

Harding Meetings—81 Greville Street
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The NOWletter appears between 8 and 12 times every year and is a vehicle for news and views about awakening to what is really going on. The content is based **primarily on contributions from readers**, either their own writing or examples of what moves interests them. Subscription is free.

Staring at the Sun by Irvin D. Yalom	<i>Alan Mann</i>	2
The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth	<i>Quotes</i>	3
Mr Sammler on Death and God	<i>Saul Bellow</i>	4
Subtle Dualism?	<i>Sam Blight</i>	4
Buddhism and Death	<i>Heinz Rahn</i>	5
Harding and Heresy	<i>Doug Lloyd</i>	8
‘A Soft Spring Night in Shillington’—a memoir	<i>John Updike</i>	9
Simple Notes on Enlightenment Revisited	<i>Joanna Malinowska</i>	10
From the Chinese Zen Masters	<i>Anon</i>	12
Traherne and Phenomenology	<i>Various</i>	13
Regular Meetings		14

Editor’s Note, Meredith pointed out that I left dot.com off the end of the URL for the new blog. The correct address is: <http://www.capacitie.blogspot.com/>. Thanks for the correction Meredith. Premananda also corrected me about his community in Germany, it is an open not a closed community as I described it. Sam Blight has combined with Richard Lang in a silent, three minute presentation at http://www.headless.org/videos/richard_flash_video_test.htm, very effective and well worth a visit. Might become a popular aid for those who prefer the DIY approach. Sam has also designed some beautiful posters of Douglas’ first person map, these are available from http://www.headless.org/catalog_46871/Posters. There is quite a lot about death in this issue. A friend suggested I read *Staring at the Sun* by Irvin D. Yalom which led to some discussion and contributions on the matter of life and death and defined the major theme of this issue.

Harding Meetings – usually every second month. Anyone wishing to add their name to the list for notification of these meetings please send an email or phone 02 9419 7394)

Staring at the Sun by Irvin D. Yalom from Alan Mann

Sub-titled—Overcoming the dread of death

This is a book written by a therapist to deal with his own fear of death and how, by therapeutically applying what he discovered as effective in addressing his own problem, he was able to help his patients. Like Ernest Becker in *Denial of Death* he maintains that we are all afraid of death and whilst we can manage it, by reducing the terror to mild anxiety, we cannot eliminate it. Any claim to be free of this fear is considered to be effective repression. He is a secular humanist and believes that religion offers no serious solutions, only evasion of the existential fear. The book sets out a series of case studies to illustrate his theme and show how he handles it. It is very interestingly written and the author seems a very fine person.

He argues that facing death, ‘staring at the sun’, will, if carried through result in the enrichment of life. This outcome is largely a consequence of awakening to the wonder of life and the need to make the best of the opportunity whilst you have it, in the full realization that it will come to an end. His main remedy is connectivity but it is explained primarily as interconnectedness through interpersonal relationship than integration with the wholeness of life.

He identifies the main concerns we face as: death, meaning, isolation and freedom. He believes life arises from random events and gave one of his patients a book by Dawkins, which tells me as much about him as just about anything else he reveals in the book.

Taking his headings how do I think he manages his task:

Death

I think he fails completely to meet the challenge. He continually skirts the issue. By claiming fear of death is unavoidable and inevitable any resolution is excluded. It’s as though he has turned his back on the dimension that offers prospects of complete cure.

Meaning

He mentions the necessary shift from knowing into being in the case of Alice page 43, “*who had a glimpse of the bare scaffolding of life and the nothingness below*” which was the root of her despair but eventually leads her into “*an ontological mode, which ultimately led to significant change*”. He seems to acknowledge the need for a shift from an analytical enquiry into the fear of death to an ontological understanding of it as an aspect of life but he doesn’t apparently see in that approach an ending of the fear. The Alice case concludes with her, at the age of eighty, following the sad loss of a dear husband and letting go of precious belongings, feeling suddenly liberated. He doesn’t say whether this liberation freed her from the fear of death. He sees meaning as merely what we make of life rather than life itself as unfolding meaning.

Isolation

He says, p212, “*the lonely I dissolves into the we*” which I think is very good but doesn’t take it a step further into the All.

Freedom

He claims freedom from the fear of death cannot be achieved. He thinks death is the price of life. However, freedom is not of the person in my view but from the person and that seems outside his scope because he seems not only imprisoned by his strict secularism but embedded in a world view which treats the views of traditions such as Buddhism as of limited value. He gets nearest with references to Phenomenology and Husserl’s ‘bracketing’ on page 201.

He is keen on Epicurus' "after death I will be in the same state of non-being as I was before birth". I find that very digestible however this is much more positively expressed as:

And then he saw that Brahman was joy: for from joy all beings have come,
by joy they all live, and unto joy they all return.

