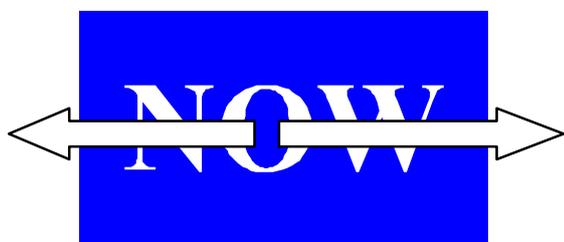


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Next Greville Street Meeting – Saturday 7th December

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Meanderings Of A Wanderer from Trisha English

Last year I journeyed on a group tour to Kathmandu and Bhutan. I had always wanted to see these places and with old age creeping up quickly, I thought my decision to travel as part of a group was both prudent and practical because I would be safe and surrounded by like minds.

Only three of the group were not Americans. I was the only one from Australia and there were two men, travelling alone, who were from Denmark and Argentina respectively. The first thing I discovered was that most of the travellers were Buddhist, or had a working knowledge of Buddhism. And the second thing was that all the travellers were university educated. They were interesting people and many of them had retired from illustrious careers.

After a meet-and-greet session in Kathmandu we were taken to the main monastery for a dharma talk by one of the leading Rinpoches. He spoke for about twenty minutes at a time in Nepalese and then a beautiful looking Swedish girl gave the translation. There must have been a few hundred people in attendance. I wondered why the Rinpoche – who spoke English – bothered with a translator and a particularly beautiful one at that. And then I recalled Krishnamurti's comment that most people treat this kind of exposition as an "entertainment". It was definitely that.

It went on for about three hours before the group broke up for refreshments. I wandered away from "my" group to interact with some of the other participants. I wondered what they thought of Buddhism. Surely, everything the Rinpoche said could be read over the net, or gleaned from any basic text on Buddhism. Perhaps the participants regarded the direct contact with the guru as some kind of blessing.

When the interval was over and people began to wander back to the vast auditorium, for a second installment of basic Buddhism, I decided to abscond. After advising the group leader, I went back to the hotel and had a massage instead. It was wonderful and calmed my mind for the long journey ahead.

By the second or third day, I realised that any suffering I was enduring was due to my own thinking. Mainly my thoughts were about how I could escape from the next dharma talk, the next exposition by some new learned Rinpoche. I became very good at it by the end of the tour. It wasn't just that the talks were indistinguishable from any other dharma talk I had ever heard, but the Tibetan form of Buddhism (Vajrayana) was distinctly far more steeped in superstition and primitive beliefs than the Theravadan stream which tends to dominate Western practice.

By the time we got to Bhutan, where the terrain reminded me of the Blue Mountains in N.S.W Australia, I wouldn't have cared if I never saw another Zong (Temple) for the rest of my life. One day, while standing in the freezing temperature (about 6 celsius), and contemplating the forty or fifty stairs to the next dharma talk, I suddenly had an insight into all the religions of the world. Not only are they put together by thought, but the gods and goddesses are projections of human consciousness and nothing more. Sure they provide comfort to many people, but at what cost?

During this tour, I saw more money being “offered” for good karma, for the health of the family, or for some other worthy cause, than I could have believed possible. As I said, I was travelling with a group of highly sophisticated Americans and they seemed to have enough money to seriously impact the Bhutan economy. By day they listened with rapt attention to the so-called teachings of the Buddha, and by night they bought the tourist trophies of their trip if not their journey to enlightenment.

It reminded me of that chapter in Christianity, where ordinary people, poor people, devout people, would buy indulgences to get their family members out of purgatory. There was one other insight. As individuals, the people on the tour resembled Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. Every person had a sadness. Every person was looking for something and almost everyone would accept the most incredible mumbo jumbo in order to get it.

