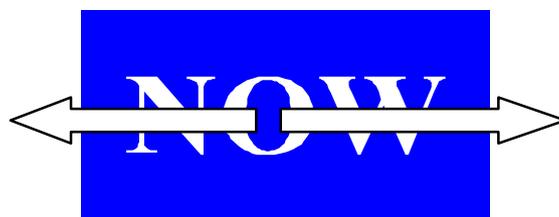


Issue 193—November 2016 - Backnumbers at



<http://www.capacitie.org/now/archive.htm>

HOME PAGE

Greville Street Meetings –Sunday Nov 6 & Saturday Nov 29

CONTENTS

<u>Introductory Note</u>	George Schloss	2
<u>Unselfconscious Self Acceptance</u>	Doug Lloyd	2
<u>Thomas Traherne Day</u>	James Nicol	4
<u>Down In and Through</u>	Robert Penny	6
<u>Two Sides of the One Coin</u>	Barry Hora	7
<u>When Falling Back</u>	Steven Steensels	7
<u>You Happy Child</u>	Paul Tulip	9
<u>So, What Now?</u>	Alan Mann	9
<u>Response</u>	Chris Cheney	11
<u>Meetings at Greville Street</u>	Programme	12

Thank you for reader responses to recent articles and your contributions to this issue which is dedicated to matters arising from our interest in the ‘headless’ experience. I intended to include Brentyn Ramm’s workshop note in this issue but decided to publish them separately. They appeared as a single subject edition –in NOWletter 192 I posted a few days ago.

Brentyn’s recently completed thesis *First Person Investigations of Consciousness*, which was recently accepted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the ANU can be accessed via the following link:

<https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/109192>

Introductory Note – George Schloss

...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.

From The Language of Silence by George Schloss

Unselfconscious Self Acceptance?

Dorothy Rowe, a noted psychologist in her book, 'What Should I Believe?' writes: A baby does not lie on his cot wondering if other people will approve of him. He lies there just being himself, experiencing his state of unselfconscious self acceptance. The phrase is unfortunate, Self acceptance wasn't an issue for us before we learnt to talk. Nor did we lie there just being ourselves. No ! We lay there being conscious of the world.

Let's bring this abstract phrase, 'unselfconscious self acceptance' into the real living world.

Jimmy is two years old. As he lies in his cot a moving object {probably mum or dad} appears. Another object {a dummy} appears. It is stuck into a wide open nothing-ness and tasted.

Jimmy has no sense of having a mouth, or teeth or ears or a head. Nor has he any awareness of himself as a separate, distinct

human being. There is just tasting, seeing, and hearing going on. There is just consciousness of the world.

Jimmy is living as a human child {though he is not aware of this}. At the same time he is living as Consciousness of the world.

Within the Christian tradition it can be expressed as Jimmy is living as divine and human.

Likewise Jesus was living unconsciously as human and divine when he was a baby.

So did all of us who are now reading this essay.

Jimmy will learn to speak when he gets a little older. He will then learn that he is like mum and dad. He will know that he has arms, feet, eyes, mouth and is shut up in a body of flesh. And that he is separate from all other human beings.

Jesus would have gone through this stage of learning that he was a separate human being. He would then have thought of himself as only human. But Jesus later on regained that sense that there is just Consciousness of the world going on.

Jesus, like all humans, probably lost that sense that there was only Consciousness going on. Wonderfully he regained it later.

How can we know he did?

There are these statements attributed to him found in the New Testament: "The works that I do are not mine but the Father in Heaven doeth them.

Unless you turn and become as a little child, you shall in no wise enter the kingdom of Heaven.

I thank thee, Father, that you have not revealed these things to the wise and clever but to babes."

For at least four thousand years there have been people who lost their identity as Consciousness of the world and later regained it.