Taittirya Upanishad

The fear of death seems to be dependent on identification with the 'me' the personal. This fundamental assumption that I am what I think I am rather than a perspective on or aspect of what is happening is the root of this fear. I wonder if the unconscious awareness of my non-entity is the root of death fears. If I cannot see through this false identity to a deeper identification with the wholeness of life, the fear of death may well be inescapable. So, Yalom is quite right at that level but his professional responsibility, in my opinion, is to show that it is not about personal survival but to help unravel the accumulation that obscures an understanding of what it is to be free of time, unburdened by self and, therefore, free—not death-free but fear-of-death-free. This doesn't involve personal survival or personal reincarnation but it does involve ongoing life. If I don't resolve the issue of mistaken identity, the deep identification with the secondary processes that generate the sense of 'me', second nature continues to overwhelm first nature. I think that recovery of first nature is the cure, and that involves a present rather than a future death.

Here is a quotation by Robert Powell that made its mark on me many years ago:

Continuity can never be broken on its own level: it can only cease when submerged in another dimension—and that dimension is the timeless, manifesting itself on the level of continuity as death.

My engagement with this book coincided with some readings that seem to be dealing with this issue so I've added them below.

Alan Mann

The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth

The following quotations are taken from Douglas Harding's *The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth* to illustrate a theme which Douglas deals with extensively in Chapter XIX of his book. I thought them relevant to our death enquiry.

"This life is a preliminary thing. All this life man must be learning to diet himself for another way of living. It is not easy to learn that—it must demand a drive of energy easily distracted. As he grew the mouth and throat in the womb—useless there—for the life of earthly feeding he should follow here, so now in this close world he must exactly grow those spiritual organs so that he may live hereafter." Gerald Heard, *A Dialogue in the Desert*, p. 11. In the same author's *Training for the Life of the Spirit* (i. p. 14), the saint is described "as earnest and guaranty that evolution does go on and as an indication of its direction: towards increased consciousness. This increased consciousness is therefore won by a constantly enlarged awareness of one's kinship and union with Life."

Walt Whitman has a great deal to say about what may be called the higher old age: "I see in you the estuary that enlarges and spreads itself grandly as it pours in the great sea."

From The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth, (manuscript) pages 491-492.

Mr Sammler on Death and God—Saul Bellow

Andrew Hilton gave me a pile of his cast-off books during a recent visit. The pile included Mr Sammler's Planet by Saul Bellow, an unlikely title as far as I was concerned, not a book I would have chosen myself. However, I found myself thoroughly gripped by Mr. Sammler and include this brief extract from his conversation with Dr. Govinda Lal because it seems to fit well with the theme of this issue. Alan

...But it is not even for us to vote Yea or Nay. And I have not stated my arguments, for I argue nothing. I have stated my thoughts. They were asked for, and I wanted to express them. The best, I have found, is to be disinterested. Not as misanthropes dissociate themselves, by judging, but by not judging. By willing as God wills.

"During the war I had no belief, and I had always disliked the ways of the Orthodox. I saw that God was not impressed by death. Hell was his indifference. But inability to explain is no ground for disbelief. Not as long as the sense of God persists. I could wish that it did not persist. The contradictions are so painful. No concern for justice? Nothing of pity? Is God only the gossip of the living? Then we watch these living speed like birds over the surface of a water, and one will dive or plunge but not come up again and never be seen any more. And in our turn we will never be seen again, once gone through that surface. But then we have no proof that there is no depth under the surface. We cannot even say that our knowledge of death is shallow. There is no knowledge. There is longing, suffering, mourning. These come from need, affection, and love—the needs of the living creature, because it is a living creature. There is also strangeness, implicit. There is also adumbration. Other states are sensed. All is not flatly knowable. There would never have been any inquiry without this adumbration, there would never have been any knowledge without it. But I am not life's examiner, or a connoisseur, and I have nothing to argue. Surely a man would console, if he could. But that is not an aim of mine. Consolers cannot always be truthful. But very often, and almost daily, I have strong impressions of eternity. This may be due to my strange experiences, or to old age. I will say that to me this does not feel elderly. Nor would I mind if there were nothing after death. If it is only to be as it was before birth, why should one care? There one would receive no further information. One's ape restiveness would stop. I think I would miss mainly my God adumbrations in the many daily forms. Yes, that is what I should miss.

Subtle Dualism? from Sam Blight

A posting to no-face Facebook

Tony Parsons and those of his ilk in what might be called the "hard core" Advaita school tend to emphasise the One and seem to devalue or dismiss its appearances (including the appearance of your individuality and free will) as illusory. This seems subtly dualistic to me (ironically) as Seeing reveals these two aspects of ourselves (unchanging Being and evolving appearance) as inseparable and mutually arising. It's only when we try to mentally understand the ineffable Reality revealed by Seeing that we might find ourselves choosing between the "view in" and the "view out" and either choice drains life of its full meaning. What I love about the Headless Way is that it lucidly deals with the paradox of the One and the Many in a perceptual /experiential way rather than through concepts (however lofty). As Birgit says, Seeing and continuing to See until it becomes natural sorts out all these issues.