But for me, I received a small shard of self knowledge. Group travelling, group thinking and group anything are not for me. I have only respect for those who choose otherwise, but I also have something bordering on awe that they can stomach such attachment and illusion while at the same time avowing a belief in the teachings of the Buddha. Did not the Buddha say: “Be a light to yourself”?

Needless to say, this year was a completely different story. On my own, and with chastened heart, I returned to India to do my own thing, in my own way. No ashram visits this year. It was “mehsahib” travelling all the way and staying in the beautiful Trident Hotel in Jaipur overlooking the lake on which rests the Jal Mahal palace. It was travelling in a private car to Agra and back to behold the breathtaking vision of the Taj Mahal. It was wandering aimlessly among a population on the move and aspiring to middle class upward mobility. It was visiting temples which were often deserted and hauntingly reminiscent of a sacredness in India that has not yet disappeared. It was experiencing the landscape where poverty and richness exist side by side. It was realizing that human beings, regardless of colour, creed and conditioning, are all the same.

The journey was a blessing. “You are the world” said Krishnamurti “and the world is you”. And Buddha said: “Everything is extraordinarily clear. I see that whole landscape before me. I see my hands, my feet, my toes, and I smell the rich river mud. I feel a sense of tremendous strangeness and wonder at being alive. Wonder of wonders”.

Trisha English

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The Unbelievers from Alan Mann

(A personal response to the film shown at The Festival of Dangerous Ideas, Sydney November 2013).

This film, *The Unbelievers*, featuring Richard Dawkins and Lawrence Krauss with a guest appearance by Sam Harris, describes the campaign they are waging against

religious fundamentalism. Whilst it provides an excellent review of the Darwinian case presented by Dawkins and Krauss in their battle with the creationists it suffers from a lack of balance. The imbalance is illustrated by a follow-up question from a member of the audience who asked “why did you not include someone arguing the opposite case? “in reply the director gave us a response on these lines, “Well, if we made a film about Dylan we would not ask Leonard Cohen to come along. This struck me as an odd reply, comparing these crusaders for contemporary reason with entertainers? So, it was not so much about the issues addressed by Dawkins and Strauss as about their motivation for mounting the crusade and its progress. In one of the shots we see Dawkins walking onto the stage in front of a very large, open-air audience all calling out in unison ‘Richard, Richard, Richard...’ This alerted me to the irony of Dawkins as cult hero and his whole campaign becoming a mirror of the situation he is attempting to undermine, hot gospel atheism. There was an acknowledgment by the filmmaker that Dawkins had asked for this clip to be removed.

Dawkins says he wants people to look objectively at their beliefs and challenge them if they find that they don’t add up. He was then asked by the interviewer if he had ever done this himself. He responded very enthusiastically to this question by saying yes he had changed completely on one occasion. He then went on to explain that, as a young man, he had been swept away by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s book *The Phenomenon Of Man*. He completely accepted de Chardin’s theory of the noosphere, etc. , but then, following a discussion with a philosopher or scientist whose name escapes me, he realised that de Chardin’s theory was ‘rubbish’ and went on to describe him as a charlatan. This, I thought, was quite over the top, it is one thing to abandon his belief in de Chardin’s theory on scientific grounds but quite another to defame the man. Teilhard was someone, like Dawkins, with the courage to challenge the beliefs of his time and who offered an alternative scenario to the accepted rational and religious world views. He paid a high price for this in that he was proscribed by the Vatican and forbidden to preach or write. I mention this as it is an example of the mean spirited zealotry which is sadly typical of the Hitchens/Dawkins tactics. And, in this connection, Dawkins should have the good sense to realise that his hard-nosed Darwinian theory will undoubtedly be superseded or modified by a number of current developments. Does this make *him* a charlatan? Strauss seems to be equally enthusiastic for the cause but more tolerant and alert to the value of humour in presenting his case.

