

GEORGE SCHLOSS 1922 - 2008

This is designed as a farewell tribute to George Schloss, a dear friend and strong proponent of and commentator on the work of Douglas Harding.

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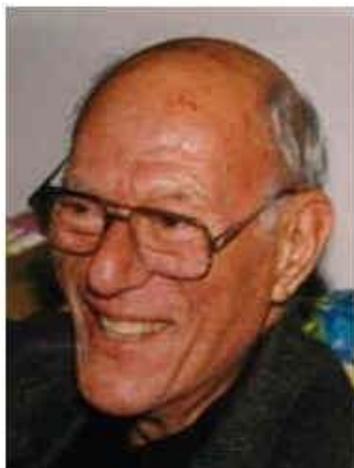
His recent writing is collected in two volumes entitled *The Language of Silence*, a self-publishing project in which George and I collaborated over the past two years. The books are available as paperbacks from the usual places online and as an Ebook download from Lulu.

Volume 1 — <http://www.lulu.com/content/935135>

Volume 2 — <http://www.lulu.com/content/935143>

His essays and the two books are also available online on a Googlepages site at;

<http://felicitie.googlepages.com/home>



George
1922 - 2008

*This is the introduction to Volume 1 of *The Language of Silence* which I persuaded George to write to provide his readers with some background to his work.*

Introduction to *The Language of Silence* by George Schloss

About ten years ago I came across a book by a Morris Berman called *Coming to Our Senses* which, appropriately enough, just under the “heading” to Chapter one bore a quote from another book called *The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth* by someone named Douglas Harding. Curiously, though I was fairly current in the literature, I’d never heard of him. Because the passage is only a few sentences long and, as it turned out, had such an implosive effect on my own life, I’m going to repeat it here.

What happens when I look in my mirror is that I, who am nothing here, place myself there where I am a man, and project him back upon this centre. Now this is only a specially lucid case of self-observation in general; my glass does for me what my friends do, only with fewer complications. What occurs everywhere obscurely, occurs plainly here. Between us, the glass and I achieve a man.

And that was all. There was no mention of him in the text. He was not even listed in the index. But far from the customary chatter, its very concreteness a good omen, it was just enough to whet my appetite. Since I live in Princeton and have access to the University Library, a copy of the abridged version of *The Hierarchy* was readily available. I say “readily available” advisedly because, though the abridged version had been published in the early fifties and this was the early nineties, it had been checked out exactly once. Now a lifetime’s experience in the ways of the world, especially the “intellectual” world, has taught me that when a book that’s been around for that length of time, particularly in one of our great centers of learning—the home to Einstein and others—and has been checked out only once in forty years there’s a reason for it. It’s either an exceptionally good book or one that’s, well, maybe not so good and receiving its just due. Needless to say it didn’t take me too long—maybe a chapter or two to recognize I was in the presence of something quite extraordinary.

Devouring it in three or four sittings, I immediately ordered a copy of *On Having No Head* which, when it arrived, I couldn’t wait to begin. Since it represents such an important turning-point in my

life, I can still picture the scene perfectly. It was a late Sunday morning and I was sitting in my bathrobe on the couch holding the book in my left hand and with my right attempting the first experiment I ever consciously performed, in this case the pointing finger or, as I've come to think of it, the magic wand which, indeed, it is. A creature of habit like so many of us, the first time round I completely missed it. I assumed I was pointing to my face which, of course, on present evidence I was not. Returning to the text for directions, I tried it again and this time I got it and got it in spades. I recognized almost at once that a search that had begun a half-century before and had included a brief flirtation with Catholicism, a lengthy pilgrimage through India and a short stint in Japan along with innumerable books and not so innumerable peak experiences, had come to a close, that I was enveloped, literally immersed in something of a revelation. Like the prodigal son who might have asked "Was this why I wandered the world over in body, mind and spirit only to end up here in the presence of mySelf?", I can also remember murmuring under my breath, and more in amazement than reverence, "O my God!" Little did I know.

Now in the sense that I'd finally found that what I'd been looking for had, in reality, been here all the time in the person of what I was looking out of, it might very well have signalled the end of the story. But, as I've written elsewhere regarding the "end of history", rather than finding myself at an end, as with history itself I discovered I was also at a beginning and a beginning which, quite in accordance with two-way looking and our all-too-human need for name-calling, may very well come to be classified as the Headless era. And if, hiding behind the all-embracing skirts of the experiments, this claim sounds too immodest, even too presumptuous for words, it's meant to. It's my conviction—and I'm quite serious—that because we've finally recognized who we are and from this conscious position can see that what obtains to each of us in microcosm is also applicable in macrocosm to the race itself, indeed to all creation, we can, now that all has been said if not done, for the first time in history afford to be too presumptuous for words. After all, if paradox is the name of the game and, as any experiment demonstrates, it is, this presumption might even, paradoxically, be taken for a sign of humility.

