

Harding Meetings—81 Greville Street
Next Meeting—Sunday 7 June
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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 or interests them. Subscription is free.

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Editor's Note,

Thank you for your contributions to this issue. The frequency of the NOWletter is a bit haphazard at present and it will probably become more like a two-monthly than a monthly event judging by the present rate of contributions. I continue to maintain the list of people awaiting news of *The 9.15 to Nirvana* of which there is nothing to say at this stage except that the movement towards publication continues. If you have one of the meetings listed the final page please remember to let me know of any changes.

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).

Revisiting Phenomenology from Dave Knowles

Alan has asked me to summarise my current thoughts on Phenomenology some 4 and a bit years after I presented a workshop to the Headless group on the subject and wrote up my notes for Nowletter Issue 106 under the title “The Fascination and Frustrations of Phenomenology”. (TFFP)

Well for me personally the fascination is still there and so, unfortunately are the frustrations.

As I said in TFFP, drawing from Natanson, there may be some merit in finding one’s own way to a phenomenological method and for me this has been helped by my struggling with the Headless way of expressing things and realising that Phenomenology and Headlessness have in common the urging to see the world differently – to break with the normally accepted and unthinkingly accepted view of the world, in way by the epoche, in the other by “removing the head.” A good way of expressing this is the slogan:

Making the normal strange

This harks back to what Maurice Merleau-Ponty said in his introduction to *The Phenomenology of Perception*:

The best formulation of the (phenomenological) reduction is probably that given by Eugen Fink, Husserl’s assistant, when he spoke of ‘wonder’ in the face of the world. Reflection does not withdraw from the world towards the unity of consciousness as the world’s basis; it steps back to watch the forms of transcendence fly up like sparks from a fire; it slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice; it alone is consciousness of the world because **it reveals that world as strange and paradoxical.**

That always appealed to me and it also covers those times when the sheer marvellousness of life suddenly comes across one without warning and makes one so grateful to be alive. And isn’t that what Douglas is urging us to do? Don’t take for granted what you are looking at, just adopt this different stance, this different way of looking and see how wonderful and full of new insights the world is.

So let formal phenomenology go hang, just take every opportunity and utilise any method that for you makes the normal strange and you will come to have for your own that fresh perception of phenomema that the founders of Phenomenology were urging on us and spent their lives trying (largely fruitlessly) to explain to us.

So what methods can we come up with? For me a simple one is donning Polaroid sunglasses on a sunny day. I find myself asking “does the world really look like this?” and taking them off again to check and finding – well yes – but I just couldn’t see it without a nudge – the sunglasses just emphasised the strangeness I overlooked.

Alain de Botton in a chapter entitled “How to Open Your Eyes” in his “How Proust can change Your Life” recounts how Proust suggests that a young man, after having looked at Jean-Baptiste Chardin’s paintings of bowls of fruit, loaves of bread and kitchen utensils would then be able to walk round a kitchen, saying to himself, this is interesting, this is grand, this is beautiful like a Chardin. In other words great painters can open our eyes, not so much to strangeness but to hitherto unperceived beauty. Though we could say it had been strange to us until it was revealed.

So, formal Phenomenology is no better revealed to me than it was 4 years ago but I feel at least that I now have my own injunction and method standing by ready to be initiated by an accidental encounter which slackens further those threads which attach me to the world thus revealing the world as freshly strange and paradoxical (again).

Dave Knowles

(This poem 'I am waiting' by Lawrence Ferlinghetti was sent by Fran Byrnes together with his book 'A Coney Island of the Mind.)

