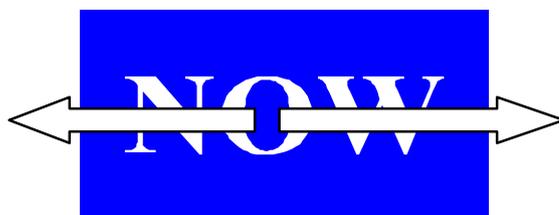


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Next Greville Street Meeting – Sunday October 1st

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A note of introduction to content. We have two contributions from Mal Mitchell this month as his response to the Anita Moorjani piece in the last issue and his contribution to my Brexit survey happened to coincide. My survey is a rambling and inconclusive collection of notes which is all of a piece with Brexit itself as far as I can make out.

Some of us will remember Eric Berne's *Games People Play*, I came across an unexpected connection to Transactional Analysis when, in researching an introductory talk on Zen, I found a 1967 article by Douglas Harding which identifies the fundamental game we learn to play and the one from which all the other games arise. It was sub-titled 'Transactional Analysis applied to Zen' and was well received by Eric Berne who published it in the Transactional Analysis Journal of that year.

Anita Moorjani from Mal Mitchell

I've just enjoyed reading the latest NOWletter. Great to see Jigme Guri's letter there – many thanks for including that. I much appreciated your review of *Dying To Be Me*. I certainly hope it may whet the appetite of anybody sore-butted for waiting at the edge of their seats for *The 9.15 To Nirvana...* There's certainly more to read while they're waiting on that platform – including of course things they might ultimately find more valuable than the awaited. Good that you not only linked Anita Moorjani's testimony/experience in with John Wren-Lewis's but also Jill Bolte-Taylor's.

I think my take on what Anita M. says is much as per yours but, naturally enough, not entirely e.g. re what survives, or might survive, the death of the body. My impression and feeling about what she's saying on that (on the strength of study of her first book, over half of her second, besides other written material and various talks online) is that she's saying something a bit less categorical or simplistic, a bit fuzzier more ambivalent/multivalent, than that individual awareness survives; something that would tally perhaps with a kind of 'uncertainty principle' in quantum mechanics as in "*any of a variety of mathematical inequalities asserting a fundamental limit to the precision with which certain pairs of physical properties of a particle, known as complementary variables, such as position x and momentum p , can be known.*".... So for 'physical properties of a particle' here, say, read '**realities of being**'... Think duality/nonduality... etc. Anita M.'s view on the nature of time itself is such that she has referred to what people call 'past lives' (and indeed 'future lives') as actually running concurrently with what we call our 'present'. Twister for the ordinary mind as that might be. Another characterisation which could be helpful here is that Buddhist/Deep Ecological/Etc one of 'interbeing'.... (And far be it for me to blow my own 'organic unfathomable' trumpet on such a thing, of course, but if I don't have the audacity to give a little cry for my own hogwash on it, I certainly won't be acknowledging/growing my own pair of wings ;-)

Mal Mitchell

Mal is the author of The Hog's Wholey Wash which was reviewed in Nowletter 153, March 2011. <http://www.capacity.org/now/Now153.pdf>

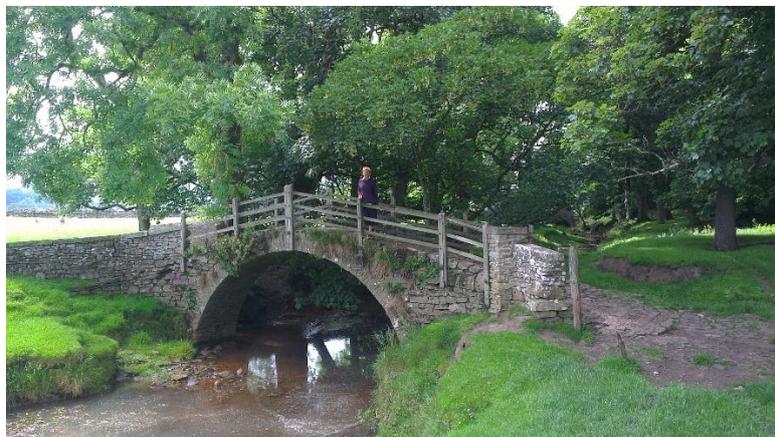


Photo of Margot on Bridge at Hawes.

The Boundless, Indivisible, Invisible Non-Sensory Reality. Always Present Everywhere. From Doug Lloyd

An Ancient Text Paraphrased.

If I go in a space shuttle to the moon, *YOU*, the invisible, indivisible, boundless, non-sensory reality are there.