Let's imagine Jimmy is now forty. Somehow he realizes that he is not what he was told he is. Perhaps he looked in a mirror and realized he was a human being on the far side of the mirror and a wide open NO THING was looking at him on the near side of the mirror. Or maybe he saw himself on the far side of a clear, calm lake. Perhaps it was a diagram of a person without a head, or engaging in a meditation, that Jimmy regained the sense of how he experienced life as a baby.

Now let us imagine Jimmy receiving a letter addressed to Jimmy Steele. He now understands that he is a member of the human race and has been given the name, Jimmy Steele. At the same time he experiences as he did before he learnt he was a member

of the human race. There was a white object with black marks on it and another object hanging onto the white object. Then tearing open the object and out pops another white object.

Jimmy Steele is not experiencing himself as reading the letter. Rather there is only Consciousness of the objects.

Consciousness, which is nameless as it is NO THING has been referred to by many names. Some of which are: The Void. That which is beyond all thought and knowledge. The invisible that alone can see the visible. The divine or God that dwells in all creation. More recently as The First Person Singular Present Tense.

Douglas Harding, in his book, 'Head off Stress,' writes of Anandamaya Ma whom he describes as a Bengali saint and seer, with millions of followers. He stayed at her Ashram for a while. When he was leaving, Ma gave him a shawl from her head with the words; 'I am you, I am you!'

Taken literally these words are absurd. Obviously she was a separate human being like Douglas Harding.

However, they are wonderfully sensible when understood to be pointing to the reality that was Ma and Douglas Harding. That is as they pointed to Consciousness in which they dwelt.

Harding was greatly moved by a line that often occurred in the traditional songs that were sung daily at the Ashram. 'I bow to thee, I bow to thee, O goddess who art the Consciousness in all creatures.'

When Douglas and Ma were babies it was Consciousness that heard their gurgles, spluttering, and crying and tasted the dummy and mother's milk. For the whole of their lives it was Consciousness in which they dwelt that heard them talking, saw them sleeping and witnessed their deaths.

Douglas Harding also refers to another line written by Ma. What is, is That. That was how Ma experienced living as a baby. There was a loud bang. That was all. Ma didn't understand she was a separate being then.

Unselfconscious self acceptance was not how we experienced as babies. Rather there was just Consciousness of the world.

Doug Lloyd.

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Thomas Traherne Day by James Nicol

Two months ago I wrote a about Thomas Traherne (1), pointing out an unexpected resonance between this seventeenth century English clergyman and the ideas of Douglas Harding (2). Only later did I discover that such parallels had already been noted – particularly by Alan Mann (3) and also *The Incredible String Band*, way back in the 1960's (4).

Thanks to Alan Mann, I subsequently found my way to the Thomas Traherne Association (5) and attended the Traherne's Day Celebrations on 10 October at Hereford Cathedral. These were built around a choral Evensong followed by a lecture. The speaker was the Revd Dr Paul Fiddes, Professor of Systematic Theology at Oxford University. Prof Fiddes has a particular interest in the relations between theology and literature, and his topic was *The Poetics of Desire in Thomas Traherne and C. S. Lewis*.

Lewis admired Traherne, especially the *Centuries of Meditations*, though he felt that Traherne was insufficiently concerned with original sin and too ready to find heaven in the here and now. For Traherne wrote that every person "is alone the Centre and Circumference of [Infinity]. It is all his own, and so Glorious, that it is the Eternal and Incomprehensible Essence of the Deitie." (6). He also wrote at the time when the Royal Society was founded and what we now call Science became respectable. Traherne followed progress with the telescope and microscope and the worlds they were beginning to reveal. Perhaps such developments and the inquiries they opened up encouraged him to write the lines:

"Heaven surely is a State and not a Place
To be in Heaven's to be full of Grace.
Heaven is where're we see God's face." (6)

and

"This busy, vast, enquiring Soul
Brooks no Controul,
No limits will endure,
Nor any Rest: It will all see
Not Time alone, but ev'n Eternity". (6)

At the same time, Prof. Fiddes' lecture showed how Lewis was at one with Traherne in apprehending a God who is present in human imagination and creativity – Traherne's words being, "for God hath made you able to Creat Worlds in your own mind, which are more Precious unto Him that those which *He* created".

