view of the Ganges as it swept along under the great bridge towards the city of Varanasi, once known as Benares.



Cottage overlooking the Ganges

The whole environment had a timeless quality about it and often the air was filled with the beautiful voices of men and women chanting or singing the ancient religious songs. Out on the river itself, small boats drifted lazily as the fishermen cast their nets in the hope of catching something for dinner. They did not seem to mind about the dead bodies of human beings that from time to time floated by and they showed no knowledge or concern about the one billion litres per day of mostly untreated raw sewage that flows into the river. Pollution is an ever present reality, but it does not seem to touch the consciousness of those who live in Varanasi. The hundreds of pilgrims who drink and bathe daily show no concern for such realities for they believe that the river is a gift of the gods and an earthly reincarnation of the deity Ganga.

Four centuries before Christ, Lord Vishnu, the four armed "All Pervading One", proclaimed in the great Sanskrit epic, the Ramayana, that -

"man becomes pure by the touch of the water, or by consuming it, or by expressing its name".

I was content with two magical boat trips on the river, as night descended and a blistering hot sun gave way to a blood-red full moon. The water was almost as still as the air itself. During the day the humidity had been ferocious, but in the early evening a coolness came upon the water. Along the banks, families began to light fires and to cook the evening meal. Everywhere the children grew quiet like the river itself.

Night descended quickly and soon the water was filled with a golden splash of light as the moon arose like a goddess, casting off a deep red robe for one of burnished gold.

There were four of us in the boat; the two oarsmen, a young Brahmin poet and myself. The young man was also staying at the study centre and was engaged in translating Krishnamurti's classic work "Freedom from the Known", into Bengali.

He quoted a few lines from scripture but then fell silent as the goddess seemed to command our undivided attention. For a long time we simply soaked up the silence. Not speaking, just listening.

In the distance two or three fishing boats appeared as smudges on the blue-black, glasslike mirror of the river's surface. The men had ceased fishing and seemed to be swallowed up in the silence, as we were.

"What does the scene speak to you?" the Brahmin boy asked. "It reminds me of how Charon ferried the dead across the river Lethe, the river of forgetfulness", I answered. He was quiet for a moment and then said "Yes. That is what I felt also".

The following night we returned to the river again and this time journeyed much further, past the ancient city. On the way back we stopped to watch the Aarti Ceremony, a spectacular drama performed every evening for the locals and tourists alike. No Verde opera could quite match it for sheer spectacle and exuberance. There were crowds on the banks behind the theatrical performers who were framed by vast pillars of fire and there were many people crowded into boats on the river, as we were. The setting itself was quite breathtaking.

But over our shoulder, on the opposite bank of the river to where the Aarti Ceremony was being performed, another drama was being enacted. It was the sacred performance of the full moon which shone down silently with a radiance and beauty beyond measure. It shone down upon the face of the earth as it had done since time began. In the Ramayana, the Lord Vishnu said that people of faith, when they bathed or sipped the water of the Ganges would go to heaven. But in a single timeless moment it had come to us as we drifted toward Rajghat Fort beneath the mystery and magic of the full moon in a cloudless sky.

After a few minutes, and almost in unison, we decided to break away from the religious throng and to be alone with the truly miraculous. The boat pulled away and took us into the darkness, beneath the bridge and away from the ancient religious ceremony which is said to have descended from the Vedic concept of fire rituals. The word also refers to the traditional Hindu devotional song that is sung during the ritual. Aarti is performed and sung to develop the highest love for God. "Aa" means "towards or to", and "rati" means "right or virtue" in Sanskrit.

There was a "Gathering" at the study centre while I was there and it was a great success. People from various walks of life gathered to explore the theme of "Choiceless Awareness and Freedom", and throughout the four days of dialogue there was a good spirit of inquiry and many

diverse views were expressed with considerable passion but always in a climate of great affection.

That atmosphere of freedom and affection which I discovered in Varanasi at the Krishnamurti Study Centre was something quite rare, although perhaps the participants did not fully realise it. The exchanges between people reminded me of the flow of the river. Except that the river gives its beauty and bounty to all, and people are only limited by their lack of sensitivity or unwillingness to see life's journey as the unfolding of everything that is sacred.