If I go down in a sub-marine to the ocean floor, *YOU* are there.

If I join the terrorists, *YOU* are there.

First Verse of a Nineteenth Century Hymn.

Praise to the holiest in the height,

And in the depth be praise:

In all his works most wonderful,

Most sure in all his ways.

A Twentyfirst Century Affirmation.

To reach the ultimate depth and height, the invisible, indivisible, infinite, non-sensory reality doesn't require a step-ladder, for it has never been anywhere else.

Doug Lloyd.

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Brexit from Alan Mann

I thought I would use our recent journey through Europe and the UK to gain some understanding of why Britain is leaving the European Union. I asked people we were travelling with and those we met in UK about their attitudes and reactions. At the outset I was surprised at how little, both the leavers and the stayers, knew about the likely outcomes and that hasn't changed over the whole period of this exercise.

The main issues seem to be:

Border control. I was told the NHS, dependent on migrant skills, has a shortage of 40,000 nurses and there was also a current shortage of crop pickers who seem to have been deterred by the resistance to foreigners, two examples of the negative aspect of reduced freedom of access and/or tougher "border protection".

The democratic aspect. One justification is the feeling that British citizens are subject to regulation by an unelected bureaucracy. I thought this odd as representatives are elected to the EU parliament. I learned that the EU parliamentary representatives do not have the final say in legislative matters and there is a complicated system where a commission takes the parliamentary recommendations and turns them into the final regulations. I am trying to work out exactly who has the final say but it seems at this state that the elected reps have an advisory rather than executive role. If that is correct then there are similarities between the EU and Iran where the clerical council overrides the elected reps. (See my notes below). I asked Claudia, our Austrian guide,

who thinks Brexit is a ridiculous mistake, whether the anti-democratic aspect is a justifiable objection. Her reply was that if the majority is a majority of dimwits then who, other than dimwits, would want to be ruled by people they would elect to rule them, Trump being the classic example. I suppose that is the basic problem with democracies but it is not the first time I've found this sense of the need for effective leadership at the cost of democratic principle in talking to Europeans, and the Russians just love it.

There was an interesting example of EU parliamentary shortcomings when European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker berated the European Parliament in May, calling the body "ridiculous" and accusing it of showing a lack of respect for smaller countries after only a tiny fraction of MEPs showed up for a speech by the Maltese prime minister.

The commercial. Industry and the City of London. I expected the negative effect of Brexit on the financial sector with companies already booking space in Frankfurt and Dublin would be a deterrent to departure. However, there is a sense amongst the leavers that those likely to be most affected had it coming and damn the consequences. As far as manufacturing is concerned the leavers don't seem to be at all concerned but I failed to establish why.

Negotiation. I am surprised at the aggressive stance of Theresa May and to a lesser extent of some Europeans when a more conciliatory approach seems necessary. It seems that the Brexit decision is creating a sense that a break up of a disunited kingdom as well as departure from the EU is now on the cards.

Personal responses.

A young Dutch mother who is a widely travelled education consultant spoke rather sadly about Brexit as it seemed to be a serious step away from the developing freedom of movement and a weakening of the integration which is developing in the new Europe. Her father was angry about it and saw it as evidence of British arrogance as though saying 'you Europeans you are not good enough for us'. This shift from sorrow to anger was an interesting experience for me as the father became quite angry as he told me about his opinion. We asked the mechanic who replaced a tyre on our hire car in Stratford what he thought about it. He said he had four sons and their only hope of worthwhile jobs as opposed to endless casual employment or unemployment was for the UK to leave and recover control of immigration. In some of the Brexiteers' responses there is a note of irritation at what is seen as continental domination, particularly as far as Germany is concerned.

Our Hereford rented cottage was owned by a mixed race couple, she was English he was Turkish. I asked him about Brexit thinking he was an obvious opponent of Brexit only to find he was in favour of getting out providing that the marketing connection was maintained. He thought the Common Market aspect was the level at which it worked well and the Union a step too far. He thought the aggressive attitudes of some cabinet ministers, which I thought unwise posturing, was an inevitable preamble to the negotiations.

Various friends and contacts. Two of our Traherne friends, both remainers, considered the complete absence of debate about the effects, plus campaign lies about relative cost combined with an expectation that 'Remain' would romp home, were the

main reasons for the outcome. They also felt that the current indications of a softer less economically damaging departure are the result of wishful thinking. It is interesting that this couple have links to Germany and, in my view, for that reason a much more rational perspective. Everywhere we went in Europe the moment we opened our mouths we were answered in English. Putting aside the sense of inadequacy this always generates I felt this was a rather too important a piece of cultural capital to be tossed away.