Sam Blight

Thoughts on Death from Heinz Rahn

I asked Heinz about Yalom's view, that the fear of death is an inevitable consequence of living, and Heinz who has not read Yalom but has a background in psychoanalytic psychotherapy and Buddhism replied: . . .

Dear Alan, Have just returned from Newcastle again and thinking about your 'death list' after reading your answer to my quote from Welwood about the fear of death which he equates with the fear of 'egolessness' {or headlessness? }.

"Just as the fist is the activity of clenching an open hand, so the ego is the solidifying of open, nongrasping awareness, which is inherently egoless. Ego continually arises out of and subsides back into egolessness, like a fist tensing and relaxing again. If so it is clear that ego cannot exist without egolessness, which is its ground. Everyone has little glimpses of egolessness in the gaps and spaces between thoughts which usually go unnoticed. Ego is dying and being reborn at every moment. We continually have to let go of what we have already thought, accomplished, known, experienced, become. A sense of panic underlies these births and deaths, which stimulates further grasping and clenching. Existential anxiety arises as a sense of impending death, a dawning realisation that the I is nothing solid, that it has no true support and is continually threatened by the possibility of dissolving back into the egoless ground from which it arose. Ego contains at its core a panic about egolessness, an anxious reaction to the unconditioned openness that underlies each moment of consciousness.

. . . And in the end, it is only egoless awareness that allows us to face and accept death in all its forms. Recognising ego death as an integral, recurring aspect of life makes it possible to overcome our fear of letting go. When we are not so driven to prove, justify, defend, or immortalise our bounded self, we can breathe more deeply, appreciate death as a renewing element within the larger circle of life, and embrace reality in all its forms in which it presents itself." End of Welwood quote.

And where 'ego' as portrayed in Western psychology is not a dirty word but whose boundaries can be clarified and expanded, according to 'meditation theory'. . . As you implied about getting older, you might have heard it before in some form. There is a book by a psychoanalyst, on 'Death Anxiety and Clinical Practice', (Robert Langs) which takes a post-Darwinian post-Freudian evolutionary perspective and another by Reginald Ray, 'Touching Enlightenment' (2008), which is an exposition of the Vajrayana, from the view of embodiment. Ray points out that the problem for meditators is often one of disembodiment. Mind in a Cartesian sense becomes split off from the body. I think I'm in the process of digesting this, as it ever was, 'milking the painted cow' (Tarthang Tulku) with barely a word to say. Reggie Ray sees the teachings of the Vajrayana as encapsulating the often lost continuity of folk-religion, which he suggests is the well-spring of Religion.

As you pointed out there are levels of explanation. Two of these levels or categories, or interacting fields of experience, seem to me to be philosophical and psychological. When applied to 'shunyata', which is unsatisfactorily translated as emptiness, the philosophical meaning is different to the psychological meaning. Where the former is an expression for fundamental reality, as process, rather than substance and so forth. The latter describes a state, a mental/emotional state of depletion, which is experienced statically as 'all there is'. So perhaps, with death. The fear of death can be argued to be a natural response to the idea of death in various situations and most generally in the knowledge that you will surely die and that you do not know when. On another level, if we equate death with non-existence then, a desire for non-existence or oblivion could presumably arise unaccompanied by fear or as a response to fear. When Bion was a soldier in battle he worried about his indifference to death. (Gerard Bleanon, p. 27)

Buddhism extols a middle-way, neither grasping at existence nor non-existence. Let death take care of itself. Epistemologically, as in modern analytical philosophy, death is a mere concept with many meanings. As is fear, though psychologically, we all know what that feels like if we have an

intact brain; as we know from neuro-psychology, that severe damage to a portion of the brain can render a person into a pervading state of fearlessness. In fact fear is probably best explained as a state that is felt in the body, the seat of emotions. Or the seat of the passions as the ancient Greek philosophers called them, as did some of the more modern philosophers, like Leibniz, Spinoza and Nussbaum. They proposed that by understanding the emotions or passions we could come to a position of detachment while still taking them seriously. Perhaps one could describe religious systems as defences against the fear of death and also as therapeutic systems that face death. As the Sufis say: 'Trust in God but tie your camel first'.

Descartes described providence in the passions of the soul which imposed limits on the freedom of the will. Otherwise we are left with endless responsibility. (Genevieve Lloyd, 'Providence Lost, The Philosopher's Zone, R.N. 2/3/09). However it is located, death-anxiety is experienceable on some level.