Perhaps reflections like this freed Lewis' own imagination in his fiction:

“Each grain is at the centre. The dust is at the centre. The Worlds are at the centre. The beasts are at the centre. The ancient peoples are there. The race that sinned is there... Blessed be He! Where Maleldil is, there is the centre. He is in every place ... Because we are with him, each, each of us is at the centre ... there seems no centre because it is all centre ... “(7)

“I have come home at last! This is my real country! ... This is the land I have been looking for all my life, though I never knew it till now.” (8)

It was C.S. Lewis who helped Douglas Harding find a publisher for *The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth* and wrote the introduction to it. My knowledge of this link was a prompt to attend the Traherne Day lecture, though I might have gone any way. I was brought up in the Church of England, and C.S. Lewis had a place in my imaginative hinterland. So did metaphysical poetry (though not especially Traherne's), before I parted ways. I enjoyed Evensong last Monday, especially hearing the choir. Whilst feeling no pull to re-communicate, I felt very much at peace both with the aspect of heritage and that of spiritual community. This was a blessing in itself, and I am grateful for the occasion and to the people who made it happen.

(1) <https://contemplativeinquiry.wordpress.com/2016/08/16/seing-thomas-traherne>

(2) headless.org

(3) capacitie.org

(4) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AK2m7rYjZ54>

(5) thomastraherneassociation.org

(6) Denise Inge (ed.) *Happiness and Holiness: Thomas Traherne and his writings* Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008

(7) C.S. Lewis, *Perelandra* London: Bles, 1943

(8) C.S. Lewis *The Last Battle* London: Collins, 1956

(9) Douglas Harding *The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth: a new diagram of man in the universe* London: Faber and Faber, 1952 (Introduction by C.S. Lewis)

Down, In, and Through by Robert Penny

A Condensed Recap of Harding

Infancy

For myself, I'm not a baby,

I finger the moon and stars,
 I'm Space for the world to happen in,
 the world is here and not afar.
 The moon and stars way up high
 in the dark sky of night
 are seamlessly united with me as one
 here in clear and boundless sight.

Infancy to So-called Adulthood

I face the world with my No-face,
 I do not play the Face Game,
 I'm Space for the world without knowing it,
 I live from the truth and I'm sane.
 As Space for the world I'm the Whole,
 I've been the whole-of-things from the start,
 and now I'm being cut down
 to being just one tiny part.

Between childhood and adolescence
 I finally succumb
 to steadily identifying as just the person
 who others lay their eyes upon.

With help from people and the mirror,
 over the years after the cot,

I come to believe that '*I am what I look like*',
 the person who, here, for myself, I am not!

*'I am, here, at Centre, for myself, what I look like, there, off
 Centre, to you' --*

This is the common-sense assumption of the human race.

And the 1st Person Singular, Present Tense, is virtually
 obliterated,

by the imagined acquisition, here, of one's mirror face.

Adopting and maintaining such false identity

is the price of belonging to the Human Club,

but this necessary development comes at a high price,

this commonly accepted norm is a painful rub!

Fate and Freedom

Everything influences every other thing
 all things are conditioned by their past,

there is no freedom at the human level,
 there it's fate that comes to pass.
 The Bottom Line is the real and true Place of Freedom,
 by being the World's Beginning and the World's End.

Robert Penny

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

1st and 3rd person (2 sides of the one coin) from Barry Hora

1st person is experiencing being, being in the 'as is' world in the present moment—now—while 3rd person is allowing the known or the 'as if' world to guide their worldview, life style and relationships. An experiencer practising 1st person being, experiences a change in their 3rd person perception and in communicating with other/s in the spirit of 'The Headless Way' of Face to No Face (*where I see your face but not my own*) in bringing human beings together. I like the David Bohm statement on communication where he said: - "*If you say, here am I and there are you then we have already divided it. But perhaps we can communicate in the spirit of the whole without assuming that division*". This is similar to Face to No Face communication.