My Relations and friends Couple 1. Both voted for Brexit. Resistance to regulation It is sadly ironic that regulatory failure is the likely cause of the Grenfell Tower tragedy. Undemocratic system. Preferential decisions favouring Germany and France. Uncontrolled immigration and foreign investment. They believe the EU budget is not subject to scrutiny or auditing of any kind. *Couple 2.* Both voted for Brexit. One respondent claimed that certain EU structural arrangements favoured French and German interests but I was unable to find out why British companies could not take advantage of the same arrangements.

In the case of *Couples 3 & 4*, the wives voted to leave whilst the husbands voted remain. There is a feeling that the commercial threat pointed to by the 'Remainers' is overstated and any losses will be offset by unidentified gains. My oldest friend is a 'leaver' and the only Brit on our European tour was an enthusiastic supporter of the out case and of Theresa May.

General

There was an election whilst we were finishing our European tour which was intended by the PM, Theresa May, to increase the Conservative majority and strengthen her hand in her plan for a hard Brexit. However, the outcome was the reverse and she now has to manage a minority Government in coalition with uncomfortable bedfellows and with the possibility that a soft Brexit is now more likely.

Matthew d'Ancona wrote in the Guardian on 25 June about the two major driving forces as nativism and economic prosperity. Nativism covering 'Little Englandism' and anti-immigration and that the realisation of potential economic disaster is beginning to push the leavers towards a softer Brexit although in his view that is a contradiction in terms; xenophobia versus trade. In the same issue Felicity Lawrence points out that food and drink are the UK's largest remaining manufacturing sector and contribute 28bn per year to the economy and 13% of employment. Europe is its most significant export market. UK produces only 50% of the food it consumes and European imports represent half of the imported food. British farmers received about 3bn in subsidies from the common agricultural policy last year. Bonfire of the regulations is out of the question as it will result in the exclusion of products which are not produced to EU standards.

For those interested in untangling the EU operating system I have made the following extracts from extensive material on the internet. If you decide to get your teeth into it you will probably have some sympathy after all for the supporters of Brexit.

The EU Management Process

In the Council, government ministers from each EU country meet to discuss, amend and adopt laws, and coordinate policies. The ministers have the authority to commit

their governments to the actions agreed on in the meetings. Together with the European Parliament, the Council is the main decision-making body of the EU.

The EU is run by five main institutions: the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Court of Justice. The European Council, which is the meeting place for heads of state or government, sets the EU's overall policy agenda and its priorities.

The European Commission will commonly propose new EU laws, after having [consulted](#) other EU institutions and interested parties. The draft laws are [available](#) on the EU website.

The draft EU law must then be approved by the Council, which is composed of [government ministers](#), as well as by the European Parliament, which is made up of directly elected representatives from [national constituencies](#). These members of the European Parliament, or MEPs, are organised into [political groups](#) rather than by nationality.

A draft law will commonly be [amended](#) by the Council and by the European Parliament. These institutions will normally discuss the draft with each other and with the Commission.

The Legislative Process

Main elements of the procedure:

The European Commission submits a proposal to the Council and the European Parliament

The Council and the Parliament adopt a legislative proposal either at the first reading or at the second reading

If the two institutions do not reach an agreement after the second reading a conciliation committee is convened

If the text agreed by the conciliation committee is acceptable to both institutions at the third reading, the legislative act is adopted

If a legislative proposal is rejected at any stage of the procedure, or the Parliament and Council cannot reach a compromise, the proposal is not adopted and the procedure ends.

Alan back again:

One of the best commentaries I have read on the Brexit situation is the latest Henry Grattan Lecture by Former Taoiseach of Ireland John Bruton. It is summarised on the website:

According to Mr Bruton: *"The Brexit process will not be like a member leaving a club of which he or she no longer wishes to be a member, which is an easy enough process, once the bar bill has been settled. It will be much more like divorces between a couple, who have lived together for years, have several small dependent children, a mortgage, and a small business they had been running together. Not only have past bills to be settled, but future liabilities have to be anticipated, decisions made about the running of the business, and rights and responsibilities in respect of*

the children, agreed. It would be naive to think that the divorce between the UK, and the other EU countries, including Ireland, will not leave scars. I hope that is all they will be, scars, that will gradually become less visible."