On the next to the last page of my copy of the Headless book was a note advising that further information was available from Anne Seward in Playford in Suffolk. I wrote, she responded with a list, I selected a few items, enclosed a check and proceeded to forget about it. Not about Headlessness, of course, or the experiments which I continued to return to—at least the few I knew about that could be practised alone, that is to say in the presence of none other than my Non-other—but about the material I'd ordered. It wasn't until a few months later that in the U.K. on one of my frequent visits and coming across a copy of the newly-published *Head Off Stress* in the airport on the way home—and I can assure you it only served to re-ignite my commitment—I was reminded that, though my check had long since been cashed, I hadn't as yet received the print-outs and back issues of Share It I'd sent for. I hasten to add this was pure oversight on Anne's part and instantly remedied when, on my return to the States, I called her.

Now if I'm going into this in far too much detail, it's only because it seems to me a perfect example of what I've come to think of as 'providential serendipity', serendipity being a word coined by Horace Walpole in the eighteenth century signifying valuable things not sought for. Recognizing that it says a great deal more about me than it does about him and I blush to admit it, but here I'd been already deeply affected by Douglas' work and maybe a hundred miles from where he lived and it never occurred to me once to get in touch with him. Not that I'd ever been that much of a camp-follower but, aside from the fact that I'd lived long enough to have had my fill of "gurus" (which, of course, as I was to discover, he distinctly is not). I wasn't about to intrude on the privacy of a man already in his eighties.

All I can say now is how mistaken I was, especially as regards this business of ‘privacy.’ Because as I was to find out, if there’s one thing Douglas is not it’s a ‘private’ person. On the contrary, his life and work, dedicated to the total transparency that reveals the secret everyone knows anyway, have proven to be just the reverse and, in retrospect, I can only thank God for it. And Douglas, too, of course, and Anne for her oversight and the subsequent phone-call I would otherwise not have had to make. I still shudder to think of the alternative. Because it was on the strength of that phone-call that my own personal history, already come to an ‘end’ by means of the meaning made explicit in the uncovering provided by the experiments, was to begin anew on an altogether different plane. And here, if I may, is an example of how ‘providential serendipity’ works or, at least in this instance, worked for me.

After accepting her profuse apologies, I mentioned in passing that I knew Playford where she lived quite well, that I’d been stationed for the better part of two years during the War at Martlesham Heath only a few miles away and that, though I’d been to England many times since, I’d never returned to the base but, having recently received an announcement that what was left of my old outfit was about to celebrate its fiftieth reunion, a plaque to be unveiled and the queen in attendance and so on, I was thinking of doing so. “Then you must come and visit him,” she said and not only said but insisted. “Why don’t you give him a call? I know he’s home now because I just finished talking to him.” So she gave me his number.

I called. We set up a time and a few months later following a day or two spent revisiting some of my former haunts in Woodbridge, Felixstowe and Ipswich I found myself at Shollond Hill. I knocked, he opened and we immediately greeted each other on a first-name basis. (And though this is not the place to go into it, that too, in my view has its significance when weighed in the great scale-pan of custom and history). I also handed him a large package I’d seen leaning against the door which, as it turned out, contained the final proofs of *The Trial*. (THE TRIAL OF THE MAN WHO SAID HE WAS GOD). When he groaned—and for all the radiant lightness of its content it was a heavy damn thing—I mentioned that inasmuch as I’d been an editor in one of my past lives I’d be glad to run through it with him. Apparently it was an offer he couldn’t refuse because instead of spending just the one night as planned, I stayed for the balance of the week. No need to imagine what a delight and privilege that was, not only to go over that seminal book word for word, but to be able to share and compare notes with its author. Incidentally, prior to leaving I learned that someone else was due to arrive shortly, a lady he’d recently met in Paris also on her first visit. Her name was Catherine.

I don’t want to go on too long. Suffice it that I attended my first organized gathering that fall in Montreal where, accompanied by Judy, Douglas kicked off his annual progress from east to west in this hemisphere. Aside from the obvious benefits of sharing with the like-minded or even the not so like-minded, it was a marvelous opportunity to go through some of the experiments that, as with the Foursome, the Machine, the Circle, require more than one or two people to make their point. Though, as Douglas is fond of emphasizing, any way home is the right way home and, as a result, any one experiment will do to reveal who we really really are, nevertheless, when it comes to my particular area of concern, to illuminating this or that aspect of human existence not only as experienced singly but in its so-called collectivity—that elusive and illusive ‘we’ he talks about in *The Science of the 1st Person*—some experiments are more equal than others. In any case, though I’ve since attended many, many workshops, both here and in England and France and on a small scale have even conducted a few of my own and though I’ve also been a guest in his house many, many times just as he, from time to time, has been a guest in mine and each occasion has offered an opportunity to at once confirm and deepen my commitment I have never veered, not for one instant, from my first response to the initial invitation I received that Sunday morning: that the pleasure of my company was being requested at an epochal event.