As Welwood writes, 'The big mind of pure awareness {capacity?} is a no-man's-land - a free, open reality without reference points, property boundaries, or trail markers. Although it cannot be grasped as an object by focal attention, it is not merely an article of faith. Quite the contrary; in the words of a Tibetan text, "The nothingness in question is actually experienceable." Unfortunately, when the untutored mind regards it as a mere blankness or nothingness, the jewel-like radiance of this pure awareness { capacity? } becomes obscured. As Dzogchen teacher Tenzin Wangyal points out, "The gap between two thoughts is essence. { cf. Samten Gyatso on essence and capacity }. But if in that gap there is lack of presence, it becomes ignorance and we experience only a lack of awareness, almost an unconsciousness. If there is presence in the gap, then we experience the dharmakaya [the ultimate]."

The essence of meditation could be described quite simply, in Tenzin Wangyal's words, as "presence in the gap" - as an act of nondual, unitive knowing that reveals the ground of being in what at first appears to be nothing at all. As another Tibetan text explains, "The foundation of sentient beings is without roots. . . . And this rootlessness is the root of enlightenment." Only in the groundless ground of being can the dance of reality unfold in all its luminous clarity.'(p56-7)

Welwood goes on to give a clear modern exposition of C.G.Jung's theories which makes me realise that perhaps Jung's ideas helped to feed the fear of meditation in the West. "Jung's interpretation of meditation as a royal road to the unconsciousness contrasts sharply with that of Buddhist teachers, who describe meditative awareness as clear, transparent perception, free of conceptual filters, rather than an act of going inward. . . . When the Eastern texts say that enlightened mind cannot be described, Jung equates indescribable with unknowable, assuming that they must be referring to the unconscious. And so the sharpened perception of enlightened mind becomes dulled, in his perspective, into a vague abstraction. What Jung does not realise is that meditation can provide a direct, precise recognition of the ultimate nature of consciousness, which can be described in innumerable ways. . . . A new understanding of unconscious process is necessary in order to see how it is possible for meditation to put us in direct touch with 'things as they are.' (p62-3).

Perhaps Freud in his advice to analysts to give 'evenly suspended attention' to whatever the analysand did, unwittingly endorsed meditation. As Chogyam Trungpa described meditation: "One should realise that one does not meditate in order to go deeply into oneself and withdraw from the world. . . . There should be no feeling of striving to reach some exalted higher state, since this simply produces something conditioned and artificial that will act as an obstruction to the free flow of the mind. . . . The everyday practice is simply to develop a complete awareness and openness to all situations and emotions, and to all people, experiencing everything totally without mental reservations and blockages, so that one never withdraws or centralises onto oneself. . . . When performing the meditation practice, one should develop the feeling of opening oneself out completely to the whole universe with absolute simplicity and nakedness of mind." An approach grounded in an understanding of the total interpenetration of organism and environment, self and world.

Among psychoanalysts since Freud, Robert Langs has grappled with the issue of death-anxiety along evolutionary lines. He posits two forms of death anxiety, predatory and existential. He writes

that, "with respect to the early hominids, the overwhelming traumatic qualities of the conscious and unconscious experiences of death and death anxiety are likely to have caused system overload for the early single conscious-system emotion processing mind. These disruptive and distracting impingements, especially as they pertained to death anxiety, were a key aspect of the selection pressure and threat to survival that led to the evolution of a second system for the emotion-processing mind - the deep unconscious system. By means of unconscious perception, many death related traumas and meanings could be experienced and processed entirely without awareness interceding. The conscious system was freed of a great burden and source of disruptive anxiety, thereby allowing the system to operate more smoothly than otherwise." (Death Anxiety and Clinical Practice, p 93). He proposes that natural selection has favoured the perpetuation of highly defensive emotion-processing minds to deal with death-related - and thereby all emotionally charged - adaptation-evoking impingements. Most favoured were the psychological defences of denial and repression, and the communicative defences of non-communication and disguise. Thereby many aspects of death-related experiences and memories tend to be expressed indirectly via displaced and disguised allusions or not expressed at all. A number of defences have been identified in psychoanalysis and are largely to do with the interpersonal, intersubjective field of experience and Langs seems to be one of the few who have attempted to clarify the relationship of the defences to death anxiety particularly as it applies in therapy.

From the Buddhist view, what makes the 'ego', 'self', 'I', 'me', 'myself' anxious is not threatening unconscious contents so much as the groundless, open nature of our being. We can never establish our ego securely, our self-identities keep slipping away, with nothing to hold onto which is as good a description of existential anxiety as any. The defences are ways that we armor ourselves against and ward off this larger openness that threatens our attempt to establish a permanent separate identity. "The feared empty space is a fertile void. Exploring it is a turning point towards therapeutic change." (Wilson Van Dusen, 1958)

Alan, I've again given you some excerpts from my reading and the value I place in meditation. As most of our activities in life could be described as attempts to establish a permanent and separate self and as ways of defending ourselves from the anxiety of impermanence and death it seems a tall order to face the 'anxiety of groundlessness and openness' and so it is and yet as all the great masters testify, to face it, is the only way. Meditating on death and impermanence is highly recommended in Tibetan Buddhism as one of the preliminary practices which include meditating on; the precious human form, suffering and the law of cause and effect.