The complete address at: https://www.tcd.ie/news_events/articles/former- taoiseach-john-bruton-gives-annual-henry-grattan-lecture/7909

Brexit postscript from Mal Mitchell

P.S. Our last interview was in London where we had a traditional catch-up meeting with Mal Mitchell, friend and NOWletter contributor and asked him what he thought about the Brexit business. I was a bit too travel-torn to recall all but an overall impression of his dissatisfaction and asked him to give us a note for this report. Alan

Good-o - thanks Alan. I do have strong feelings and views on Brexit so it's hard not to write a wee essay if asked my take on it! You're welcome to include in your report as much or as little as you like of what's below, but this is what occurs to me now about it - struggling to be succinct!

I think Brexit will prove to be a case of British pride before a great fall – bad for the UK, and less predictably so to other countries in terms of peace, democracy, general stability and health. I think Brexit is a phenomenally ill-conceived idea, a blinkered ‘devolutionary’ strategy, something in essence counter-spirited to the anti-war, anti-fascist feeling of Europe’s nation states following WW2, the momentum at the heart of the EU as a political-economic entity. Brexit runs counter to this spirit in a world which – given its capacity to forget and delude itself – is hardly less apt to fall into forms of conflict than before; where unity beyond superficial differences, and structures supporting this, count more than ever – as especially in the face of the huge and interrelated challenges facing us like poverty, inequality, climate change, overpopulation, abuses of human rights, of the rights/welfare of other species and this planet’s environments.

As an idea, Brexit was substantially sold to the British public by privileged and ambitious white men comfortable with misrepresenting current realities, likely impacts, etc – men hungry for personal success and political power. Naming no names like Boris Johnson, Nigel Farage, Michael Gove...They successful charmed and frightened older voters in particular with supposed threats to an idealised, romanticised national integrity – a significantly falsified narrative regarding Britain’s past, present and potential future, engaging with people’s capacity for fear, prejudice, parochial self-interest, if not out-and-out hatred. Manipulating people’s thinking, they played royally on people’s fear of “control by Brussels”, of unbridled immigration, etc. Largely ignored was how any ‘greatness’ of Britain has generally and variously entailed great indebtedness to other countries.

The grim predictions of ‘Remainers’ in terms of psycho-social and economic consequences have already been unfolding – not least increases in race-related attacks and general empowerment to bigotry. It was with a spirit of British nationalism, to some extent arguably a kind of fascism, that Brexit has its ‘success’ – as opposed to a more inclusive, expansive sense of identity, and motivation to find ways to protect and celebrate differences within greater contexts of unity. I do think that the vote went also with a valid but misdirected frustration at how things stand, how they’ve been going

in terms of regional inequalities, etc – things I anticipate will now, in general, get worse....

Mal Mitchell

Reader views on Brexit are welcome and I'll include further contributions in the next issue. Alan

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The Face Game – Introductory Notes

Transactional Analysis Applied To Zen – D. E. Harding

First published in The Transactional Analysis Bulletin 1967

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS ESSAY

From the original introduction.

This essay is an attempt to apply the principles of Transactional Analysis (as set out in Eric Berne's *Games People Play*)' to Zen experience, in order to gain a clearer understanding of what Zen calls Enlightenment, and the delusion or ignorance which Enlightenment removes. Our study applies also to Vedanta, Sufism, Taoism, etc., which have other names, such as Liberation, Self-realisation, Awakening, for what is essentially the same experience as Zen Enlightenment or Satori. We shall describe Enlightenment as ceasing to play what we call the Face Game.

From the original Transactional Analysis publication.

Mr. Harding is a distinguished British student of Zen and its relationship to Western psychology and psychiatry, as will be evident from his bibliography. He is author of *Religions of the World* (1966), *On Having No Head* (1961), and other books and articles in this field. This is the longest article we have ever published in the Bulletin, and we have done so because of its relevance to much of our own current research, particularly regarding intimacy (TAB 3: 113, January 1964 & 125, April 1964) and the origins of games in infancy. We are grateful to Mr. Harding for offering these results of his thinking and observation for publication in the Bulletin.

The original article can be read on the web at:

*https://archive.org/stream/transactionalanaoochen/transactionalanaoochen_djvu.txt
However, it is not a very clear transcription and contains many indecipherable glitches. The following is a condensed and updated version lifted directly from the www.headless.org articles list.*

The Face Game by Douglas E. Harding

1. Our Thesis. This Essay claims that:

(a) All the 'games people play' arise out of one basic game, which we call the Face Game.

(b) To be game-free is to cease playing the Face Game, and this (in religious contexts) is variously called Liberation, Self-realisation, Awakening, Enlightenment.