Krishnamurti described the purpose of the study centre in the following words:

"I think it is essential sometimes to go on retreat, to stop everything that you have been doing, to stop your beliefs and experiences completely, and look at them anew, not keep on repeating it like machines whether you believe or do not believe. You would then let in fresh air into your minds. Wouldn't you? That means you must be insecure, must you not? If you can do so, you would open to the mysteries of nature and to things that are whispering about us, which you would not otherwise reach; you would reach the God that is waiting to come, the truth that cannot be invited but comes itself".

If readers travelling to India would like to stay at the Study Centre, and are prepared to put aside worldly pursuits for a little while and open themselves to something completely new, they should write to the following:



Krishnamurti Study Centre Varanasi, 2011

The In-Charge, Krishnamurti Study Centre Krishnamurti Foundation India, Rajghat Fort, Varanasi 22101 (U.P), INDIA. (Information is also available on the web)

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## Meeting Greg Campbell from Alan Mann

On our last full day in the USA we met, for the first time, one of our regular contributors, Greg Campbell. Greg is the author of two books (that I know of) *Living Bare Foot Dying Consciously* and *Womanhood is Holy*. Whilst I don't always grasp exactly what Greg is offering in his writing I nevertheless feel a deep affinity with his approach and admiration for what strikes me as a unique and challenging contribution to spiritual enquiry. I could as well leave out the spiritual enquiry description and just say a contribution to life. Jikoji is a peaceful Zen temple and retreat centre one hour south of San Francisco. Greg is listed on their website as the business manager. Margot took this photo of Greg and me on the deck of one of the retreat buildings.



Before we left the centre, Greg presented us with a 'not to be opened until later' package which included a number of treasures one of which was the poem below. The poem was accompanied by a golden statuette of Hotei which now sits on the windowsill above our PC together with the Goddess of compassion, another gift from Greg.

I did a bit of research on Hotei and most of the reference material emphasizes his sense of mirth and connection with children. The latter which I choose to interpret as an endorsement of a childlike playfulness as opposed to childishness. I had recently read what I thought a surprising conclusion to Chesterton's book *Orthodoxy*. His final sentence of the last paragraph, speaking of Jesus, reads, "*There was some one thing that was too great for God to show us when He walked upon our earth; and I have sometimes fancied that it was His mirth.*" Moments of clarity, openings to wholeness or whatever we call them are often accompanied in my case by a sense of mirth, a deep hilarity, partly I imagine, as a response to essence itself and partly at my stupidity in seeking for what is ever present.



Thank you Greg.

<http://www.jikoji.org/plan/Managers.htm>

P.S. We also had three other very interesting meetings with overseas contributors, Antoinette Goodwin, Mal Mitchell and Chris Cheney. We hope to cover these visits in our next NOWletter, in one of Margot's Traveller's Tales.

## The Happy, Barefoot, Buddha Could Be Us Also!

The so-called "Happy" Buddha  
is more accurately understood  
as an Embodiment or Archetype of  
what it **is living in** -

**Thankful Contentment and Full Receptivity.**  
**In Japanese Buddhism this Embodiment is known as**  
**"Hotei"**

a semi-legendary Zen Monk who lived in the early middle ages.  
Wandering barefoot, wearing only a ragged  
seldom washed monk's robe, playing with Children,  
he carried a mysterious cloth sack over his shoulder  
which he occasionally sat on.

There are various views as to what Treasures  
that sack contains - Snacks and/or Toys for Children;  
perhaps even  
The Secret of Perfect Peace.

The following is Part of an ancient poem:

**"Bare-footed, bare-chested,  
entering the market place empty-handed!  
Smear'd with mud and ashes -  
Still How Shining A Smile fills that Face!  
We have no need of  
supernatural powers -  
Bare Attention Alone is Enough  
to bring even Withered Trees to  
Beautifully Bloom..."**

**Every Baby Born even Here in-Our-World  
In any case, in any time, in any place and every Race,  
Every Baby Born is indeed,  
"The World Honored One"-  
yet another Buddha !  
At Your Birth You were also  
But Tragically no one could See that and so  
Tragically You Forgot Too.**

**Ignore Truth If You Will But  
Truth does not ignore Us.**

**The Always Happy.  
Always Barefoot Buddha  
Is Us !**

"Rejoice, Rejoice,

We Have No Choice"