The film provided me with some interesting insights. For example, Sam Harris has a more moderate approach, moderated I think by an exposure to and participation in some form of Buddhist practice. In describing the present moment he employs terms and definitions for which many of us would be happy to substitute the word God. And Strauss, author of the book *The Universe from Nothing* made an interesting attempt to explain exactly what he meant by the word nothing. It was very clear that he did not mean what is normally understood by the word. He waved his hands in the air saying something like— if you take a handful of what we call empty space, here before us now and somehow extract all the atoms and particles we know to be there we’d be left with an indescribable appearing and disappearing, an actuality of energy. So his ‘nothing’

from which the universe appears is neither what is generally understood by the word nothing nor by the word something.

I find it delightful to have these militant atheists using language which is so very similar to that of mystics of all traditions. For example, *...till we see our nothing we cannot understand the value of our being*, that was Traherne in 1657 appx.

I enjoyed the film, I find the work of the evangelists of atheism stimulating and I believe their attack on religious absolutism is well-founded as far as it addresses the crackpot end of the spiritual spectrum. However, their case is weakened by their unwillingness to include the other end of the spectrum in which science and religion come together. Their campaign against religious fundamentalism is significantly weakened by the blinkered view of what strikes me as their own fundamentalism.

Alan Mann

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James Charlton on Non-Dualism by Dr Robert Andrews

(This is another review of a great book . The following review of James Charlton's book on Non-Dualism was written by Dr Robert Andrews, a staff member of Australian Catholic University. The source is: Compass: A Review of Topical Theology (edited by Dr Barry Brundell MSC) vol.47, no.3, 2013, p.41. Used by permission).

James Charlton, *Non-Dualism in Eckhart, Julian of Norwich and Traherne: A Theopoetic Reflection*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2013, 196pp.

Early on in his most recent book, James Charlton poses an important question for the student of Western theology. He asks if it is 'matter' that has 'prevented humanity's greater access to wisdom and compassion?' (p.18) The question is certainly a legitimate one, and the book attempts to answer with a strong 'No'. Reading some of the dominating voices of the Western theological canon, dualism—the dividing of matter and spirit—is a commonly found theme or underlying presupposition. Is there, however, a case to argue that dualism has had negative consequences in the spiritual development of Western minds? It is a question Charlton forces us, at the very least, to consider.

Non-Dualism in Eckhart, Julian of Norwich and Traherne: A Theopoetic Reflection is Charlton's third book. In 2001 he published *Luminous Bodies* (Montpelier Press) and followed this up with *So Much Light* (Pardalote Press, 2007). Both of these are poetry collections. And *Non-dualism*, despite its academic nature, is clearly the fruit of many years of poetic and theological reflection. Indeed, the book is filled with Charlton's own poetry, illustrating and illuminating his 'theopoetic' reflections upon the three writers whom he contends 'share what might be described as qualified or moderate non-dualism' (p.1). The question Charlton poses that was quoted at the beginning of this review seems to me to be central to the book's main thesis: namely, that Meister Eckhart, Julian of Norwich and Thomas Traherne correct the tendency of Western thought to dualistic categories, collapsing the boundaries between

transcendence and immanence by their non-dualistic spiritualities. In demonstrating this the book is original in a number of ways and I am amazed that Charlton has been able to fit so much into it in terms of methodologies and content. His skilful weaving of his own poetry into an examination of Eckhart, Julian of Norwich and Traherne, with the more thorough-going Hindu non-dualism of Ramana Maharshi as a counterpoint, makes for an interesting, if confronting, thesis.

As a historian of Christianity myself, I personally would have liked to have read more about the histories of the individuals discussed in the book. For example, did Traherne, as an Anglican, rebel against dualist theologies then present in his seventeenth-century Anglican milieu? This is not a criticism so much as an observation made by a curious reader. Perhaps a more philosophical point to raise would be my belief (I would not go so far as to call it a conviction) that Christianity cannot ever wholly escape a certain element of dualism, though there is no question its more negative excesses do need to be exorcized from Western spirituality. Dualism always needs to be reined-in and Charlton has produced a highly convincing case, at the very least, for the integration of a moderate non-dualism into Western theology. To be sure, the book is not easy reading, but it is an outstanding and highly original achievement. Moreover its thesis is, as Charlton asserts, ‘confronting’—confronting not only because it challenges a common Western theological category, but ‘because it ... ‘confronts us with potential layers of meaning that require response’ (p.93). Anyone interested in the fundamental questions of theology and spirituality will want to consult Charlton’s book.