2. The Face Game Defined.

This is the game which almost everyone plays (exceptions include infants, some retardates and schizophrenics, and Seers) in which the player pretends that he has a face where he has no face, that he is (at 0 inches) what he looks like (at, say 4 inches).

3. Before The Game

It takes years for the growing child to learn the Face Game thoroughly and to play it with conviction. In the following examples, the lesson has still to be learned: the child is still (momentarily, anyhow) as faceless as at birth.

Carlos (1:7), at a party, is asked to locate various uncles and aunties. He points to each in turn, correctly. Then someone asks him where Carlos is. He waves his hands aimlessly - a gesture which seems to say he is at large. Carlos cannot locate Carlos. Around this time, when rebuked for being a naughty boy, he didn't mind being called naughty, but protested he was not a boy. (Eventually he told his grandmother that he was a boy.)

Joan (2), is told to go and wash. She proceeds to the bathroom and starts washing her face - the face in the mirror.

Simon (2), asked where Simon is, points straight outwards.

Johnny (2:3) asks mother to make a picture. She draws a circle for a face, and asks: 'What next?' He asks for the trunk, then trousers, feet, hands (but not arms). Then he wants eyes, so mother draws a pair. But he insists on more and more till the whole face is covered with eyes. He then declares the picture finished.

Andrew (3) has an accident. He goes to see his friend, taking along a mirror to show him the stitches in his face.

Stephen (3:6), standing in the bath and looking down at his body, cries out: 'Mum, I haven't got a head!'

George (5), asked whether he has a brother, says: 'Yes'. 'Then he has a brother?' 'Oh no.'

Mary (5) asks Mother why she and his sister have heads, and he hasn't.

Fingering his head, he announced: 'But I don't have a head here.'

Asked where they do their thinking, most of the children in the class say: 'In our heads.' Peter (7) says he thinks in his arithmetic book.

Susan (8) is a black girl in a white school. Her forearms and the backs of her hands are sore; she has been trying to scrub them white. At this stage her face is no problem.

Caroline (9) is sitting with the family round the table playing cards. She can't make out why her mother insists that she should include herself when she counts the players.

Hakim, writing about himself at 10: 'I knew my arms and body were black, I

could see them but I swore my face was white and if she (Shirley Temple) ever met me, she'd return my love.'

John (11) tries - unsuccessfully - to explain to his parents that he is 'the space in which all these things happen'.

Notice that there are, in fact, two very different kinds of facelessness apparent in these examples. The first - mere facelessness - may be called: overlooking one's presence (e.g. Caroline). The second - conscious facelessness - may be called: seeing one's absence (e.g. Stephen). However brief and spasmodic, this insight is a true preview of the Seer's Liberation or Enlightenment, which is accordingly described as 'becoming like a little child again'.

4. Learning To Play

The young child is faceless, and his learning to pretend otherwise is a long and complicated business, starting almost at birth and hardly complete till his teens. There are three ways of learning the Game, and they complement and reinforce one another. All are thoroughly dishonest.

(1) Building a face here (2) Importing a face from elsewhere (3) Going out to find a face.

(1) Building a face here.

This way is non-visual, and builds on the foundations of touch, muscular activity and tension, sensations of heat, cold, pain, and so on. From birth, baby's face is kissed, patted, fed, washed, and generally worked on and fussed over, as if to make up for its inherent evanescence and to body it forth. In due course there are added various nursery pastimes involving facial manipulation, and deliberately drawing the child's attention to what he looks like - to other people. In school, too, the work goes on. (Teacher: 'Let's pretend our fingers are motor-cars. Then we can take a trip around our cheeks!')

As one grows up, the need to body forth one's face increases rather than diminishes. The site gets still more working over: witness the ritual of frequent washing, teeth-cleaning, hair-brushing, putting on and making up and repairing one's face, shaving, fussing with spectacles, smoking. (I must have a face here for this great big pipe to be stuck in, for all this smoke to be billowing out of!)

How successful is the method? What sort of features does it produce, not in the make-believe of the Game, but in reality?

Instead of thinking up an answer, why not put the matter to the test? Manipulate your face now anyway you please. Can you build on your shoulders a solid, opaque, coloured globe, such as you find on other people's shoulders? And, having built it, can you take up residence? If so, what's it like in there?

Isn't this the first method of trying to build a face, right where you are, a total failure? It is the ploy of the Face Game to pretend otherwise.

(2) Importing a face from elsewhere.

What you need but can't make at home, you import. This is where the mirror comes in.