*Greg Campbell*

## Letters to Carl – George Schloss

*Letter 7 – April 13, 2004.* Since it's almost impossible, at least for me, to determine where to begin when talking about the relationship between history and Headlessness, I might as well declare myself by beginning at the only place from which everything becomes comprehensible anyway and so have done with it once and for all. I refer, of course, to the end. Because in my mind there's no doubt that thanks to the experiments we are, if not at *the* end certainly at *an* end to history, not in the currently fashionable sense of a massive self-destruct (though the I-told-you-so syndrome is always a possibility, especially when playing with fire) or even in the more palatable if distasteful potential of a new Dark Age, but in a quite different sense: the sense of finality, of beating the bomb or war of attrition to the draw so to speak by means of a goal achieved, a mission accomplished – *the* mission as it happens. "I was a treasure and I wanted to be known," as one of the Sufi masters has it. And now, significantly enough (since there is a connection) the good news arrives just in time to be recognized by all even unto the "face" of the Unspeakable. From where, looking back (which is what history is all about or was until, again thanks to the experiments, it graced us with its Presence), everything falls into place, where in the twinkling of an eye even Mr. Eliot's "In my end is my beginning" is transformed from a paradox into a common-place, the only difference being that, though he said it and we read it, now we can prove it and he can't, or couldn't. If, that is, "proof" is the appropriate word for the silence that, though it admits of itSelf by way of the Word, lays no claim to either or even to the provisional certainty that, without exception, from Jesus and the Buddha on down to the latest avatar, to a Ramana Maharshi, for instance, has ruled the spiritual roost or at least what's passed for it up to now. "It's as plain as a gooseberry in the palm of your hand," Ramana used to say. Which indeed it is, once you've seen it. But how do you do that without almost killing yourself as he did straining for a vision or, going him one better, offering yourself up to be killed, which literal sacrifice when made once upon a time by you-know-who was, as it turned out, more than enough to satisfy local as well as universal requirements but, according to Kierkegaard at least, if committed twice in His Name would have been both superfluous and in bad taste, an indulgence? Well, for the first time in history and as easy as switching on one of Mr. Edison's lights (and, not by coincidence, since there is a connection), we've found a way, I make so bold as to say *the* way. No longer reduced to playing it by ear like the fumbling amateurs we are or were, we, too, can be the Life of the party. We, too, by learning, or rather re-learning, to sight-read, are now in a position to profess our birth-right and so come into our own, testament enough that the meaning of modernity—the despair occasioned by the breakdown and finally collapse of transcendence, the Death of God thrown in for good measure as it were—has served its purpose.

That said, and admittedly it's a mouthful, we can afford to move on to the things that count—us—always keeping in mind the caveat that, as I pointed out in my opening note and Douglas never tires of repeating, the experience of any experiment—now there's a tautology for you!—is prior to whatever meaning attaches itself to it. Which is no more than to say that, whatever conclusions we may draw regarding both, from a God's-eye perspective and its corresponding sense of vertical fulfillment (up, down, heaven, hell), space—the domain of 1<sup>st</sup> Person Science—takes precedence over time, over the horizontal, linear "completion" of 1<sup>st</sup> Person History, not in the order of value, of course, but in the order of cause. We can go even further and, respectfully acknowledging all previous symbolisms as stations on the way rather than mere shots in the dark,

nevertheless insist that, whether we know it or not or even like it or not, here at dead center where the cross is made (and, because conscious, eminently by us) is palpably where all life lives.

And if I bring this up now before setting out in earnest, it's only because I think that, the better to make our case for the sake of some hypothetical reader looking over our shoulder (and—who knows?—as Father Abraham suspected, one or two may more than suffice), we really ought to establish a few Ground-rules, the most obvious being our total debt to and reliance on evidence provided by the experiments. And again for the benefit of our hypothetical reader, should also note the emphasis we place on “the experiments” rather than on Douglas, for all that we owe him for his unparalleled insight. It's my contention that one of the things that distinguishes generic Seeing from everything that's preceded it—and I can only insist on the “everything”—is its impersonality or, if you prefer (and I do), its anonymity. Because it's not what Douglas says or does or what you or I say or do but what the experiments say or, better yet, render in silence that differentiates them from everything that's gone before. And differentiates them to such a degree as to constitute at Omega what Alpha is only able to *foresee*: the ultimate reversal in kind, the world and everything in it turned upside down and so made right side up. Is it an accident that as with the interplay of lens, retina and light, the very mechanics of the act of seeing while mirroring its own reflection—the way of the world—also reveals the way of deity to those with a single eye trained to and on it? And is it possible that, in turn, this suggests a connection between the way of the world as brought to a head by 1<sup>st</sup> Person History and the way of deity as confirmed by 1<sup>st</sup> Person Science? Well, we shall see. *George*