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Sailor Bob and Douglas from Melanie Gamble

Mahesh Michal Borkowski asked on the No-Face Facebook “Does Sailor Bob know of Douglas?” Melanie replied:

Yes he does. He told me a story of being involved in bringing him to Melbourne years ago. He asked me what brought me there and I explained my interest in Douglas and Headlessness. And how through this I had read some of his teachings - which I liked very much. He seemed very enthusiastic about DEH and the experiments. He is a very down to earth and unpretentious man.

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South African follow-up from Mal Mitchell

Hi Alan, Hope this finds you well. Having earlier done an 'emailout' on Reza's cycle adventure from Kapp to Cape, I just had a chance for a bit of catching up with your latest NOWletter, and of course Dave Knowles' piece on South Africa was bound to stick out a bit for me with Cape being thus in mind. Dave Knowles gives a few book recommendations at the end of his piece, so I was thinking you might like to pass on a

related book recommendation he might be interested in! It's Mamphela Ramphele's "Across Boundaries". I found it a fascinating and profoundly moving book (and I wrote a review of it on Amazon, as it didn't look like anyone was reading it. Unfortunately it still doesn't!)

Ramphele herself was a key anti-apartheid campaigner who worked alongside (and had a couple of children with) Steve Biko. In my rave review I described her autobiography as "a primary resource on the anti-apartheid struggle. It gives a lucid analysis of psychological and cultural forces feeding and evolving from that struggle, and the kind of dynamics bearing upon women worldwide. Morally, spiritually [if such a word has any meaning], it's a rich, soberly profound account of personal healing and development - as of moving with grace against the grain."

She's now getting a lot of flak this year in connection with her forming and campaigning for a new political party which presents a challenge to the ANC. I've not been following her moves or things around this closely enough to have a strong view on whether the particular points of criticism are fair or otherwise, but I'm sure that there's plenty working against her in any case.

Anyway, hope you and Margot are both doing well. (If Margot's looking for a book to get her teeth into, I've a sneaky feeling she might like "Across Boundaries"!)

Do by all means pop that (the above) in as a follow-up to Dave's contribution if you'd like to. Something to further flesh it out that you might like to add is a quote from Mamphela Ramphele - an assertion by her made in a political/personal context [but] which has a boundless kind of resonance:

"The various constraints work together to form a vicious cycle, but once such a cycle is broken at a critical point, the transformative capacity of human beings can come to the fore."

And if I was to take things a wee bit further, I'd pitch a no less strongly worded recommendation of Wangari Maathai's "Unbowed", as another autobiography of a greatly inspirational African woman - a superheroic person from Kenya, who died two years ago.

Any road, I look forward to a spot of 'tour guiding' with you folks again anon! Usually something interesting to find on the South Bank, if only some fine ale...All the best to Margot & you,

Mal Mitchell

(Mal is the author of The Hog's Wholey Wash and our London evening tour guide.)