I am waiting for my case to come up
and I am waiting
for a rebirth of wonder
and I am waiting for someone
to really discover America
and wail
and I am waiting
for the discovery
of a new symbolic western frontier
and I am waiting
for the American Eagle
to really spread its wings
and straighten up and fly right
and I am waiting for the Age of Anxiety
to drop dead
and I am waiting
for the war to be fought
which will make the world safe
for anarchy
and I am waiting for the final withering away
of all governments
and I am perpetually awaiting
a rebirth of wonder

I am waiting for the second coming
and I am waiting
for a religious revival
to sweep thru the state of Arizona
and I am waiting
for the Grapes of Wrath to be stored
and I am waiting
for them to prove
that God is really American

...
and I am waiting
to see God on television
piped into church altars
if only they can find
the right channel
to tune it in on
and I am waiting
for the Last Supper to be served again
and a strange new appetizer
and I am perpetually awaiting
a rebirth of wonder

I am waiting for my number to be called
and I am waiting

for the living end
...
and I am waiting happily
for things to get much worse
before they improve
and I am waiting
for the Salvation Army to take over
and I am waiting
for the human crowd
to wander off a cliff somewhere
clutching its atomic umbrella
...
and I am waiting
for the meek to be blessed
and inherit the earth
without taxes
and I am waiting
for forests and animals
to reclaim the earth as theirs
and I am waiting
for a way to be devised
to destroy all nationalisms
without killing anybody
and I am waiting
for linnets and planets to fall like rain
and I am waiting for lovers and weepers
to lie down together again
in a new rebirth of wonder

I am waiting for the Great Divide to be
crossed
and I am anxiously waiting
for the secret of eternal life to be discovered
by an obscure general practitioner
and save me forever from certain death
and I am waiting
for life to begin
and I am waiting
for the storms of life
to be over
and I am waiting
to set sail for happiness
and I am waiting
for a reconstructed Mayflower
to reach America
with its picture story and tv rights
sold in advance to the natives
and I am waiting

for the lost music to sound again
in the Lost Continent
in a new rebirth of wonder

I am waiting for the day
that maketh all things clear

...
and I am waiting
for God to lookout
from Lookout Mountain
and see the Ode to the Confederate Dead
as a real farce
and I am waiting for retribution
for what America did
to Tom Sawyer
and I am perpetually awaiting
a rebirth of wonder

I am waiting for Tom Swift to grow up
and I am waiting
for the American Boy
to take off Beauty's clothes
and get on top of her
and I am waiting
for Alice in Wonderland
to retransmit to me
her total dream of innocence
and I am waiting

for Childe Roland to come
to the final darkest tower
and I am waiting
for Aphrodite
to grow live arms
at a final disarmament conference
in a new rebirth of wonder

I am waiting
to get some intimations
of immortality
by recollecting my early childhood
and I am waiting
for the green mornings to come again
youth's dumb green fields come back again
for some strains of unpremeditated art
to shake my typewriter
and I am waiting to write
the great indelible poem
and I am waiting
for the last long careless rapture
and I am perpetually waiting
for the fleeting lovers on the Grecian Urn
to catch each other at last
and embrace
and I am awaiting
perpetually and forever
a renaissance of wonder

Lawrence Ferlinghetti

akhaNDAkAra'.Electronic Journal

Dennis Waite writes:

In connection with my website, (www.advaita.org.uk), I have now produced the first version of what I hope will be a regular, approximately quarterly, free, Electronic journal. Each one will address a key topic in advaita and will use the format of my book 'Back to the Truth' to present it, i.e. my own words and understanding, linking together articles, book extracts and quotations from other writers and teachers. The first issue is on the topic of 'Enlightenment', since the title I decided upon for the journal is 'akhaNDAkAra'.

If anyone is interested in receiving this (and subscribing to future issues), please send me a brief email (using the email address dwnot@advaita.org.uk) – it can just contain the heading 'Subscribe' if you like.

Comments, suggestions, questions for future issues etc. will all be welcome.

Dennis

(If you haven't already been to the www.advaita.org.uk it is a most comprehensive resource of material relating to Advaita through the ages. It has helped me to come to grips with my difficulties with the neo-advaita movement. Alan)

Thanksgiving at Nacton from Steve Palmer

I'm just back from Nacton. The burial of Douglas's ashes in a cask with around 30 to 40 friends in the churchyard was a beautiful occasion. The sun shone, Catherine smiled and many old friends gathered to celebrate Douglas's life.

The feeling was one of gratitude, friendship and sharing. We met at Under Shollond and walked with Catherine up to the church. The Tombstone has one of Douglas's circular style pictures, carved in stone on the top of the tombstone The words—

"The Kingdom of Heaven is within you "
DOUGLAS EDISON HARDING 1909-2007
beloved husband of Catherine"

are under the stone diagram.