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### **New England Notes from Alan Mann**

There is a copy of Whitehead's *Process & Reality* glaring at me from a bookshelf. It has been sitting there for at least 20 years. From time to time I have taken the book down with the intention of getting on top of it but I never managed more than a couple of chapters, it seemed to be far too dense and inaccessible. Nevertheless, I realized Whitehead had something important to say to me because the various commentaries on his work and quotations from his lectures I came across over the years sounded very true to my understanding. I mentioned this problem to a friend just before setting off to the USA in May and she told me to try Whitehead's *Modes of Thought* as a painless alternative to *Process and Reality*. This is a book of eight chapters condensed from lectures he gave in the thirties at Wellesley College, Massachusetts and Chicago University in the thirties plus an epilogue.

There is a lot of material in these chapters that relates to the NOWletter but I will confine myself to the particular bits that fitted my New England jigsaw. At the conclusion of an explanation of the nature of self Whitehead says:

*...in our direct apprehension of the world around us we find the curious habit of claiming a twofold unity with the observed data. We are in the world and the world is in us.*

I find this identical to Traherne's observation in his poem Silence that "The world is more in me than I in it".

A vast and Infinite Capacitie  
 Did make my Bosom like the Deitie,  
 In whose Mysterious and Celestial Mind  
 All Ages and all Worlds together shined.  
 Who tho' he nothing said did always reign  
 And in Himself Eternitie contain.  
**The world was more in me then I in it.**  
 The King of Glory in my Soul did sit.  
 And to Himself in Me He ever gave  
 All that He takes Delight to see me have  
 For so my Spirit was an Endless Sphere,  
 Like God Himself, and Heaven and Earth was there.

I include this under the present heading of New England Notes as Whitehead spent most of his last 30 years at Harvard and it was highly synchronous in that my reading of his last lectures linked me to another great mind with Harvard connections, Ralph Waldo Emerson. In preparation for visits to the home ground of the Transcendentalists I read a bit of Emerson and came upon the *Divinity School Address* he gave to divinity students at Harvard in 1838. Speaking of the shortcomings of the churches he explains that they have substituted the person of Jesus and the words of the bible for the living miracle of Being, to which Jesus himself was pointing. The church seemed to him then, as it does to me now, to be more interested in reported miracles rather the miracle of life and the message of the churches is no longer, in Emerson's words, "one with the blowing clover and the falling rain" and thus misses what Jesus himself was trying to make plain. Emerson goes on to say:

*...The soul knows no persons. It invites every man to expand to the full circle of the universe, and will have no preferences but those of spontaneous love.*

Hence the connection with Whitehead and Traherne. And with this ringing in my mind we had a guided tour of the Dickinson home in Amherst and one of the two poems prominently displayed echoed Emerson's sentiments:

*The Brain - is wider than the Sky -  
 For - put them side by side -  
 The one the other will contain*

*With ease - and You – beside -*

*The Brain is deeper than the sea -*

*For - hold them Blue to Blue -*

*The one the other will absorb -*

*As sponges, Buckets do.*

*The brain is just the weight of God -*

*For – Heft them - Pound for Pound -*

*And they will differ - if they do -*

*As Syllable from Sound.*

What to make of this openness and how to realize it? It is regarded as inaccessible and transcendent rather than obvious and immanent. Most meditation techniques seem designed to reopen the window. Apart from spontaneous 'openings' I have found the Harding experiments to be the most direct route. I think that complexity is an obstacle to realization and, consequently, I tend towards the more simple expressions and approaches. For example I found Whitehead offering an idea worth testing.

*The world is included in the occasion in one sense, and the occasion included in the world in another sense. For example, I am in the room, and the room is an item in my present experience. But my present experience is what I now am.*

Back to Emerson's point about the shortcomings of the church. Never in all the services I have attended and sermons I ever heard did any preacher relate the matters covered in this note to Christ's "Dwell in me and I in you" other than figuratively as opposed to a necessary and living actuality.