The cultivation of meditative awareness is one method. The awareness that sits with concepts, images and feelings/emotions/body and becomes aware of the rich stillness that lies below the sights and sounds of the surface, as an existential/experiential reality, and in contact with what that is including the surface, in any modality of consciousness. And one will invariably find what one dislikes as well as what one loves, unless the dislike turns to nihilism.

Heinz Rahn

P.S. In reply to a controversy that sometimes pops up in the NOW Letter as with Krishnamurti and Alan Watts I came across a quote from D.H. Lawrence giving a permanent wisdom:

"Trust the tale, not the teller."

In the course of these exchanges and arising from earlier NOWletter notes on 'Time', and in particular the George Schloss quotation, 'unfolding time in the service of enfolding space', Heinz introduced me to an excellent article: The Mystery of Time An excerpt from the book of Lama Anagarika Govinda which can be accessed at:

<http://www.purifymind.com/MysteryofTime.htm>

Alan

(The following contribution is from Doug Lloyd who wrote the article Cupitt and Harding on Emptiness and Peace in NOWletter 134—October 2008. Doug is a retired minister of the Uniting Church. In view of his professional background I told him how, in my first flush of enthusiasm for the Harding experiments, I mentioned to Douglas that this is just what the church needed to reinvigorate itself and restore its foundations. He laughed and said if I offered him a church, half filled with ministers of all denominations, and allowed him to fill the other half with a random selection of passers-by from the street, the hit rate would be much higher for the passer-by contingent. I asked Doug Lloyd what he thought about that and why it would be so. This is his reply. Alan)

Harding and Heresy from Doug Lloyd

In order to make the most of our short time together I am now responding to your question of the Church's unresponsiveness to the meaning of the Harding experiments.

I welcome further discussion on this matter when we meet, or by email before we meet.

1. Incarnational Dogma.

Jesus is uniquely God and man. God has appeared only in Jesus. He is of one substance with God the heavenly Father. The rest of us are not. We are merely human. On the basis of the Harding experiments, to assert we are all human and divine is heretical.

2. Salvation Dogma.

Jesus as God the Son of the heavenly Father saves all who believe in him. Saved in that we are forgiven, given strength to lead a godly life, and will be raised from the dead through Jesus' resurrection. Also there is salvation with Jesus coming again to cleanse this world of evil, or to destroy it and create a New Heaven and Earth. All this is asserted as eternal and unchanging truth. Hence logically, asserting that each human is an appearance, or occasion of God cannot be true.

3. Reason for the Existence of the Church.

The Church exists to proclaim, teach and administer the incarnational and salvation dogmas. As such it is even thought to be infallible by one denomination of the Church. This reason for existence no longer applies if Jesus is an appearance of God like all other humans, or if he is simply regarded as human and in no way divine.

4. Ordination Vows.

(a) Guilt.

We pledge when ordained to preach and teach the incarnational and salvation dogmas. We are likely to feel intense guilt if we dare question them, let alone assert Jesus was only human, or was divine and human like the rest of us. One ordained minister here in Geelong both in the pulpit and in the daily newspaper denied the Virgin Birth. Another ordained minister wrote to the newspaper stating that the minister who denied the Virgin Birth would have to deal with his conscience on the matter.

(b) Fear.

There is fear of excommunication and being sacked from being a minister. This goes on today if one does not adhere to the dogma.

5. I am God Delusion.

That is, the fear that the individual thinks that he or she is the eternal God and the rest of us are mortal humans. This has happened in the past and not only by psychiatric patients. I know several ministers or priests who assert Jesus was merely human, but I don't know any who are convinced all humans are divine and human. Would you let me know if you know any ministers who take the view that we are all human and divine?

I have and am reading both volumes of George Schloss's works, volumes one and two. I agree with you that his essays and letters are important. I would like to talk to you of what Schloss has to say of Jonathan Edwards' theology of God active in history, pages 187 -209, volume two.

Doug Lloyd

From "A Soft Spring Night in Shillington, " a memoir By John Updike

Two sensations stood out as peculiarly blissful in my childhood... The first has been alluded to: the awareness of things going by, impinging on my consciousness, and then, all beyond my control, sliding away toward their own destination and destiny.