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Letters to Carl – June 26, 2004

(This is the seventeenth of the Schloss letters I am serializing in the NOWletter. All the letters are archived at the link below where individual letters or the complete volumes can be downloaded as PDF files.. Hardcopies of the books from LULU.<http://www.capacitie.org/schloss/articles.htm>)

Dear Carl, To Nishitani at last, for clarity and depth unsurpassed except for you-know-who. And altogether fitting that as an exemplar par excellence of the Alpha perspective, the primordial absence of time, he should be paired with Douglas, our man in Omega, waving from across the way, from that street of dreams once known for its fullness as heaven but now re-christened the Gap. Not for nothing or, more precisely, for no-thing was *On Having No Head* originally sub-titled, “*Zen and the Re-Discovery of the Obvious*,” though, if I’m not mistaken, it’s been deleted from subsequent printings. And rightly so if on no other grounds than as marking the retreat to Alpha—and make no mistake about it, it is a retreat—Zen, by jumping the gun and negating speech, merely betokens an end, whereas, flitting through the afterlife, those affirmations of silence, the experiments, not only bespeak a difference in degree from anything that’s gone before but a difference in kind, as different as death from resurrection where, not incidentally, Omega begins.

I know comparisons are odorous but they sure as hell put us on the scent and the scent here is so distinctive as to be unmistakable. Quite simply, contrary to prevailing opinion, the current popularity of Zen in its pioneer attack on speech—the *neti, neti*, not-this, not-this, it appropriated from the Vedanta—rather than initiate a new beginning as the consensus would have it, it marks the end of the period we’re about to exit anyway though, not to put too fine a point on it, whether we arrive head-first or feet-first is still very much up for grabs. One thing, however, is for sure: following the million or so years it’s taken us to get there, or rather, here—and this with little to speak for us except a hand and tongue aided and abetted by an upright posture, “the better to see you with, my dear”—“unaccommodated man” has finally succeeded in that precarious quest that’s delivered him from the precincts of sound and smell to within sight of absolute headquarters. The rest, as they say, is history. And thereby hangs a tale, the fudging of which via the escape from nature to eternity without it has, despite the very real benefit of clergy, made bastards of us all if only by telling half the story, a story that’s had to await the belated blessing and retroactive legitimacy bestowed by Headlessness for its completion. Hear, O Israel? How about the whole of it? How about hearing it for “*See, O Israel*” for a change, for *the* change?

What it all means, of course, what the experiments and only the experiments are capable of revealing in no uncertain terms is that, as Douglas has outlined so succinctly on pages 224-225 of the abridged *Hierarchy* and I noted in an earlier letter: if our first concern must be “to realize this instantaneous Now, to live in the present moment, taking no thought for tomorrow or yesterday,” then our second must be “to find in this Now all my to-morrows and yesterdays.” Which is no more than to say that if, like all things under the sun along with those that go bump in the night, we live and breathe and have our being primarily by grace (and we do), then failing that—and God knows

we do fail it and have failed it though it has never failed us—like Bogart and Bergman in *Casablanca* who, if they didn't have each other at the end, "always had Paris," so too, we now have providence to look back on with its dual realization that history's progressive revelation of God as rendered in the experiments and God's progressive revelation of history as rendered in the experiments are one and the same. What is it the Sufis say in anticipation of the last great day when, with grace blind-sided, we'll be forced to find our way by hook or by crook? "In the latter days, one-tenth of what was required in the beginning will be sufficient." I'd say a trip to our city of light is worth a wink or a blink any day—or night, too, for that matter. Where else will two get you One and all *pro-videre*, for the sake of Seeing?

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Non-duality in Christianity from Garry Booth

Lately I have been "following my bliss" and looking at all sorts of leads on nonduality in Christianity, and in a synchronistic moment last weekend I came across a wonderful book in my local esoteric bookshop by Joseph Campbell called "Pathways to Bliss," a summary of his life-long work. (Again this overview has flowed into a lengthy email - as I am not very busy at work this week - and thought you may find quite interesting). Joseph is considered a "world expert" on mythology and comparative religion and this book cleverly explains in simple language, something I have been trying to put together this year via the internet, that is, to fathom the evolution and timelines of the earliest east and west civilizations and their religions, i.e., by comparison, from self-consciousness to earliest mythology > religion > hunters and gatherers > herdsman > agricultural > paganism to exoteric and esoteric monotheism, and in particular, the evolution of Vedanta how and why this simple truth was lost or "veiled".