At first, baby ignores the other baby behind the glass. Soon, however, he starts playing with his little friend. Eventually, he learns that that face is 'really' his own

face here, in front of the glass. In imagination, he reaches out for it, frees it from the glass, draws it towards him enlarging it as it comes, turns it round, and finally claps it onto his facelessness. What a set of impossible tricks - to play upon oneself! (To test how efficiently you are playing the Face Game, look in your bathroom mirror. If you see somebody in that second bathroom behind the glass, staring fixedly into your empty bathroom, then you are playing badly or not at all. If you simply see yourself, you are playing well.)

(3) Going out to find a face.

If my face is really some way off, and I can neither (if I'm honest) build it up here by feeling it, nor bring it home from elsewhere with the help of my mirror, it seems I must go out in search of it. If I'm in no position to register my face, I must somehow get into the position of those who are.

To begin with, of course, this is impossible. The infant is at first centred wholly upon himself. He takes in the world as it is presented. But his gradual and many-sided development into a mature human means the growth of his ability to shift centre onto other observers and to contemplate himself as their object, from their point of view. This is the crucial move in the Face Game. Growing up is learning to play this Game better, and this is learning to jump further and further out of your skin (imaginary, here) in order to view your skin (real, there).

Consider the following Player's Progress, in six short scenes.

(a) Baby Carlos at the party cannot pin himself down. Not yet shut up in a body, he is at large, unbounded. Faceless, he has no worries about how he looks to others, so he acts unselfconsciously, spontaneously, and is no respecter of persons.

(b) But this innocent phase is already passing, as Carlos is made increasingly aware that his parents are looking meaningfully in his direction - looking angrily or approvingly, lovingly or distastefully, at something and not at nothing.

(c) As a boy, Carlos attends another party. It is his turn to be 'it'. This time, suddenly confronted by a circle of faces, he starts blushing and stammering. Those critical, thought-hiding masks - what do they make of him? They make him out to be a crestfallen little boy, and he adopts their view. no longer immense and free and nothing whatever like them, he now sees himself through their eyes as one of them - and a very inadequate one, at that.

(d) A few years later, a very different Carlos strides into the same room - a Carlos who has learned to play the Face Game with something like enjoyment. This time, he makes his appearance confidently (who makes this appearance, what it's an appearance of, he doesn't wish to know). Everything he says and does is to impress, not express. For he is right out there being impressed by handsome and charming young Carlos. The others are less impressed. In fact, they are vaguely embarrassed. They sense the falsity of the game. They don't enjoy the spectacle of recognition-hungry young Carlos off-centre and beside himself, in order that he may be turned in upon himself instead of out upon them.

(e) Now Carlos, quite grown up, is playing the Game harder than ever and on a much larger field. The number of fellow-players to be confronted and impressed has grown vastly. His television face is familiar in a million homes. Even so, he is losing. His appetite for recognition grows faster than the supply. Besides, for all his technique, the discriminating viewer finds him more unreal than ever. In effect he is saying: 'I'm not what I am, but what I look like.' He is self-alienated.

(f) He can now play harder still, and go more obviously sick; or ease off the Game and somehow get by till he dies. Let's optimistically suppose he is a moderate player: for society is mutual face-making and face-taking. It works, after a fashion.

Yet it is only a game, a pretence, which is kept in full swing by the hidden advantages it yields. It papers over our dreaded Emptiness; it enables us to avoid the true intimacy and love of which that emptiness is the ground. But these advantages are illusory: if our Emptiness isn't acknowledged positively, it will make itself felt negatively, and in the end disastrously. Really to grow up, to be free and at ease and natural, to be quite sane, even to be wholly practical, we must stop playing.

5. Failure to Play

Many never learn to play the Face Game with skill or conviction, and some never get round to playing it at all. Having failed or declined to take themselves at the world's estimate, they are labelled schizoid or schizophrenic. Understandably, the discrepancy between the facelessness they find at the centre, and the facade which everybody out there seems determined to construct upon it, proves too much for them.

Jung said that the schizophrenic ceases to be schizophrenic when he feels he is understood; and one method of treatment has been to adopt (with imperfect sincerity) the symbolic language of the patient. But if the therapist has himself opted out of the Face Game, he can in some cases do much to help the patient by endorsing, with perfect sincerity, the patient's view of himself. Herbert, for instance, sees himself as transparent, a vacuum, made of glass or thin air: people look clean through him. He is empty, unborn, dead, weightless, discontinuous in time, headless, faceless, disembodied, lacking personal identity, at odds with what he sees in the mirror, quite other than the hateful self people try to impose upon him. Now all this (given some change of language), is basically true, indeed obvious, to anyone who isn't playing the Face Game. Herbert is too sane for comfort. He has to understand the Game the others are playing; they (or at least his therapist) have to stop playing it. His cure is theirs.