Which brings me, finally, to specific material you ask for your proposed biography. Though, like many of us I do know something of the inevitable gossip, the ins and outs and ups and downs of little Douglas' life, it's nevertheless a project that's worth undertaking and must and should be undertaken while the details, the names and dates and all that goes along with them, are still available straight from the horse's mouth. Certainly it's a book I look forward to reading. As to what I in particular might contribute to your research over and above what I've already mentioned in passing—I've been thinking about that. Hence my delay in responding to your request for information.

For me it all boils down to one essential question. What has been central to my experience of Douglas that, commensurate with his epochal achievement—and I have to insist on that—might be of interest to the world? I suppose I could begin by listing the many personal qualities I'm sure you and others will note as well, qualities made obvious not only to me but to the seemingly endless stream of visitors through his house and the innumerable attendees at workshops: his courtesy and patience, his openness and generosity, above all his supreme intelligence. I'm sure that those of us who've met him in the flesh and maybe even those who haven't could add to the list and throw in, for good measure, some I've omitted. But though all that goes without saying and in themselves would be more than enough to insure a valued friend, as far as I'm concerned it's still not of the essence. After all, there've been many people—well, if not many at least a few, enough at least to keep the world right-side up—who, from time to time, have exhibited courtesy and patience and intelligence and all the rest but that still doesn't add up to the experiments, to the give and take of two-way looking.

Because in my view the experiments are the key not only to his work but to a life which seen from the outside might otherwise have revealed a dangerous integrity bordering on unholy ambition had it not been redeemed by these 'heavenly' instruments he was then impelled by their very nature to share with us. Now I realize I may be treading on delicate ground here—his early rupture with his family, for instance, echoing, at least to some degree, an earlier "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"—but in the final analysis (which is what the experiments are all about) that's not the issue. The issue is the truth.

I've already mentioned his transparency. And certainly it's no small thing and reveals something of the awesome power implicit in the experiments that the realization of his 'glassy essence' has not only brought so many of us together who would otherwise not have met but has served as a conduit, a medium through which each of us can in turn, if we so desire, realize our own. But as I've written elsewhere as regards the nature of apocalypse—its essential meaning no more nor less than 'an unveiling, an uncovering'—with history itself now coming to an end, not in the way expected, of course, but the only way possible, and with its purpose fulfilled by means of these simple instruments, as with each of us individually this is only a beginning. It's my contention that what distinguishes the experiments and, by extension, Douglas, from anything that's come before is not only their all-inclusiveness but their and his essential anonymity. As in the Unclassified, to invoke the experiments is to call upon the name of that which shall remain nameless, namely the voice of silence, Godspak. And though, as regards their implications, I have yet to detect one false note in anything he's ever said or written about them, their absolute truth depends neither on what he says nor does but only on that they are. And I know of no other guides to the nature of reality—and that includes the founders of the great religions and the great spiritual teachers, the sages and saints and seers—of whom that can be claimed. Were it otherwise, especially in this 'democratic and scientific' age, it would represent not only the mixture as before but an intolerable lapse into an idolatry and hagiography that has bedevilled us from the beginning of time and which, of course, he instantly and justifiably rejects. And should the day arrive when there are some who don't reject it—and stranger

things have happened (“Why call me good when only God is good?”)—we now know, thanks to two-way looking, that as the unique Subject of the equal opportunity universe that inhabits us, either all of us have the credentials to identify ourSelf and the where-with-all to prove it, or none of us do. By the same token, that it’s been granted to Douglas to become the vessel through which I, for one, have been given back this gift of mySelf would be a debt almost impossible to repay were it not for the testimony of the experiments themselves. But I do repay it and so do we all with the knowledge and assurance—and never so apparent as in a paper-bag—that, whether in Nacton or at a workshop or anywhere else, as his guest I am at the same time necessarily his host and so, paradoxically, in this reciprocal interchange of absolute inequality we meet as equals. And that, too, is the meaning of our time. I dare say of all time.

George

I asked George’s wife Antoinette if she could enlarge on George’s biographical note by way of some more ‘personal’ information, which she kindly provided in a series of emails.

Antoinette 1

Dear Alan, First off, George was born in New York City on November 7, 1922 the younger of two sons. He was a lifelong mystery to his father in particular. His father was one of the lower East Side NYC Jews who brought himself up quite successfully by his bootstraps, with the help of George's (incredibly beautiful) mother, Irene Lipman. By the time George was born the bootstraps were up and they lived in one of the several high rises his father had built on Central Park West supporting a house staff of five and a chauffeur. George always hated the hierarchy and identified with the servants . . . or fell in love with them. As that little boy, George's name appeared in the newspaper his father was reading one day. It was one in a list of donors to a charity organized to meet the needs of those devastated by the Great Depression. Maybe he was as old as 11, but I think younger. His father looked over his paper at George and asked, "Son, is this you?" When George told him yes, his father could only look at him as if to study him briefly and then he went back to reading his paper.