I have been looking for common threads and the core truth of "spirituality" prior to religious dogma. Also intriguing is how Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy influenced Judaism/Christianity through logos and mythos - and as we know logos won and at the same time myth was turned into a real story and lost its significant truth. As you can see there are many threads I would like to eventually pull together. Over the years researching various related topics, I have tried to find the essence, because the topics are so incredibly large and information available tends to overwhelm. Of course over-generalization has to be watched, although on this subject there appears to be plenty of credible "evidence". Interestingly for me ancient mythology now makes so much more sense 10,000BC - 300 AD - as does Greek philosophy on the metaphysical 500-100BC - again about interconnectedness - and Vedanta/Hinduism /Buddhism pointing to non-duality 2,500 - 600 BC. What I find staggering is that Joseph and his peers found that most early indigenous tribes created similar mythology stories even if they had no contact with each other and he explains why. Their mythology then influenced the earliest religions- and that's a long story. Within these mythologies were the nature gods depending on the environment that the tribe inhabited. Essentially mythology sought to: - awaken a sense of awe to the mystery of being - (paganism/pantheism seeing the divine in

everything & seeing the interconnection) - explain the shape of their world / universe and how they fitted in (interconnection with the celestial & earth, seasons & weather) - guide the individual through stages of life (interconnection of rites of passage - cradle to grave - sacrifice rituals and the underworld) - validate and support social order Joseph explains the common story of "exile and return" - leaving home > the outward physical journey and the homecoming > the internal journey - and all the mythological symbolism—adopted by the earliest religions. In essence this was eventually translated in a nutshell "to know your-self is to know the divine." As Joseph has done all the hard yakka , it appears to me that human interconnection with nature and the divine was at the core of most mythology. Nature and the divine were not separate or personal - as espoused in western theology. Eastern theology was closer to the mark. This seeing, being Oneness, I believe to be the seed and core of non-duality and to my way of thinking - the greatest irony of all - that the only thing standing at the threshold between a human being and the divine is the gatekeeper - the ego self.

Although history is what it Is, the quest for the "holy grail" should be—why was this ancient truth—our birthright—denied, covered up and lost—or should I say high-jacked by Judaism / Christianity—and how can this eternal truth ever be "resurrected" en-masse after 2,000 years of cover up? Pardon me , if I'm being judgmental and idealistic. In all fairness though, apart from wars, separation and guilt, the Church gave us magnificent architecture, wonderful choirs and choral, Gregorian chants and some good charity work—without meaning to be sarcastic. Joseph has also studied Freud & Jung and explains fundamentals of modern psychology in terms of ancient mythology, innate human intuition and the rise of ego and archetypes. Joseph explains religious and spiritual development over the millennium and the stages of human life. Since time immemorial he notes all human beings hold deeply in common the experience of adjusting to the stages of life, within our respective cultures. He also explains how the Occident (West) and Orient (East) psychological/ spiritual world view arose and diametrically opposite—dual and non-dual.

Garry Booth

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A description of the Headless Way, from Robert Penny

(This piece is a revised version of my response to an interested friend who found the word 'headless' off-putting. Robert Penny).

The term 'headless' *can* create the wrong mental image. In a sense, the term is incorrect. I shall explain. What headlessness means to me is that I see that I don't have a head, or brain, brain cells, etc., *here at my Centre*, which is the Centre of my world. What's happened to my head then! Well, I find my head over there in my mirror, regional to my Centre. And the appearance of my head is in other people and their cameras. A camera doesn't lie about what's present where it is. And my friend can draw

my head and face in detail, proving that he has it where he is. I've found this realization or insight to be identical with the essential experience of Zen Buddhism.