6. Halting Play

Facelessness seldom descends out of the blue upon anyone. Nor is it likely to be got by study, or even solitary do-it-yourself meditation. Normally, it is transmitted. It is easy to see why. Essentially transactional, a social infection, the Face Game is very catching; and so is ceasing from the Game catching. In the company of hardfaced players we play our hardest. In the company of the faceless - animals, idiots, young children - we abate our play and don't bother to put on special faces. In the company of a Seer, we may find ourselves temporarily de-faced altogether - so infectious is his darshan.

If I'm opting out of the Face Game, some people around me are already tending to follow, though their initial response may well be to step up their play in self-defence. Precisely how does my ceasing play necessarily involve them, and maybe help them to do the same? There are three transactional stages. (It's no good merely reading the following. Get face-to-face with someone - and see if you are, in fact, face-to-face.)

(1) Parent-child

Suppose I'm sitting opposite you and playing the Game - making believe that the set-up is symmetrical. I count two - two pairs of eyes, two mouths, two noses, two faces. We match. This means I'm split: part of me sees your face there, while the other is busy thinking up a similar object right here. The result of this split is that I glimpse rather than see your face. And certainly I don't take on what I see of it. I've got a perfectly good one of my own here, thank you! So I throw your face back at you, making it almost impossible for you to refuse delivery. This is what your Parent, and we (your Parent's surrogates) do for you: our wearing faces practically ensures you shall wear one.

(2) Child-Parent

Now suppose, while still sitting opposite you, I withdraw from the Game. Then the set-up is for me totally asymmetrical, face to no-face, your presence to my absence. This means my attention is undivided: childlike, I'm going by what I see, without thinking things into it. The result is that I really do see you, vividly and with a minimum of subjective distortion. And even more clearly, I really do see Myself, as this blank screen on which you are now starring. I'm delighted to take your face off you!

(3) Adult-Adult

Now suppose you cheerfully give what anyway I take. Then you, in turn, see how you are built open. There is no confrontation; we are no longer opposed. Instead, we are united. This is the factual basis, the essential foundation of any fully Adult-Adult relationship.

But the issue may be a less happy one: the last thing that many people want is relief from their faces, and the game-free intimacy that goes with it.

7. Resistance

One of the marks of a game (a game in the technical sense, as defined in Transactional Analysis) is that when a player is in danger of becoming aware of his game and its hitherto unconscious motivation, he is likely to suffer distress. The harder he is playing, and the greater the concealed advantages he is getting from the game, the greater his distress or resentment is likely to be when those advantages are threatened.

All this applies strikingly to the Face Game. Reactions to its exposure vary widely. People who, on account of youth or failure to comply with the social norm, haven't learned to play the Game with ease, are commonly delighted to start giving it up. On the other hand, people who have invested much time and effort in face-building, and won through to the resulting social advantages (so-called), are likely to try any

manoeuvre which promises to remove the threat to their hard-won faces. For instance, when Mr Black, opting out of the Game, declines to go on playing it with Mr White, who is a hard player, and (perhaps unwisely) tries to explain the Game and why he's pulling out, White dismisses Black as incomprehensible, eccentric, or plain crazy. Anyhow, the upshot of Black's well-meant efforts is to provoke White to play still harder. Alternatively, White may be really shaken, in which case his attitude to Black is liable to degenerate into a curious mixture of embarrassment, apprehension and fascination. He tries to avoid Black, but unsuccessfully. Their friendship seems at an end. (In fact, if all goes well, it is now really beginning).

Here is another instance, a more dramatic one. Normally, the Zen monk goes for his daily interview with the Roshi quite willingly, but when he gets to the verge of Satori he may have to be carried, struggling, into the Roshi's presence, which he would give anything to avoid. In general, the disciple who is about to see his Original Face (his Facelessness, his Voidness) is apt to come up against unexpected resistances. His distress, as he confronts this barrier, is matched by his joy and relief as he breaks through to the simple truth of his clarity.

8. Our Original Face

'Seeing one's Original Face' is one of Zen's synonyms for Enlightenment. 'See what at this very moment your own face looks like - the Face you had before your parents were born,' is the message of Hui Neng, the virtual Founder of Zen. Our Original Face is absolutely featureless. Understandably, this doctrine perplexed the young Tung-shan (807-869), who became the founder of Soto Zen. The occasion of his Enlightenment was when he happened to see his reflection in a pond. In our terms, he located his human face down there in the water, and his non-human, featureless Face above the water. He looked at himself as if for the first time, and took seriously what he saw - at its face value - instead of playing games with it. 'When thought is put down', says a later Zen Master, 'the Original Face appears.'