George's father, Leo Schloss, a simple, hard working, very successful businessman, apparently never had the intellectual or emotional developmental wherewithal to understand or to identify at all with George or to find his way over to his son and his experience. George's 7 or 8-year-old brother was the one who would follow in his father's footsteps and who would inherit the business and much more of the wealth than George would. But George was a creative type for whom (as I found out through my own experiences and studies) psychoanalysis has a quasi-diagnostic category of “creative type”. (Cf. Ernest Becker’s *The Denial of Death*)

Perhaps you have already heard the myriad of stories of George's travels after his parents divorced when he was 16. George left home traumatized whether he knew it or not at the time by the messiness and painfulness of his parents' break-up and divorce. He would stay close to his mother all his life, for better AND worse, as he often revealed through his stories.

At this very unstable time in his family’s life the 16 year-old George graduated from Columbia Grammar School on the Upper West Side and was off to the University of Chicago to study. Soon bored by his undergraduate courses—he quit to go to Hollywood where he thought he might like to act in or direct movies. (George had an incredibly rich and beautiful speaking and singing voice and he never forgot a lyric, a melody or a line of poetry.) On the movie lots of Hollywood he worked as

a messenger boy, but he had one too many exchanges in passing with personalities like Humphrey Bogart that he decided he just did not get along with actors; and off he went again.

Traipsing all over the USA he read voraciously every work of “Shakespeare” (actually written by the Earl of Oxford, George was prepared to prove). This he did before (as he imagined he very well might do soon) die in the war (as it was just before his turn to be drafted into WWII). Reading his way back he was headed home to NYC to enlist before the government could draft him, (sort of like quitting before they could fire him?)

So then to England, to Paris and finally home again to NYC. Next was marriage to Jeanne, the girl who’d waited for him. The newly wed George, became an editor at Colliers Magazine and was doing very well when his father for whatever reason came to visit them in their cold water flat in the Village and offered to match George’s salary at Colliers. George said if his dad was willing to pay him the equivalent of his salary he would quit his position to write and paint; and so he did. He studied under fine painters and did very well. He wrote poetry and the first of his plays; but with his leisure came restlessness and bouts with meaning and he went off to search for God, in India and its surrounds, sleeping in the streets and washing in the rivers, meeting with gurus; and finally the last one told him to go home again; so he did. He took the longest because then least expensive way back to the States to what he must have known was to be his own divorce.

Deep depression set in after his divorce from Jeanne as he was living alone, studying and continuing to do very well at “doing” art in the Village of NYC while longing to see his children. His story goes on through another marriage, life in the West (USA) divorce, a masters at St. John University, an emotional crash, a revival, another marriage, initially blissful with two more children, Thea and Luc. Then he went through intense pain, divorce, financial loss and profound bitterness until his discovery of Douglas Harding’s work. Nonetheless still bitter, he found his way into and out of one last disillusioning and disappointing tie with a woman.

We met in 1997 at a July 4th party at the end of my own decade-long search for meaning through studies that earned me three academic degrees, one after another, at Princeton Theological Seminary and concurrently in New York through my clinical training that earned me three clinical certificates. Since George and I met our friends who were at the party have continued to like telling the story of how I sat down in the only empty seat at the party, the seat next to George’s, he introduced himself to me and gradually, pulling his chair closer and closer to mine, launched into one of his characteristic interrogations serving his desire to know all he could about anyone he met. Between his questions about me and my answers he mentioned that he was familiar with one of the religious personalities that I had studied with passionate interest. I was elated! The personality he knew from his own studies and had been my very favorite subject to explore. A 17th century French Quietist mystic, Madame Jeanne Marie Guyon fascinated me then and now and I was so excited to know someone else who knew of her and her work and who found her interesting, too! What was more, he knew of the psychoanalytic theorist, Julia Kristeva, whose work provided my psychoanalytic methodology.

I thoroughly enjoyed these connections in our conversation, but I thought little of it at first. Then he called me to invite me to dinner and afterward on a fine summer’s eve while we shared an ice cream cone for dessert, sitting on a bench on the town square, I realized how appealing his brash charm was to me. After our “date,” I asked around about him among our mutual friends, and when I answered their “Why?” as to my reason for wanting to know, one lovely man exclaimed, “How fortuitous!” (George and I would later love to joke that we would inscribe these words on our shared gravestone.)

I invited him to a play in New York. We then circled each other briefly, dared to marry, floundered around successfully through all of George's surgeries and others of his (and my) life events. Together our relationship transformed itself into the best of friendships. (Don't get me wrong. I loved him like crazy, 'til he loved me like sane. I can't imagine being married to any one else in my lifetime.) Without our knowing enough to be trying, we were to discover together what it meant to know ourSelves as One. We knew in the exact same moment though he said it first as one afternoon we lay together facing his approaching death.

It's true, I confess, that I used to joke with our friends when we first married that we might not be a couple, per se, but that we definitely were a pair. It's just that we surpassed ourselves, through no fault of our own, so that I am eternally grateful to have had that madman in my life. He was brilliant and funny and sexy to the end. I abhorred any uncomfortable moment he had as he lay dying and I celebrate the ultimate peacefulness of his death. He died in his sleep in the hospital bed that I'd put right next to our bed and it was there I lay, waking at what must have been the moment he died. He was warm when I kissed his forehead, but he was still. I adored him and he learned to trust it . . . and me; and I learned to trust myself through loving him. We did it! We loved; and for us, that was a most important feat.