The traffic on Philadelphia Avenue was such; the sound of an engine and tires would swell like a gust of wind, the head- light beam would parabolically wheel about the papered walls of my little room, and then the lights and the sound would die, and that dangerous creature of combustion and momentum would be out of my life. To put myself to sleep, I would picture logs floating down a river and then over a waterfall, out of sight. Mailing letters, flushing a toilet, reading the last set of proofs—all have this sweetness of riddance. The second intimation of deep, cosmic joy, also already hinted at, is really a variation of the first; the sensation of shelter, of being out of the rain, but just out. I would lean close to the chill windowpane to hear the raindrops ticking on the other side; I would huddle under bushes until the rain penetrated; I loved doorways in a shower. On our side porch, it was my humble job, when it rained, to turn the wicker furniture with its seats to the wall, and in these porous woven caves I would crouch happy almost to tears, as the rain drummed on the porch rail and rattled the grape leaves of the arbor and touched my wicker shelter with a mist like a vain assault of an atomic army. In both species of delightful experience, the reader may notice, the experiencer is motionless, holding his breath as it were, and the things experienced are morally detached from him: there is nothing he can do, or ought to do, about the flow, the tumult. He is irresponsible, safe, and witnessing: the entire body, for these rapt moments, mimics the position of the essential self in its jungle of physiology, its moldering tangle of inheritance and circumstance. Early in his life, the child I once was sensed the guilt in things, inseparable from the pain, the competition: the sparrow dead on the lawn, the flies swatted on the porch, the impervious leer of the bully on the school playground. The burden of activity, of participation, must clearly be shouldered, and had its pleasures. But they were cruel pleasures. There was nothing cruel about crouching in a shelter and letting phenomena slide by: it was ecstasy. The essential self is innocent, and when it tastes its own innocence knows that it lives forever. If we keep utterly still, we can suffer no wear and tear, and will never die. John Updike, December 24, 1984

Sam Blight sent me the Updike piece and it reminded me of one of my very earliest memories. It was an occasion when I was four or less when my grandfather took me to window of the front room of my grandparent's terrace house in Newhey, Lancashire during a downpour. He pulled aside the lace curtains which were mandatory in those days to keep the nosey parkers, only an arm's length away on the pavement outside, at bay and said, " you know Alan there's nothing I like better than sitting here by myself, dry and warm, when it's cold and raining out there, looking out at the downpour and especially the water sliding down the windows, splashing on the pavement and rushing down the gutters". I could never understand why that particular memory stood out from all others until I realized that, even at that age, I must have intuited his words and enthusiasm for this experience as a

metaphor for Home at centre. It might also have something to do with the number of insights that seem to strike me in the shower! Alan

Simple Notes on Enlightenment Revisited from Joanna Malinowska

I've read the lengthy document which was our exchange with Alan almost a year ago and I've decided that it became too fragmented to get what it was saying. I've revisited my original notes and I've tried to make it as clear as possible, including some changes and explanations inflicted by Alan. So here it is:

The simplest notes on Enlightenment

Enlightenment is just a total realization of being what we are anyway. Since it is just a realization, we are it, and it does not matter if we know it or not. We do not need to do anything, as we are already what we are.

Whatever the definition of Enlightenment, it involves being whole, end of separation; everything is one, everything is together. It may be called "One Consciousness" or "Self" or "Reality". And it is being this "One". There is no time, just now; but now contains everything. Perhaps you may say it contains past and future, and also much more, all the possibilities of past and future. And you are that. From now I will use word THAT as a shortcut for what we really are.

Most of people I've talked to during the last two years had some experience of "seeing that there is something bigger", or experiencing "bliss of awareness" or "being one with the mountain" etc. The full realization can take lifetimes; for me reincarnations are not belief but fact, at least as much a fact as the current life. Sooner or later we will all realize who we are.

It is not that difficult to access the mental picture, or visual insight of this Wholeness and One Self. Some of the best ways are Douglas Harding's experiments, the whole chapter in "The Mandala of Being" by Richard Moss. I also have my own mental picture, like many other people. So it is relatively easy to SEE who you really are, or rather to have a glimpse. I used to call it a view.

So why wait? What if we assume that we are THAT already?

No metaphysical state is needed; I call it "as if Enlightenment", pretending that you already realized. To SEE who you really are is being in the view, it is "as if Enlightenment". Seeing is the insight, it is approximation, being a seeker. At least for me, each time I have an insight, it is different, it evolves more, but it is not complete and it does not last. So I've chosen to TRUST. So "as if Enlightenment" is only seeing, being in the view, but acting as if BEING THAT. I can only SEE at this point; or perhaps even be THAT, but only for a short time.

But who cares if I am really Enlightened or not, because I am THAT already anyway. What are the implications of being THAT, being one real wholeness, embracing everything? What happens when we do not go into metaphysics, but JUST LIVE IT?

There are very obvious implications of assuming you are THAT already. Simple consequences, which are just defaults:

Being whole means containing everything. Nothing is needed, no desires, no wanting anything. This applies to people. No attachments of any kind is needed, because you are everybody anyway. You cannot lose anybody.

Love is just being love. Since you are everybody, then you do not love somebody; as there is no you and no somebody, only love is.