The tombstone is right in the corner of the churchyard with a young tree leaning towards it. Catherine noticed the buds which should flower soon. Many if not all of us put a handful of earth into the cask plot and it had the feeling of a simple spontaneous ritual of Thanks for Douglas's life.

Catherine and few others spoke about Douglas in a simple way. A French man, possible Phillip, spoke for the French group of about 12 friends who came from France. Catherine translated the talk, to paraphrase "Douglas walked his talk"

Two Theravadan Buddhist monks, from Amaravati ,came. One spoke saying Ajahn Sumedho would have come but was in Japan. The monk expressed thanks for Douglas's simplicity and directness in teaching.

Paul had to tread down the earth above the cask so the grass turf could be replaced. Richard Lang watching joked " Why am I not surprised to see you on his grave"Jose's phone rang as Catherine finished a sentence, Catherine quipped straight away "It must be Douglas". The atmosphere was light, friendly and thankful.

Afterwards we went to Nacton Village Hall for Tea, coffee, cakes and conversation. Then back to Under Shollond with Catherine for more chat, recollections, talk of a biography, jokes and general sharing.

I left with Chris and Camilla for the four hour journey home and others stayed to go to Felixstowe for the evening meal.

What a memorable day. "Seeing is for Sharing" is my thought for the day. Especially with seeing friends.....may there be many more friends who benefit from Douglas and Seeing.
regards,

Steve Palmer

Michael Hoey also posted on the no-face book site filling in my gaps.

Thanks so much for this Steve. I wanted to write something but you've pretty well said it all. Except that there was a hearty rendition of Blake's "Jerusalem" which nicely honoured Douglas's Englishness. Also there was another intriguing unconventional headstone nearby which beautifully complemented Douglas's. It commemorated a couple (the woman having lived to 105!) and had some beautiful non-dual words which I wish I'd written down. They were obviously keen gardeners and there was something about us all meeting in the green veil and wherever we are being home. I also loved the international flavour of the gathering and it was touching how far some had travelled for this single event. For some reason I had a really powerful sense of us all being essentially identical at Source. Thanks to you, Douglas, for your wisdom, clarity, courage and love.

Harding Meeting at Greville Street on Sunday 5 April 2009

Most of us had seen the TED tape of Jill Bolte Taylor, a neuroanatomist who suffered a left hemisphere brain haemorrhage. My aim in devoting this meeting to her experience was to see whether her explanation of what happened would help people who are having difficulty with the experiments by giving them a new angle. That is, her language of right and left hemisphere orientation might be more digestible to some than our familiar terms of first and third person. Also, the comparison with John Wren-Lewis, himself a noted scientist, who thought Douglas was a bit of a crackpot until he, like Jill Bolte Taylor found the wholeness he had spent much of his life dismissing as non sense. Here is the link to the original talk.

http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/jill_bolte_taylor_s_powerful_stroke_of_insight.html

This Sunday meeting we watched the series of interviews Bolte Taylor subsequently made with Oprah Winfrey.

Bolte Taylor speaks of her awakening to 'Nirvana' when her left hemisphere completely closed down due to the stroke. I think we should beware of expectations of bliss as a consequence of the Harding experiments as we are not aiming to eliminate left hemisphere perception but to go beyond or behind it, to see in what it appears, and discover how exclusive embedment in the left obscures right hemisphere apprehension of the bigger 'picture'.

In the opening session she talks of tuning into the body, awakening to her molecular and sub-molecular identity, at the same time discovering she is the universe; at one with all that is, yet aware of the need for the balance of left and right apprehension. As far as I can see, that is in complete agreement with what we are saying.

There are other parallels with headlessness: asked whether she could go back to that space she says she never leaves it and, if occupied by left hemisphere activities, the perspective of wholeness is only a thought away and accessible at all times. There was an objection that this is not really what Douglas is on about, but the point of looking at the Bolte Taylor story is to test someone else's language in communicating a similar message.