Other religious traditions, including Taoism, Hinduism (Advaita), Islam (Sufism), and mystical Christianity, have their versions of the Original Face. They agree that I have to see, not just acknowledge, this Emptiness that lies here at the Centre of my universe - and is filled with that universe. It isn't that I must become as faceless, as incorporeal, as much at large, as I was in the cradle; but rather see that I have always been like that, and always will be so, whether I have the honesty to recognise it or not. And, after all, this makes sense: the game-free baby is here so obviously in the right.

9. The Five Stages of the Game

(1) Like any animal, the new-born infant is - for himself - No-thing, faceless, at large, unseparate from his world, 1st-person without knowing it.

(2) The young child, as we have seen, is liable to become aware (however briefly and intermittently) of himself-as-he-is-for-himself - faceless Capacity. Yet he's also becoming increasingly aware of himself-as-he-is-for-others: a very special and all-too-human 3rd person, complete with head and face. Both views of himself are valid and needful.

(3) But as the growing child learns the Face Game his acquired view of himself-from-outside comes to overshadow, and in the end to obliterate, his native view of himself-from-inside. In fact, he grows down, not up. At first, he contained his world: now it contains him - what little there is of him. he takes everybody's word for what it's like where he is, except his own, and is 1st-person no longer. The consequences are just what might be expected. Shrunk from being the Whole into being this insignificant part, he grows greedy, hating, fearful, closed in, phoney, and tired. Greedy, as he tries to regain, at whatever cost, a little of his lost empire; hating, as he tries to revenge himself on a society that has cruelly cut him down to size; fearful, as he sees himself a mere thing up against all other things; closed in, because it is the nature of a thing to keep others out; phoney, as he puts on mask after mask for each person or occasion; tired, because so much energy goes in keeping up these appearances instead of letting them go to where they belong - in and for the others. And all these troubles - and many more - arise from his basic pretence, the Face Game, as he imagines (contrary to all the evidence) that he is a 0 feet what he looks like at 6 feet - a solid, opaque, coloured, outlined lump of stuff. In short, he's beside himself, eccentric, self-alienated.

(4) He sees through the Game. Play is, for the moment, halted. This initial seeing is simplicity itself. Once noticed, nothing is more obvious than one's facelessness. The results, however, including freedom from greed, hate, fear, and delusion, are assured only while the Clarity here (which is Freedom itself) is being attended to. Flashes of Clarity aren't enough.

(5) Now the really exacting stage begins. He has to go on seeing his facelessness whenever and wherever he can till the seeing becomes quite natural and unbroken. Then at last the Game is over. He is game-free, Liberated, Awake, Enlightened, truly 1st-person.

This conscious 1st-personhood, or Enlightenment, has been breaking out here and there for the past 4,000 years, and is now becoming much less rare. It could be exploding, in spite of society's still immense resistances. This is fortunate, for the race's survival may well depend upon the condition becoming, if not universal, at least the recognised norm, against which true mental health is measured.

10. Conclusion

There is no end to the number and variety of the games which continually arise out of the Face Game, and no way to be free of them but to tackle them at source. The Face Game is the root, and all the other games people play only branches and twigs. It makes sense, in that case, to hack at the root and leave the branches to wither of themselves.

Till they are put to the test, these are mere words. Here is a working hypothesis, and its testing isn't necessarily as difficult as it looks. Though universal, the Face Game is all the while becoming more manifestly absurd and unworkable.

Douglas Harding 1967

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The Poet's Death

He lay. His high-propped face could only peer
in pale refusal at the silent cover,
now that the world and all this knowledge of her,
torn from the senses of her lover,
had fallen back to the unfeeling year.

Those who had seen him living saw no trace
of his deep unity with all that passes;
for these, these valleys here, these meadow-grasses,
these streams of running water, were his face.

Oh yes, his face was this remotest distance,
that seeks him still and woos him in despair;
and his mere mask, timidly dying there,
tender and open, has no more consistence
than broken fruit corrupting in the air.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Meetings:

Byron Sophia Philosophical Group Masonic Centre,
6 Byron St. Byron Bay –
Open Meetings: every Thursday from 1 to 3 pm

81 Greville Street –Chatswood –
Next meeting 10am SUNDAY 1st October.

Let me know of changes or of other meetings we could list here.

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