Fear. What could you be afraid of, if you are it? No time, so no future, how the fear can come? Being humble is a default. You are everybody and everybody is you, so nobody is special. At the same time, it is seeing everybody as Enlightened already, because everything is NOW, time does not exist. So once one is whole we are all whole, once one is God we are all gods, once one is enlightened we are all enlightened.

Judging. What is to judge, if everything is one? So nothing can be good or bad, true or false, it just is.

Anger, hate. Against whom?

Forgiveness. Whom would you need to forgive, if you are them? And what for? Past is just old stories, old movies, never comes back; nothing to forgive.

Guilt. If you are everybody, perhaps you would expect guilt, as every past crime is yours; but there is no time, past does not really exist. Past is only memories, stories, lessons.

It is obvious who you are not. Since you are whole, you are not your beliefs, memories, expectations, emotions, not your judgments or opinions about yourself or anything else. As you see who you are not, it just dissolves.

The physical part of you is seen differently. It does not disappear; for example, there is a body, body eats chocolate and enjoys it, but it is kind of transparent and more intense at the same time.

Future. There is no time, so there is no future really. It is just a curious interest in what unfolds just now. It is just a trusting opening into what unfolds.

So the implication of staying in the "being That" view is just freedom from obstacles. This is also so simple, no need to evolve... Shredding off who you are not, so you are free to be whom you really are... Now, see how important it is. It affects the "dream", it changes the dreamer and it cannot be any other way. It leads to "God's Consciousness" naturally, since you are a god when you assume you are a god and more... This is the ripening of realization, the full realization. And it may happen even before the realization...

This approach can take different levels, because the view we may pretend to be in will evolve.

Usually, even when we free ourselves from beliefs, we leave something or we take some new beliefs, and we create new theories around them. New beliefs are even more "sticky" than the old ones, especially if we consider ourselves special to think in a new way or it makes us members of some "better" group of people.

So this is a process, seen from the "journey" point of view. From the other view, from the Enlightenment view, there is no process and no journey, because there is no time, just one real wholeness, embracing everything.

As a hypnotherapist, I've experienced and I've been a witness to enough to be sure that reincarnations are fact. People perceive the different lives as their own; they carry their identity through different lives. Facts are simple, people can access memories from the previous lives, they identify with them, it seems that they learn from them as they evolve. And it all depends how we see it. When we see our lives in time, being body and mind, and our identification as a person as just a ripple in the consciousness, here the ripple takes more time and goes through few more bodies. It does not matter how it works; just the illusion of being separate from THAT takes longer, so there is time to mature and to reach the realization. The identification works the same as in the current life, that's all. When I say it is a fact for me, it is the same kind of fact as me having a body. Just fact on the body/mind level. It all depends from which view you look at those things.

From THAT view all the memories are just stories, current life or not. From THAT point of view you are the creator of body/mind facts; so it is true and it is false, it depends how you see it

Douglas Harding's experiments can be view from

<http://www.headless.org/english-new/experiments.htm> . Harding's experiments lead explicitly to the insight of "One Consciousness". Just take one of them, "Pointing Here". When I follow the finger pointing to my face, I just see the opening, without boundaries; simply there is no head, just the space. This is how it is, no mystery here; I never felt emptiness, just no head; so the place from which I look is just the expansion. This is expansion which contains everything. And there is other experiment, "No-head Circle", which shows that we share this expansion. So this is the very explicit view of "One Consciousness".

For me, the mental picture which leads to taking the above as quite simple view is the photon traveling between two most distant stars on the opposite ends of universe. For us, the distance is about 14 billion light years. For us, the light travels 14 billion years from one star to the other. But photon travels with the speed of light, so for the photon the time does not exists; photon is simultaneously on both stars. For the photon all is one, and there is no distance, no space, no time, just one singularity.

This is just a picture, so I can see it easier. This picture shows only collapse of time and space and being one with the world; seems very straightforward.

Joanna Malinowska

From the Chinese Zen Masters

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/mzb/mzb04.htm>

When people learn that what is transmitted from one Buddha to another is Mind itself, they imagine that there is a particular object known as a mind which they attempt to grasp or to realize; but this is seeking something outside Mind itself, or creating something which does not exist. In reality, Mind alone is. You cannot pursue it by setting up another mind; however long, through hundreds of thousands of kalpas, you are after it, no time will ever come to you when you can say that you have it. Only when you have an immediate awakening to the state of *mushin* you have your own Mind. It is like the strong man's seeking for his own gem hidden within his forehead: as long as he seeks it outside himself in the ten quarters, he will not come across it; but let the wise once point at it where it lies hidden, and the man instantly perceives his own gem as having been there from the very first.

(Thanks to whoever sent me this interesting, ancient version of the pointing finger experiment.)