I'm told that the 700 koans of Zen all aim to help the student to see that her Original Face is 'No-face that's filled with the world'. The science of perception confirms this experience; confirms that my world is present on my shoulders, in consciousness. Advertisers and film-makers know this. And as soon as we know what to look for, we also find confirmation in many places in literature, religious and secular,

I've recently seen the You Tube film entitled *Death and the Present Moment* by Sam Harris, American author, philosopher and neuroscientist, co-founder and CEO of Project Reason, and, as I see it, a highly respected leader of opinion. (Link below)

From what Harris said, the main influence on him, with respect to his talk, has been his Buddhist meditation practice. In his talk, Harris conducts a Harding-like Closed Eyes exercise with his audience, which arrives at the same essential experience as headlessness. Which is seeing that the world, as experienced, is present to us precisely where and when we are, which is here and now, *in* consciousness.

Consciousness is not a head. Consciousness is not in heads, or in any kinds of things. Things are in Consciousness. If my head and the parts of it were present here at the Centre where Consciousness resides, then they would crowd out, or at least contaminate, my world. My experience confirms what Douglas Harding says about himself. Harding says, "I'm not what I look like!" I too find that I'm not what I look like. For starters, I don't have a head *here*. I find that my head is regional to my Centre, and is for my outside observers see, and to cope with! Of course I see my head (Robert's head) when I look in my mirror or at photographs. But I don't find my head *here*, at Centre.

Being aware of my essential 'Nothing and Everything-ness' is always available to me, without me having to take time-out from my other work and play in order to do this. If there's a problem to do with me not noticing who I really am, then it's to do with the excessive obviousness of who I really am.

To notice It, I have to know: 1. When to look, 2. Where to look, 3. How to look, and 4. What to look for. The answers to these crucial questions are: 1. I have look now, 2. I have to look in a precise direction that's 180 degrees round from what I'm looking out at, 3. I have to look with the attitude of a small child who is open to the evidence, and humble before the facts, and 4. I look for "that which has no form, features, colour or limits, but is like air or clear water or space, Great Space, filled to capacity with what's on show. Great Space, aware of Itself as thus empty and thus full" (Harding, *The Trial Of The Man Who Said He Was God*, page 26). To see my true nature, I simply turn my attention round 180 degrees, and I notice what I'm looking out of, while simultaneously noticing what I'm looking out at. This new style of perception, that Harding introduced, is called two-way looking; or two-way perception because ultimately it involves all the senses.

Harding's book, 'On Having No Head', describes, in detail, the eight typical stages of the Headless Way: 1. *The Headless Infant*, 2. *The Child*, 3. *The Headed Grown-up*, 4. *The Headless Seer*, 5. *Practising Headlessness*, 6. *Working It Out*, 7. *The Barrier*, and 8. *The Breakthrough*. We all go through the first three stages. Some who are introduced to headlessness and the 1st Person Life by the Harding experiments, go on from stage 4, initially seeing their headlessness, to stage 5, to practice in-seeing, and then to stage 6, to work out the meaning, implications and practical consequences of headlessness for their thinking, relationships, behavior and role in life. Including learning to trust who we really are. And going on to value, over and above what exists, the surprising fact that anything at all exists! Stage 7 *The Barrier*, a dark night of the soul, is generally experienced before stage 8. *The Breakthrough*; the breakthrough consciously to Who we really are, actively intending all that happens; in other words, actively saying Yes! to what is. This may include saying Yes! to all that happens, including saying Yes to one's inability, at the human level, to say yes to some aspects.

True spirituality, for me, is discovering the essential truth about myself. In particular, discovering What I am, for myself, here, at Centre, as Subject or 1st Person, in contrast with my many regional appearances.

On the back of Harding teachings, I've gradually formed the view that a plausible interpretation of God is Being and Awareness; in other words, that God is Aware Nothing and Everything. And that to have being and awareness is to be have God's Being and Awareness. This is traditional; the 3,000 year-old Perennial Philosophy says this. Well, courtesy of Harding experiments, together with his Diagrams or Maps of the 1st Person, we're now being shown this and not merely told about it. As a consequence, Self-realization is now, in principle at least, easily accessible to ordinary open-minded men and women in the suburbs. One no longer has to be especially gifted, or live in a monastery, in order to, in religions terms, experience conscious union with God.