*Alan Mann*

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**The NOWletter appears between 8 and 12 times every year and is a vehicle for news and views about awakening to what is really going on. The content is based primarily on contributions from readers, either their own writing or examples of what moves or interests them. Subscription is free. There is an Index of articles and back numbers from 1993 at: <http://www.capacitie.org/now/archive.htm> The most recent HTML versions at [www.traherne.org](http://www.traherne.org).**

## The Empty Throne

This sculpture hangs in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The description on the V&A website reads: “Early Buddhist artists were reluctant to represent the Buddha in human form. They preferred to indicate his presence symbolically. This relief indicates the Buddha's presence through an empty throne, attended by two attendants bearing fly-whisks, emblems of a world



sovereign (‘cakravartin’), and flanked by winged-lion capitals”.

The emptiness strikes me as particularly significant and reminds me of Traherne’s reference to the throne of deity “*his throne is near, ‘tis just before your face*’ leaving us to ponder whether he intended the word ‘before’ to indicate ‘in front of’ or ‘prior to’ your face—maybe both.

I would be interested to hear from Buddhist readers whether this really indicates *his presence symbolically* as the inscription claims or his absence symbolically, i.e., Buddha nature?

Alan Mann

**The Adoration of the Empty Throne**  
**A.D. 100-300 Kushan Dynasty Mathura,**  
**Uttar Pradesh North India**

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/users/node/2791>

## Dogen from Beryl Starke

Beryl is one of a fairly small number of our friends who manages to combine an interest in Douglas Harding and Jiddu Krishnamurti. She sent in the following quote with the observation that it fits well with what both had to say.

*One day he instructed, An Ancient said, " One must hear, one must see, one must attain." \* He also said, "If you haven't attained, you should see; if you haven't seen, you should hear."*

*What this means is that seeing is better than hearing, and attaining is better than seeing. If you haven't yet attained, you must see; if you haven't yet seen, you must hear.*

Record of things heard by Dogen translated by Thomas Cleary page 118

\*The Choenji version has " experience" for "attain"

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## **"Holistic Vision" The latest News from Floco Tausin 2/2011 (No. 10)**

NOWletter 151, December 2010 included a paper by Floco Tausin on the interesting subject of EntopticPhenomena. We have just received his latest newsletter which refers to an additional paper on the subject which is too long for inclusion in the NOWletter but which can be read at: <http://www.eye-floaters.info/news/news.htm>. Here is the introductory paragraph.

### *Open eye meditation on eye floaters*

*This is the latest issue of "Holistic Vision", the spiritual project by the author and consciousness researcher Floco Tausin. It is devoted to a phenomenon known as idiopathic or harmless "eye floaters" or "muscae volitantes" (see pictures) among ophthalmologists. We see them as scattered, mobile, transparent dots and strings in our visual field. "Holistic Vision" includes ophthalmology but questions its conclusion on floaters and goes beyond. For the observation and open eye meditation reveals a connection between altered states of consciousness and the way floaters look. Furthermore, a look at different cultures highlights floaters as an object of art and spirituality. By this "holistic vision", Floco Tausin pursues the question whether these spheres and strings are first appearances of a shining structure of consciousness within which we cover a distance to our spiritual origin a path that lights up through open eye meditation.*

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## **The Awakened Eye – Awareness and Creativity from Colin Drake**

This article was written for a website called ‘The Awakened Eye’ [www.theawkenedeye.com](http://www.theawkenedeye.com) which is dedicated to the visual arts created by those who have had some degree of awakening, and also to the fact that creating artworks can foster this awakening.

The universe is the manifestation of cosmic energy, which is consciousness in motion, for energy is synonymous with motion and consciousness is the substratum in (and from) which all things arise, in which they exist and back into which they subside. Another name for consciousness, when it is still, is awareness, for by definition consciousness is conscious and thus aware of everything occurring in it. So ‘The Awakened Eye’ is a good definition of awareness itself which is always awake and ‘sees’ every movement (thing) occurring in it.

So it can be readily seen that awareness is endlessly creative, continually creating everything that arises in the universe, and also continually destructive in that every ‘thing’, which is ephemeral, finally returns back into that. For all motion arises in stillness, exists in stillness, is known by its comparison with stillness, and eventually subsides back into stillness. For example, if you walk

across a room, before you start there is stillness, as you walk the room is still and you know you are moving relative to this stillness, and when you stop once again there is stillness. In the same way every 'thing' (consciousness in motion) arises in awareness (consciousness at rest), exists in awareness, is known in awareness and subsides back into awareness. Awareness is still, but is the container of all potential energy which is continually bubbling up into manifestation (physical energy) and then subsiding back into stillness.