Dear Alan and Margot, Thank you so unspeakably much for making George's life's work to "bloom like a rose" for him before his marveling, ever so very, very grateful eyes. You recognized him and valued him for who he was and it was the perfect gift for a man whose father never was able to comprehend the miracle "little George" was.

Antoinette

Antoinette 2

Dear Alan and Margot, It occurs to me that I might have given you more painful detail with way less sensitivity than I should have about George. I do hope I said nothing that would mar your memory of him or diminish your respect for him.

We were both on relational paths from which we diverted each other, indeed saved each other from following to their respective unhappy endings. We both had found our intellectual and vocational passions before we found each other; and we had the highest respect for each other's thinking and for each one's making of our lives what we could be comfortable and satisfied with, indeed fulfilled by. (I'm still, after *all* this study and practice, inclined to follow such a statement re: this part of our respective realities with a passionate "Thanks be to God.")

George was from the big city, indeed, THE big city, and I came from a small town in "THE" Appalachian mountains of West Virginia. My mother was a mountain girl with more drive and innate intelligence than others from her time and location on a mountain farm. She married two very intelligent men . . . consecutively of course. ☺

The first, my (very intelligent and eventually way-overeducated) father, the son of Italian immigrants, was never faithful to my mother and literally abandoned her to care by herself for my brother and me when we were toddlers. She, from Scotch Irish immigrants had grown up a poor farm girl. She did not know how to drive a car, never mind own one, and we lived in abject

conditions before she made a move encouraged and facilitated by our dear uncle who could not stand to watch her suffer her loss or her struggle to support us. Uncle Paul was a big ol' Kentucky coal and oilman and unlike my mother who went to church where she could walk to, he went to the Presbyterian church "uptown" with his wife, Julia, my biological father's older sister. So one week Uncle Paul told my mother that from the coming Sunday on he'd pick us up on Sunday mornings and drive us to church and, by the way, she could meet this lovely man, Ray Goodwin; and Uncle Paul suggested that my mother join the church choir in which Uncle Paul and Ray sang. She had a gift for singing (and yodeling, tho' she never did *that* in a Presbyterian choir; so she joined the church and the choir. My mother and Ray Goodwin, a well-respected local businessman fell in love as Uncle Paul had thought they might and then dated for four years before they married. (But who was counting? My hungry-for-love "Irish twin" brother and me, that's who!) In those four years Ray Goodwin had the roof lifted on his lovely brick home (in a very nice neighborhood) lifted and a whole floor built for my brother's and my new bedrooms and bath! We thought we'd gone to heaven.

At the same time the church members "adopted" my brother and me into their Presbyterian midst, into Sunday school every Sunday, Vacation Bible School in the summers and then the Youth Fellowship when we became teenagers, which effectively swept us out of our bio. Italian immigrant grandparents' owned and run town bar (that our grandfather and grandmother and their siblings had established originally as a confectionery across the street from this mountain town's bus station.) We'd already spent way too much time in the bar as small children.

Our "Nonno" and "Nona" had saved the money that my Nono and his brother had made mining coal in order to buy their own business, all of this of course at the turn of the century; but sadly not many folks wanted confections when they got off the bus in Clarksburg, WV so their confectionery had soon become one of the local bars. Boy, were we pulled out of there in a hurry when Mother met Ray married, and then off to church!

George's four kids often liked to say that their father was a cross between *Kojak* (an old cops and robbers television show character played by Telly Sevalas) and Henry Higgins (played by Rex Harrison, if I'm not mistaken) in the movie *My Fair Lady*. That was an apt description of the social man George was; but obviously he was so much more (and blessedly so much less).

I do not feel that I will ever have the need to marry again after my journey with George. I feel fulfilled by our relationship. God willing I will have my work and my-soon-to-be-remarried daughter and two grandchildren to keep me busy the rest of my life; and I bought the plot for my ashes to be buried right next to George's in the Princeton Cemetery. I just ordered a simple and lovely headstone with room on it for my name to be engraved below George's. Hopefully that will be many years from now when it's "little Antoinette's" turn to go.

Antoinette

Antoinette 3

Dear Alan and Margot, Patiently, I assure you, but with sweet anticipation I will look forward to biographical e-mails from and about you both. I'm very moved, though not in the least surprised, that you plan a NOWletter about George in January or whenever! George would indeed have groaned outwardly and been moved and grateful and then have endured his unconscious struggle between grandiosity and shame, i.e. the usual human narcissistic mix of embarrassment and pleasure about it,

the likes of which we both have had to endure way too often until we got any semblance of authentically humble footing again, at least for a moment.