3rd person is generally where we are coming from before a Face to No Face type of communication commences. So, assuming a non-divisional aspect, being open to the intended process needed and staying focused on what is given, sets the scene for communication that is always new. An openness of mind is needed to veil first strong beliefs which generally carry with them hidden agendas and expectations.

This communication is exemplified by the combination of 1st person & 3rd person working together, the process is 1st person, and content of the dialogue is 3rd person, thus there is sharing information without conflict.

Barry Hora

When Falling Back from Steven Steensels

(This message is reprinted from the LookForYourself email conference I have been involved with for many years. Alan)

I read some posts here on LFY about the seeming impossibility to maintain a two—way vision, and also elsewhere I often hear

‘seekers’ – with some experience of their true nature, of who they really are—say that, after a while, they fall back into a half awakened/half asleep state. Awareness shrinks and seems trapped again into a feeling of separateness, of identification with a personal story, with a body, with the incapacity to continue and to neutrally observe, to live, to experience the situations of life into which the body is organically involved. It is then as if the problems, never far away, bent consciousness back to the horizontal level where duality, with its inherent opposing forces, forms barriers impossible to reconcile. A first noticing of the boundless space into which the I—thought had vanished, where oneness and eternity gave a limitless sense of freedom, again disappears in a contracted atmosphere of routine with daily preoccupations. They then ask themselves if it is truly possible to experience freedom there where, ‘in reality’, society powerfully pushes and stresses them—for good and/or for bad—so that life seems only compulsory.

Most of the time these friends forget that a first encounter with freedom went along with a disposition of total openness. There was room for Everything, including all opposites. The impression that a feeling of peace has been lost is therefore less the result of seemingly compulsive events in life—with all the difficulties that accompany them – than of the effort done in order to avoid unpleasant situations. Freedom is not dependent on the absence of obstacles. Well on the contrary! When we ‘freely’ surrender to conditions sometimes experienced as painful—without considering them unacceptable—we may discover that the attention given to the experience of pain is much more important than the throbbing. Hence are pleasure and suffering second—rate to the awareness granting them room. Not seldom do spiritual seekers (whatever that may be) expect problems to disappear. What is gradually understood, however, is that every form of resistance enhances the narrowing and closing of awareness. This insight is what eventually leads back to a better receptivity, thus avoiding useless suffering.

This means—paradoxically enough—that we, in the first place, have to allow ourselves to be more vulnerable than we already are. We do not try to deny any of our wounds through, so to speak, seeking distraction, or slipping away from them through aggressive behavior. We will, on the contrary, give all our attention to the injuries by not running away. We want to discover why we so much feel offended, disadvantaged, cheated, mistreated. Very soon it becomes clear that ‘I’ is the only one who feels diminished, because thinking/imagining that ‘I’ is

someone who doesn't deserve a bad treat. We then learn to understand how an excessive self-sense is at the basis of most of our problems.

On the material level, we sometimes feel we're having bad luck. We lose our job, money, a colleague, a friend, fall sick, so that we are suddenly confronted with surviving difficulties. Here also do we have to learn that the acceptance of restrictions, shortcomings, is the sole way out to possible solutions. Emergencies do most of the time create their own appropriate actions. They often incarnate the motivation that was lacking to try and walk new paths, to choose new directions.

To dare and willingly be vulnerable is what, in the end, opens the clouds for freedom to shine. For, who feels free when only pursuing partiality?

Steven Steensels

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

You Happy Child

Personality is an onion
 Having many layers.
 Your deepest is a
 Happy Child,
 All the rest are players.
 You Happy Child!
 So full of Life!
 Greet each day with a kiss,
 Your outer styles are necessary,
 But underneath is Bliss!

Paul Tulip

So, What Now? from Alan Mann

This is a personal response to the Harding revelation—my particular angle on it. I know my approach does not appeal to many friends who are committed to the headless way and it is open to their correction or readjustment.