But this is all too wordy! And none of it is for believing, not even for one minute! To get behind the words, Douglas Harding, and others who follow him, by way of workshops and books, guide people to SEE Who they really are, using one, or some, or all, of the elements of the four-pillared toolkit which Harding devised, comprised of 1. Experiments, 2. Pictures and Diagrams, 3. Quotes from Tradition, and 4. Reason and Logic. Some say that only doing the Experiments is necessary, and the rest are optional. To me, the four pillars of the Harding method are a strictly indivisible unity.

None of the conclusions that others (Harding for instance) have arrived at, and reported on, are for believing. They're all for doubting, testing, weighing up, and trying out. If anyone does this, and finds anything that isn't true, then s/he is advised to junk it. The Headless Way is based on radical skepticism, and testing: 1. Testing by experience, 2. Testing the proposed theory, and 3. Testing how the experience and the theory work out in practice, in everyday life. This is an active process. And it's a very good, up-to-date, de-mythologized Way of Truth that includes values of Love, Goodness, and Beauty, and much else besides

Robert Penny

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITTxTCz4Ums> .

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The Parallax View by Slavoj Zizek

(Thanks to whoever sent me the Amazon review of this book they are now reading. I'm hoping whoever you are, and my apologies for losing your name, will send me a more comprehensive review for a future NOWletter. If I understand the review below it seems to be offering a contemporary approach to moderate non-dualism of the sort we have been covering in recent issues).

The Parallax View is Slavoj Zizek's most substantial theoretical work to appear in many years; Zizek himself describes it as his magnum opus. Parallax can be defined as the apparent displacement of an object, caused by a change in observational position. Zizek is interested in the "parallax gap" separating two points between which no synthesis or mediation is possible, linked by an "impossible short circuit" of levels that can never meet. From this consideration of parallax, Zizek begins a rehabilitation of dialectical materialism. Modes of parallax can be seen in different domains of today's theory, from the wave-particle duality in quantum physics to the parallax of the unconscious in Freudian psychoanalysis between interpretations of the formation of the unconscious and theories of drives. In *The Parallax View*, Zizek, with his usual astonishing erudition, focuses on three main modes of parallax: the ontological difference, the ultimate parallax that conditions our very access to reality; the scientific parallax, the irreducible gap between the phenomenal experience of reality and its scientific explanation, which reaches its apogee in today's brain sciences (according to which "nobody is home" in the skull, just stacks of brain meat--a condition Zizek calls "the unbearable lightness of being no one"); and the political parallax, the social antagonism that allows for no common ground. Between his discussions of these three modes, Zizek offers interludes that deal with more specific topics--including an ethical act in a novel by Henry James and anti-anti-Semitism. *The Parallax View* not only expands Zizek's Lacanian-Hegelian approach to new domains (notably cognitive brain sciences) but also provides the systematic exposition of the conceptual framework that underlies his entire work. Philosophical and theological analysis, detailed readings of literature, cinema, and music coexist with lively anecdotes and obscene jokes.

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There is no escape—from Greg Campbell

*I was sitting on the edge of my
bed this morning
and I suddenly realized
I have become God!!!*

*And then I saw I have not really
become God.*

*Indeed, there never was a time
I was not God!!*

*And then I saw
this is equally True of You too!!
Whoever you think you are now
You always were
and always will be
God!!*

There is no escape!!

*We can only Realize this
Ultimate Truth
Right Now*

or

*we can do as most do and
stall around until
Death does this for us.*

My urgent recommendation is

Die Right Now

*and thus
Live Forever.*

.....
*written on the first day of
The Gathering of The Light
Retreat*

8 October 2013

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