(This universal struggle I mention above was first posited by early psychoanalysis (Freud) (whose metaphors for human experience I find more helpful than others and certainly more helpful than the many religions' various metaphors re: human experience). Freud and later Heinz Kohut located its origins in infancy in relation to who else but our consequently and most unfairly maligned mothers.)

But back to our George. He liked to tell a telling story about himself of when he was a toddler whose mother one lovely afternoon was entertaining all of the ladies at a "society" tea in their living room when prompted by who knows what our little George came dancing all around the room for them joyfully and . . . stark naked. His mother's reaction was probably not at all what he had expected if he had any expectations at all. I think at least by *that* point he had developed only a gossamer-thick defense anyway against revealing his true self to audiences who hadn't invited him to do so. Your invitation to him made all the difference in the world to him. Thank you over and over again for seeing and valuing him. He didn't expect to be valued and didn't really need to be recognized to keep on doing what he was doing, but he flowered feeling seen by you.

So much love to you and Margot,

Antoinette

* Antoinette had signed off one of her earlier messages to us 'By eye-sight but not heart-sight unseen,' referring to us at the opposite ends of the earth but also to George himself. Thank you for this wonderful input Antoinette.

Jan Hamer's message to the LookforYourself email conference

Jan Hamer

Hi friends, I usually don't get to write on these pages, though I sometimes read. But I thought those of you who knew George Schloss would want to hear that he died this morning. I heard from his wife, Antoinette, and also from Catherine. I'd spoken to him every few weeks recently--he was more than ready to go, I'd almost say rarin' to go, and he said that although he tried to scare himself about it, he never succeeded. He said headlessness was the best thing that happened to him, (and in fact the best thing that happened generally since amphibians walked onto dry land), and he was always very good-humored about his declining bodily condition. His letters about headlessness, recently published in two volumes by Alan Mann, gave him a sense of completion.

His departure was modest and comfortable, at home, and blessedly devoid of the hype associated with the recent demise of Guru what's-his-name. [The listserv Lookforyourself had been discussing the death of the guru Adi Da.] Warm regards to you all.

Jan

Jim Clatfelter's message to the LFY conference in response.

Jim Clatfelter

Thank you, Jan, for letting us know of George's passing. It's always sad when somebody dies, but it's also good to know that he was ready and accepting of it. He certainly contributed a great deal to my understanding of Seeing. I've always considered headless seeing to be the central discovery (through reading *On Having No Head*) of my life, but it took George (through his letters) to make me see Douglas's discovery and sharing of the Experiments as the central event (and end) of history, the event to which all of history had been leading. He had a vast knowledge of the history of ideas, and he saw them all leading up to the discovery of headless seeing. I'm glad his letters have been published and are available on the Internet too. If we take Seeing seriously, I think his claims are undeniable. There's no reason to be shy about stating the importance of Seeing and the Experiments. We are on to something important, really important! No one has stated it more boldly than George Schloss. It took George to make me realize that, while headless seeing has been the grace of my life, it is also the great grace of history. Douglas often said it takes courage to go by what you see rather than by what all around you are insisting upon. George taught me the courage to insist upon the significance of Seeing to the planet as well as to myself. Forever grateful,

Jim

About this time Jim made another contribution to the LFY conference in response to a subject under discussion, a comment by Janet Heierbacher, which I have added here as it makes reference to George's contribution.

Hi Janet, (who had earlier said—"after reading the likes of Da Free John and how many others, was just wondering if they make more of This than is necessary.")

I wonder whether they see the design of consciousness at all. Douglas was an architect. He drew us a blueprint of awareness. He saw the Grand Design of awareness, and he shared it through experiments and the blueprints he called maps. Other teachers go on and on with word after word. Words are fine, and the words of many sages and saints seem right. Their words apply perfectly to what we see in the experiments, and in our everyday awareness once we have made the vision our own. But what are these sages and saints going by? I think they're going by the direct experience of awareness or presence. They see that our living identity is this present awareness. But how to convey it? Words, words, words. The words they use can seem just right—and just out of reach. It took Douglas, the architect, to draw the blueprint, the map of awareness. And it took Douglas to devise the experiments and put the vision in sight of each of us. The philosophers were close, but (as George Schloss would say) no brass ring, no cigar, no Fact. They showed us how to think in paradoxes. Douglas's vision resolves those paradoxes in a single instant of seeing. The sages tell us we are simultaneously all and nothing at all, void and plenum at once. How can this be? How do we resolve the paradox? Do we take it on faith? Do we feel our way into it somehow? Do we put in ten thousand hours of meditation, as some have suggested? Will any of that ever give us the tools to convey it to others? I think it just leaves everyone confused and searching forever. But the experiments and the maps clear it up at once. They point to both void and plenum in our always present experience, and they map them out. No more confusion about what the words refer to. We can point to what they are. Void and plenum are now just two aspects, two visible locations, of a

single presence or awareness, of our life itself. What was once a paradox and a puzzle is now a Fact, simple and obvious. What a gift! The end of searching! And, again as George would say, the end of history, collective and personal.