The experiments restore the first person perspective which we all enjoy as children but which is gradually obscured as the social development of our third person identity progresses from childhood through to old age which is where I find myself at

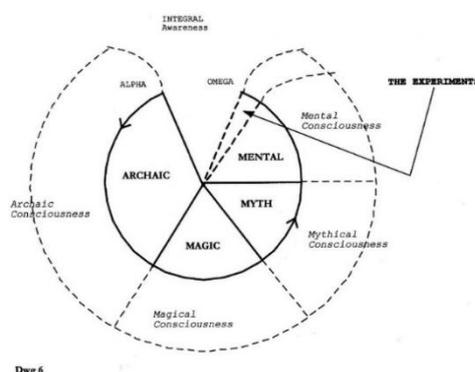
present. We are re-minded of the undivided openness, if we are lucky, by occasional epiphanies, moments when we are suddenly immersed in an awareness of the wholeness of being and of ourselves as participating components rather than observers. These fleeting, and sometimes not so fleeting experiences, carry a degree of authenticity which encourages an ongoing enquiry as to why these events are a rarity rather than the default level of awareness. There is a sense of something missing or maybe the presence of something superfluous to requirements which blocks out the openness.

The question of whether headless seeing should prevail at all times is regularly debated. The answer most find acceptable is 'no'; the fact that the first person perspective is always available for the looking, is sufficient. Life must go on with third person in the driving seat. I have had the benefit of access to what I call headless awareness for nearly thirty years but there remains a sense that I haven't fully grasped the meaning. I have come to the conclusion that 'always available for the looking', falls short of what can follow from discovery of the 'aware space here' which the experiments reveal.

So, what next, what could follow?

Shortly after first meeting Douglas Harding and gaining an understanding of what he was showing me I was persuaded to read Gebser's 'The Ever Present Origin' In which the author describes the progression of human consciousness from the archaic to the present, which he presents as the 'mental' and

locates the mental after the mythical but before the integral level.



I later discovered that Ken Wilber had drawn on this approach to some extent and, more importantly as far as my interests were concerned, that George

Schloss recognised its relevance to the Harding story. He realised that the experiments were the key to effecting the transition from the mental to the integral.

Gebser uses the words *Verition* and *Waring* to communicate what he believes to be the necessary action. Verition I take to mean 'making true' and Waring is what has to occur for the making true to happen.

So what can headlessness contribute to the ‘making true’ as opposed to simply ‘seeing truly’ which is what I refer to above as the basic consequence of the experiments and as that which is always available for the looking? To answer this question, I need first to confirm that the experiments, in revealing first person awareness, do not deny third person identity and action but relocate it, put it in its place. This revised perspective includes both first and third person and is made plain by the experiments. There is a tendency, as a result of this understanding, to assume that third person is now redundant and first person openness is all. However, I think this is where Gebser’s waring comes into the picture.

What is Waring? I must admit I am not sure what Gebser meant when he coined this word but I have adopted it to express an awareness which includes, but is free of or independent of, both first and third person perspectives. It replaces what I might previously have called ‘awareness’ which I now think is too easily assumed to be adequate. Awareness is passive, Waring implies intention and action both of which I believe to be the necessary movement flowing from the revelation of headlessness’s ‘aware space here’.

It is third person intention towards the undivided and results in a shift from the individual to the undivided. Verition is an inclusive marriage of what has been described as third and first person perspectives, perhaps what Gebser himself intended by his use of the word *Aperspectival*.

What I must abandon if this is to occur is the notion of ‘no-self’ and replace it with ‘right-self’.

Advocates of nonduality point to dualism’s illusory aspect and often define illusory as incomplete. Nonduality is open to the same criticism as it is demonstrably incomplete when it denies dualism.

The aperspectival is an attempt to find a word which can be used to describe the ground from which both dualism and nonduality arise. There are, of course, other examples:

Buddhist – Not one not two. ‘It is through the relative that the Absolute is known’.

Nisargadatta – Wisdom tells me I am nothing – Love tells me I am everything.