Traherne and Phenomenology

My long-held view that Traherne was way ahead of his time has been confirmed recently by comparisons of his work with phenomenology, in particular Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. Two instances, brought to my attention this month:

- 1) A review of *On Re-reading Thomas Traherne* by Julia Smith includes this statement:

Traherne's mystic poetry, focusing on the achievement of meditative state, has attracted comparison with twentieth-century phenomenology. Traherne sought to achieve "A Naked Simple Pure Intelligence", and, in two of the most conceptually challenging essays of the collection, Gary Kuchar and James J. Balakier explore Traherne's depiction of consciousness. These essays move

far beyond a seventeenth-century context, as Kuchar applies the Freudian term "uncanny" to Traherne's poetry and Balakier sees Traheme as a precursor to Husserl. Applying more a philosophical than a literary perspective, these essays treat Traherne's words not as art but as a transparent representation of "experiences of pure consciousness".

2) An article entitled The Strange Case of Thomas Traherne by Forrest Gander is located at: Jacket magazine <http://jacketmagazine.com/32/k-gander.shtml> it includes the following quotation by Kuchar:

Maurice Merleau-Ponty scarcely could have agreed more. He likewise blasted rational thought for its tautologies, arguing that "Intellectualism and empiricism do not give us any account of the human experience of the world..."[15] Like Traherne, he was obsessed with "attentiveness and wonder,"[16] going so far as to claim that the best formulation of the phenomenological reduction [17] was articulated by Husserl's assistant "when he spoke of 'wonder' in the face of the world." [18] When Merleau-Ponty makes his own case for a primary consciousness, he imagines a state akin to Traherne's "original simplicity", a pre-reflective awareness that reveals the "coexistence" or "coincidence" of an embodied subject with the world. It is the world, more specifically the body in the world, that structures perception, Merleau-Ponty insists, and he quotes Cezanne's boast that the landscape thought itself inside him and that he was its consciousness. [19] Traherne makes a declaration just as bold and intuitive when he writes, "The world was more in me than I in it." [20]

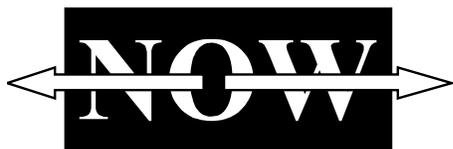
I have been on the lookout for an article from a reader on phenomenology as it relates to what appears here in the NOWletter. Any offers?

Alan Mann

March Friday Forum Meetings at Blavatsky Lodge, Sydney.

EXPLORING COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

Christopher Liddle is hosting the March Friday Forum Meetings and invites you to join in an experiment, an investigation into coming together in Oneness. These Friday night sessions aim to explore and demonstrate, in a practical way, how we can live together as more awake human beings. What we are attempting to share is an experience of profound intimacy and a sense of oneness that far surpasses our common experience in human relationship. For this to happen the individuals involved need to come together in a serious, committed interest to discover a place beyond personal ideas, belief systems and conditioning. We have found that for individuals to go beyond their separate self-sense, their interest needs to be more focused on what arises in the group rather than on their own individual experience. In the very simplicity of listening one's focus shifts from the personal to the collective and in that shift lies the opening for a greater consciousness to emerge. For a collective emergence we have found a few key elements are needed. These include an intention to come together, an open and allowing mind, active listening and a readiness to speak authentically. We are a small group of people from different backgrounds, who have been meeting and developing in this process for the last 2 years. **Join us each Friday in March 2009. Arrive in time for a punctual 7.30pm start. Tea/Coffee and an informal chat at 9.00pm.**



NOWletter 139—March 2009

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81 Greville Street, Chatswood 2067

Academy of the Word Seminar Programme Dr Alex Reichel (02) 9310 4504 – 2nd & 4th Tuesdays– Polding Centre, Level UB, 133 Liverpool St., SYDNEY. 00 - The New Phone Number is (02) 9268 0635. Second Tuesday 6.15pm - *Healing & Well-being* - Fourth Tuesday 6pm - *State of the World*

Blavatsky Lodge of The Theosophical Society Level 2, 484 Kent St., Sydney (near Town Hall Station) Talks Programme Every Wednesday at 2.30pm and 7pm – Printed programme available 02 9267 6955 and at – www.TSsydney.org.au Email: contact@TSsydney.org.au

LookforYourself (Harding) Meetings - Approximately bi-monthly, by email notification of date and programme. See upcoming dates at top of page 1.

Krishnamurti DVD Screenings followed by Dialogue – Every Thursday 7.15pm at Blavatsky Lodge, address above.

Melbourne. 1st Sunday, 2 to 5pm, Room MR B311 Level 3, CAE Bldg. 253 Flinders Lane, Joan Deerson (03) 93862237

Andrew Cohen Discussion groups – Sydney 1st Tuesday in the month-3rd Tuesday in the month - Andrew Cohen teachings. Enquiries: Graeme Burn 0416 177 012 or Christopher Liddle 0406 755 758

Eckhart Tolle Group – Enquiries: Marion Northcott 9967 8067