Jim

A reminder of Jim's website where the Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu is given a headless interpretation. His commentary on Verse 1, which I think most relevant to George's theme, reads as follows: "Lao Tzu begins the Book of Tao by telling us that the Tao, the absolute, cannot be defined with words. He says we must look for it. He will repeat this theme throughout. This looking or seeing is total seeing - looking out at the world of appearance and looking in at its origin in the spacious emptiness at the very center of our being. This emptiness is truly empty and truly great because it contains all possibility, all potential, and all that appears. It's the source of all that exists - and aware of itself as such. What a promise! He even tells us where to look. Look within for origin. Look without for creation. Look and see both ways simultaneously. Origin and creation are one!"

<http://www.geocities.com/~jimclatfelter/jimztao.html>

Alan Rowlands

Alan suggested his contribution take the form of a report of the occasion of the visit by Margot and me to Alan's home in London on the 29 September last year. After lunch, Alan rang George in New Jersey and both Alans spoke to him. After these exchanges Alan Rowlands put the phone on his piano lid and then played part of Schubert's last piano sonata; the same work that George had enjoyed so much at Douai years before.

Alan Mann

Heinz Rahn

(I include this extract from Heinz Rahn's Notebook as an example of discussions, behind the scenes, of George's work. Heinz wrote: Alan read parts of this memoir from Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche's 'Blazing Splendour' to George Schloss who exclaimed, "Why that's just what we are on about.")

I remember well one particular instruction that Samten Gyatso gave me at an early age. It had to do with a teaching on the profound topic of essence, nature, and capacity. He said, "The word capacity refers to the unconfined basis for experience, as in the moment just before something takes place. Once the arising has occurred, it usually has already turned into a thought. Capacity means the basis for that to happen, an unimpeded quality of awareness.

This unimpeded quality is extremely subtle and significant. Once you acknowledge this unimpededness, nothing more needs to be done. In this unimpededness, it is impossible to find any subject or object. The analogy for this is a bright mirror, a readiness for experience to unfold without

any preconceptions whatsoever. So please understand very well the third of these three: essence, nature, and capacity."

There are many people who misidentify capacity as being not the basis, like the mirror, but the manifestation, like the reflection in a mirror. However, the reflection means that the mind and the sense object have already linked up, and the attention has already been caught up in distraction. One should not identify the capacity with being caught up in subject, object, and the act of perceiving, he said. An unconfined basis for experience means the readiness, being able to experience - just ready to be, but not yet involved in dualistic experience. If your training is in this readiness, rather than in conceptual thinking, you won't be caught up in duality during daily activities. This capacity, in essence, is the unimpeded omniscience of all Buddhas, which is totally unlike the attention that focuses on one thing while eliminating everything else....there is one thing you should watch out for: On the one hand, you could assume it is all so simple that everyone would understand. But then, on the other hand, that's not the way things are. People will often comprehend something totally different from what you mean, concluding that there is nothing to gain, so that they become careless and give up.

You feel that realising the nature of mind is simply a matter of course, he continued, but I want you to understand that some people do not know the nature of mind, and there definitely is a reason for that. There are many people whose practice of 'mind essence' is nothing more than remaining absent-minded and unaware in the state of the all-ground.

Alan Mann

This is an attempt to explain why I think George's contribution to headlessness is so important.

To realize this instantaneous Now, to live in the present moment, taking no thought for to-morrow or yesterday - must be my first concern. And my second must be to find in this Now all my to-morrows and yesterdays."

Douglas Harding

The above quotation is taken from page 224 of *The Hierarchy of Heaven & Earth*. It is the reading, which George took as the theme of his final years and is the backbone of the collected works in the two volumes of his *Language of Silence*. I only met George once but loved him like a brother, it goes without saying, as a very lovable brother. I never knew anyone who rang more true in what he thought and taught and in what he was. As Jim Clatfelter has pointed out he rivalled Douglas in the courage to express the unacceptable.

There is considerable resistance to George's interpretation of the headless message as ultimate revelation, which he describes as the 'end of history'. When I first heard this claim myself I thought it a step too far and it seems that is the opinion of most of us who have realized the 'aware space here' and the effectiveness of the experiments in revealing the transparency at centre. My doubts about George's conclusion led me to consider whether my resistance was evidence of my inability to follow Douglas's second injunction. "*to find in this Now all my to-morrows and yesterdays*". If so, what was preventing me from going the whole hog? Reawakening to our first or true nature seems straightforward enough in the light of the experiments but in doing so, to realize true nature as true context, not as something manifesting in an apparent context of time, I find much harder to see.

I recently read a book at the prompting of Dave Knowles entitled '*Life in Mind*', a classic example of scientists skating around the need to shift from observer to participant and in which the author tackles the current approaches to the explanatory gap between consciousness and matter. An

interesting choice of the word ‘gap’ and I imagine George taking the author aside and asking him to point to the gap that ‘matters’, explaining *that* is what is required, not another pile of explanation. Coincidentally, Dave introduced me to Gebser’s *The Ever Present Origin* some time before I came across George, and I was delighted to find that George was well aware of the need for ‘presentation’ and ‘verition’ through an attentive ‘waring’— phrases that Gebser coined to describe the necessary action.