This can be seen to be the case in the natural world which contains endless variety and in which all things are impermanent. Within this, living organisms are continually reproducing and evolving which is proof of their creativity. This shows that creativity is a property of consciousness itself and this can especially be demonstrated in the human species which is continually discovering, inventing and creating. Judaism actually regards humans as partners (and instruments) of God (consciousness) in creation:

Genesis 2 v.3 states that 'God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he ceased from all the work he had set himself to do'. Jewish commentators read this to mean that God left creation unfinished so that man could serve as 'a partner to God in the act of creation'.

So it is not surprising that we all feel the urge to be creative in small ways, such as the way we cook a meal, up to the grander schemes such as writing an opera or designing an opera house ... When we can give rein to our natural creativity this naturally makes us feel go(o)d and when this is stifled it creates frustration and feelings of low self-esteem. It is often posited that if Adolf Hitler had been accepted into art college when a young man, then World War Two and the Holocaust would not have taken place!

Luckily today many of us live in a world where we can give free range to our creativity, whether it is in writing, cooking, sewing, painting, building, potting, gardening etc. Not only that but, due to the internet and social networking, we can display the products of our creativity for all the world to see. In my case I have been especially fortunate having spent the last 30 years as a potter and for the last 11 years I have combined this with writing. If it were not for the internet my articles and books would never have been published.

When it comes to non-dual awareness, that is when we recognise that at the deeper level we are awareness itself in which thoughts/mental images/sensations (body/mind) come and go, this can be very useful in the creative process. For then the small self (ego) is no longer in the way with its petty judgements, self importance, self concern, self interest etc. When this occurs we see things as they truly 'are' and the natural world is much more engaging when seen from this viewpoint:

For instance we have all had glimpses of this at various times in our lives, often when seeing a beautiful sunset, a waterfall or some other wonderful natural phenomenon. These may seem other-worldly or intensely vivid, until the mind kicks in with any valuation when everything seems to return to 'normal'. In fact nature is much more vivid and alive when directly perceived, and the more we identify with the 'perceiver', as awareness itself, the more frequently we see things 'as they are'.

In my case all of my prose and poems, on non-duality, are the direct result of my meditations/contemplations and are thus written from the 'awakened' viewpoint. I must hasten to add that I do not claim to be totally awake and I still 'nod off' from time to time when I re-

identify with the body/mind. Luckily writing on this subject keeps one awake, whilst it is taking place, as one is continually 'aware of awareness' whilst writing about awareness itself. So for me it has been a great boon to be able to continually ponder and write on this subject. I would urge you all to write down your own discoveries whilst investigating the nature of self-identity and awareness. For the pondering of these and writing new findings will help to keep you awake.

With regard to my other activity which would commonly be considered to be creative, that as a potter, I find that this is enhanced when the small self, and all of its concerns, are absent. I produce a range of restaurant ware which consists of throwing multiple copies of the same item on my kick wheel. This occurs effortlessly when it happens automatically i.e., when the body and working mind work together in unison without the discursive thinking and mind-spinning of the ego occurring. Sometimes this is the case spontaneously and I work happily with a still mind (except when it is needed to consider the work in hand) and when the mind is busy with fruitless activity I listen to the radio, or a satsang tape, to give it something to focus on whilst the body gets on with the work.

For many years my wife and I produced a range of domestic ware all of which was wood fired and some of which was salt glazed. Unfortunately such ware went completely out of fashion and we no longer fire our large wood kiln. The beauty of this ware was that the colour (glaze) on the exterior of the pots was almost entirely produced by the firing process itself, that is by the red flashing of the wood flames and the natural ash glaze created as wood ash floated throughout the kiln and settled (then melting) on the pots. In some cases this was enhanced by throwing large quantities of salt into the firebox at very high temperatures, when the salt would decompose and volatilise. The sodium vapour produced was carried throughout the kiln by the flames and pull of the chimney and this reacted with the silica in the clay body to produce a glazed finish. The iron in the clay body would resist this process causing the characteristic mottled 'orange peel' finish. The great thing about both of these techniques was that the potter had only limited control over the outcome and the glaze on the finished products was as much due to nature itself as to the skill of the potter. Thus they were all unique and had a feel of spontaneity about them. In this respect they were the outcome of the small self (the potter) being negated and allowing nature to take its course.

*Colin Drake*

Images of some of these pots are at [www.theawakenedeye.com/artisans/drake2.htm](http://www.theawakenedeye.com/artisans/drake2.htm) and for my books see [www.nonduality.com](http://www.nonduality.com)

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