Hsin Hsin Ming –

To paraphrase the opening words of the final verse which are ‘When trusting heart and mind are not estranged’...

When first and third

*Are not estranged.
Words fail and cannot speak
Of that which has no yesterday, tomorrow
or today.*

Heidegger – That which regions.

Heidegger's *waiting on* rather than *waiting for* seems to be the necessary attitude. I think this points to the understanding that an 'alert waiting on', which I am equating with *waring*, involves action, normally regarded as third person activity, is now experienced as the movement of the undivided. There is an impossible to describe reciprocity between all aspects of aperspectival being.

Headlessness is a word describing a process which opens a mind, closed by convention, to the aware space—Capacity -- which I am claiming to be source, the undivided, and the ground of all systems that claim to be source, e.g., Brahman, the Tao, etc. First, there is a reversal to see 'what I really am' and then, in that seeing, the integration of third and first person perspectives to *be* what I really am. This is summarised in the DEH quotation:

*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.*

It seems that the more words, the more confusion and yet we do have to find the words. On a recent video conference one of the participants said that her daughter had described an experience as 'the feeling of oneness' which I thought a good way of putting it and at the risk of adding complexity to simplicity I thought we could speak of both feeling oneness and of oneness feeling 'me-ness', as that seems to acknowledge the sense of reciprocal action. I know it sounds crazy but give it a try. It might be how integral being unfolds. Perhaps it is not that something is missing or superfluous but that there are two valid perspectives and the trick is to encompass both.

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Response from Chris Cheney

(This is another extract from the the LookForYourself email conference. Chris is not responding to my article above but to my general input on these matters. In particular what I try to express in the final paragraph of the piece that precedes this message and my talk in the conference of the sense of a

reciprocal, participatory engagement with the world as opposed to simple observation of it. We have talked about it in the past as 'the world painting me'. Alan)

Hi Alan, I think I get the gist of what you are on about. It is rather difficult to express clearly (at least I find it so). Part of it may be the intuition and/or past experience of periods of very pure or perfect freedom, as contrasted with some other range of states, the appearance, or registration of which necessarily involves memory, but not just visual or long term memory.

Basically, it is all thinking. But thinking of some kind is necessary to many things in life, and no thinking does not mean heedlessness, or just living from the animal instinct.

There is also apparently, a natural ebb and flow in awareness, and change is constant, and has to be adapted to. Nonetheless, there is one pure clear no thing which is always still and does not change, although it is not always responded or reacted to in the same exact way by various elements of mind which do change.

I think that the 'point' of 'paths', is that the Sankalpa (self reinforcing intention, or resolve) of the person to experience themselves as their entire being is being nourished, but further, that comes from all of life, and so returns to it. (God's big Ponzi Scheme) ">)) ">)) ">)).

So, there is kind of a sense of a 'center of gravity', which attention that is linked with it, is either (hopefully) "circling the drain", or has gone off on some kind of an adventure somewhere, and may have to remind itself that there isn't "anywhere else".

That something wants to be awake and alive as this moment, with all the senses and full attention in some way that does not require constant monitoring, training wheels, any sense of effort, striving, or any other hindrance, should be obvious, yet there are aspects of all of that that are still more subtle, completely preverbal really, just energies without form, that are also moving, and the entire phenomenal universe that is all linked up with it everywhere.

To me, there are very funny things that happen along the way, like when I read one of Douglas's later works, where he said that he had finally come to the conclusion "most reluctantly", that Seeing / Headlessness was not Zen after all, and I remembered Seung Sahn saying that he didn't teach Buddhism or Zen any more, he only taught "Don't Know". Those two things clicked for me.

The heart is a deeper thing. To be "fully absent in favor of the other" does not mean to be a slave to the wants of another, or oneself. None of that is really Headlessness or Zen, or any kind of religion or philosophy as much as it refers back to everything one should have learned in kindergarten.

I think that there is a natural drive towards a state of uninterrupted wholeness that is also entirely inclusive of all beings, and unassailable by any form of ignorance. I also think that is a tall damn (albeit natural) order.