I often had difficulty in grasping exactly what George meant in some of his extended runs so, from time to time, I wrote interpretations, which he then affirmed or corrected. My latest one paragraph effort was included in the recent survey of what it might be that blocks the revelation of the experiments and George commented that my attempt couldn’t have been said better. But it could, and it had been said better by George himself in one of his letters. (Letter 82 Vol. 2 of *The language of Silence*), in this extract from his commentary on Masao Abe:

“God is quite capable of going beyond the sacred realms and work in history at will. But how do people go beyond the realm of history and enter the realm of God?” Abe asks. Quite simply as an Eckhart or Rumi saw for themselves but other than to talk about it were, absent the experiments, no better equipped to pass it on than they were of turning on a light-switch in a flip of the wrist or twinkling of an eye. And that, the presence of an unfolding time in the service of an enfolding space, is the meaning of history. It’s as simple as that and, now that we see it, the very gift we’ve all been given in this our hour of need.

Coming to grips with George was helped, in my case, by an insight into the extent to which I was time-bound. I had a deep inversion of the notion that I was embedded in time during a lunchtime, contemplative wander through the botanic gardens one day in the late ‘80s. When I met George several years later I found that he shared my high opinion of Traherne, even to the extent of seeing that the headless experiments, which famously deliver the ‘Capacitie’ about which Traherne talks endlessly (the glass bosom mentioned in the verse below) but can also open us to the ‘ending of time’ without which the job of the experiments remains only half-done. The NOWletter, which made its appearance in 1991 was so named to reflect the Trahernian insight that what is commonly referred to as God misses the mark by quite a long way. In his poem “The Anticipation” he attempts a definition of a more comprehensive understanding:

*From everlasting He those joys did need,
And all those joys proceed
From Him eternally.
From everlasting His felicity
Complete and perfect was,
Whose bosom is the glass,
Wherein we all things everlasting see.
His name is Now, His Nature is For-ever:
None can His creatures from their Maker sever.*

Many people confronted with the experiments are shocked by their simplicity into instant rejection. They seem heretical both to traditionalists of many stripes who see years of arduous preparation as the necessary foundation, as well as to people who agree with Krishnamurti that any ‘action’ is doomed to failure; the ‘there is nothing you can do’ school. George liked to compare realization to turning on the light and used the image of Roman emperors commanding the lighting of countless

lamps and candles with our present ability to lean across and flick a switch. So, for those of us repelled by simplicity he takes us on a journey, the human journey, of infinite complexity and reveals the destination—he calls it the end (purpose) of history—as the simplicity made plain in the experiments; our ‘light-switch’ at hand.

Any criticism on the lines of “but you exclude the possibility of future extensions, realizations, new insights, etc.,” re-establishes time as the context of our being. It puts me back on the evolutionary treadmill; that which has to be suspended for the first injunction *realizing this instantaneous Now*, to get purchase. The trouble, it seems to me, is that I stop there, think ‘how wonderful’ and then try to incorporate the insight into my established world-view where time is seen as that in which I live and move. I haven’t turned inside out to reveal that wider perspective and become *this Now where all my to-morrows and yesterdays* arise.

Showing the relationship of Douglas’s work to eastern and western thought and how headlessness bridges the chasm, at which many great minds have halted, is George’s critical contribution. History seen as a progressive evolution, not of consciousness *per se* but of self-consciousness to the point where we become aware of what we really are individually and collectively as that in which we live, move and have our being.

...the presence of an unfolding time in the service of an enfolding space, is the meaning of history. It’s as simple as that and, now that we see it, the very gift we’ve all been given in this our hour of need.

George Schloss

Douglas used to say that headlessness is not the only way but that it’s a damn good way. I have tried many approaches and found it to be the one that suits me best. Ever since the experiments first worked for me in 1991 I have been very interested in exploring the consequences of their successful application. For most of that time I have been able to share my thoughts and experience with George and I consider myself incredibly fortunate in finding a friend who shared this interest and who added so much to my understanding. Thank you George.

Alan

George’s last letter to us 27 September 2008

Dear Alan and Margot, Just to show you where I’m coming from these days, I have a vague recollection of having thanked you for remembering my birthday with a card but since I can’t be sure I’m going to follow it up with this little note. And not just to thank you for your thoughtfulness. I wonder if you have any idea how much our belated friendship has meant to me and what a gift you’ve given me. There’s no question in my mind that had it not been for you the correspondence, for what it’s worth, between Carl and myself, would have been “wasted on the sweet desert air.” And this is not even to speak of the Essays. So now that we’ve just about wound it up, I want to thank you again for what may be the nicest gift I ever received in my life - I’m serious now - even surpassing the memory of that first two-wheeler bike I discovered alongside my bed the morning of my twelfth birthday. Love to you both. *George*