Moreover, if such a state were attained, how would it function in this world, and who, if anyone, would even notice? (Except maybe for purposes of resentment.) "Who does that somonabitcher think he is, hogging all the light?"

And so, once "attained", (to one's own satisfaction) the 'secret identity' must still remain secret. The revolution will not be advertised.

Anyway, meanwhile 'take yourself to no outside refuge, but be a lamp unto yourself.' Does the lamp only light the inside?

"There is a light in the lightman, and it lighteth the whole world."

Chris Cheney

I asked Chris if I could use his message in this issue and whether he could enlarge on what Douglas said about Zen. This is his reply followed by a further note from me. Alan

Hi Alan and Margot, Of course. I am honored to be included in any Nowletter, anytime. Let me give the other bit (Douglas's writing where he said he had "come very reluctantly, to the conclusion that he wasn't teaching Zen after all"), I can't remember the complete statement, and it is in one of his later works, that I read only relatively recently.

I'm not sure if he was writing about it in terms of "a different approach" or not, or exactly how he was framing that. I was struck by it, because I suddenly realized that Seung Sahn had said much the same thing, when he said that he "didn't teach Buddhism, or even Zen anymore", but only taught don't know.

This is much the same as my first teacher, Rafael, that was basically his central point. If trying to come up with a description for it (sort of antithetical that) it might be something like "a free examination of existence by awareness" or some such. It is basically just existential, experiential, and certainly not particularly concerned with doctrinal or dogmatic constructs as such, although for some people, the whole matter may benefit

generally, from some form of regular discipline or devotional practice. In other words, generally; "like a little child" perhaps consistently, albeit with adult skills in attendance. Re: Your question to John Toler, (*I had asked John whether he thought there was any difference between Headlessness and Zen*) I wouldn't say it is "the same or different" either. The particulars (e.g. expression, style, emphasis) are particular, with any two authors, teachers, dharmas, or people, period. "Who is having it" in Douglas's parlance, is singular. (Perhaps even singular is not quite right, where it is the One and the Many and the None without any description.)

It is all just whatever is happening just right now, just this moment, plain as day. (Of course that includes the possibility of confusion, anger, bigotry, sorrow, guilt, all kinds of delusion, one damned annoying thing after another also) but generally speaking, that stuff isn't particularly necessary.

(I was just watching some vids of Trump campaigners trying to suppress voter turnout in Fla. by screaming insults through a bullhorn from across a very narrow street at voters. Clearly illegal, no law in sight, they were working themselves into a frenzy trying to control other people, it reminded me of a bunch of self appointed "volunteer traffic wardens" who were attempting to direct pedestrians on the sidewalk and the street during the last blackout in N.Y.C. One lady actually put her hands on me as I tried to cross the street in the middle of the block, so after telling her to let go didn't work, I just ignored her and continued to cross, dragging her along behind me, as she refused to let go of my arm. They created quite a traffic jam on the sidewalk, but the Sun shines on them also ">)) ">)) ">)) ">)) ">))...).

The big problem is that everybody seems to think they know what is right for everybody else, and everybody wants to be the world tyrant ">)) ">)) ">))... (without even knowing What Is, from what is not).

I will have to see if I can find that quote from Douglas and send it along, I don't know what I could add to it. I think historically, Zen practitioners have located in their T'an T'ien rather than in their head, and, depending on the style of Kong An practice, they are looking for more of "an explosion from the middle", that culminates in some sort of liberation or freedom from hindrance beyond life and death that does not regress.

If that is so, it is my experience, speaking only for myself, that the least productive thing I could do in that general direction, would be to concern myself with attaining any such thing.

Anyway, Love to you and Margot, Chris

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)

Meeting Programme

Sunday 6th November – The Sense of Self and Damasio – Garry Booth

Saturday 26th November – Judy Bruce and the Brentyn Ramm approach.

Note the one-off day change from Sunday to Saturday for the second meeting.