We carried out four experiments by way of exploration and comparison. Our main objection was her use of the word Nirvana to describe the nature of right hemisphere experiencing when freed from left hemisphere interference—although she does offer this as the extreme position which manifests when left hemisphere input is at a bare minimum. She also emphasizes the need for a balanced brain.

In addition to the obvious similarity of the split-brain approach to the first person and third person perception of headlessness she brings out the significance of simply being alive and the need for an attitude of gratitude. Speaking of her state following the stroke she says: *To you I am a drooling wreck but for myself I knew what I was* - another interesting variation on “I am not what I look like”. *Everything was interesting: I was a miracle, I was alive.* She felt she was boundless, *I am enormous, I'm as big as the universe.* And as to what consequences might follow from a wider, general understanding: *A world full of compassionate people who could step into this right hemisphere consciousness at any time.* Asked about religion she says that religion is an outcome of this comprehensive apprehension. The various creeds and stories that have been substituted for the experience in formal religious practice are fine if they get us there. An echo of Douglas’s “any road that gets you there is a good road”.

I found the exercise very interesting and well worthwhile. There are some objections to her message and method. I trawled the net to seek out critics and list three websites below. They seem to be reasonable observations from professionals in her field. The main objections are to what is claimed to be her over-simplification and the fact that her case rests on right/left brain theories that have been largely superseded. I don't find these argument persuasive myself as Bolte Taylor's message is about what actually happened to her and on which she must remain the sole authority. The anti-argument seems to be about the language she has chosen to share her experience. It is almost as if the left brain of the Internet, in the shape of her professional objectors, is fighting for the spotlight against the right brain of the Internet, represented by the Jill Bolte Taylor story.

1. <http://chaunceybell.wordpress.com/2008/04/02/comment-on-jill-bolte-taylors-impressive-ted-talk/>
2. <http://dangerousintersection.org/2008/04/15/can-someone-really-know-what-its-like-to-have-a-stroke-comments-regarding-stroke-of-insight/>
3. <http://westallen.typepad.com/idealawg/2008/04/some-critical-t.html>

Alan Mann

The Winter Journal. Page 39 Margiad Evans.

Thanks to Jane Cox for this contribution from The Autobiography of Margiad Evans, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1943

The dusky darkness spread like the network of a great tree. In an elm the thrush was singing. He was so hidden and one with the bushy twigs that I could only see him by his tail which twitched when his song altered. Everything else was motionless except a broken twig which stirred and swung by a strip of bark. As I went along I made an effort to climb out and get into these things - into the mysterious darkening and sealing of the earth, the quietening that is as the loveliest psalm of rest. And at last I did. I stood leaning on a gate. I was behind the sky. I was in the ground. I was in the space between the trees. My meaning grew in the earth and the firmament - I in the Nothing in which all is related.

Dancing with Adyashanti from Alan Mann

Joanna sent me Adyashanti's latest book "Emptiness Dancing". I started this note as a letter of thanks to Joanna but the book raises issues that might be worth considering at our next meeting so I expanded it into notes for that meeting. (Joanna pointed out that my initial comments seemed over-critical and that more heart and less head would be in order. I subsequently modified my original response).

If he came to our meetings I'm sure Adyashanti would find us approximately in accord with his teaching. He sounds like an update of Krishnamurti with a coating of Advaita. I wonder if he would come to a meeting of us lay folk and if he came would he expect to be present as a participant or as a teacher? I also wondered, as I read, why he had to change his name from Stephen Gray to Adyashanti. I read somewhere that Adyashanti means primordial peace.

I am skeptical about gurus. This is based on too much patient listening and reading (and watching). As many of you know, I spent years listening to Krishnamurti. My only concession to guru these days is to seek it amongst my friends.

I thought I'd try to summarize Adyashanti's message as I read the book:

- See through the strong identification with *my* story and see that the seeing of that is not enough, we have to live our realization. P3 and p69.
- Do not seek enlightenment somewhere else.
- Do not seek enlightenment for one's self. It is not something to be acquired.
- Enlightenment is what is—freed from the 'what is not'.
- What is (everything-All) is sacred.
- No continuity to realization
- A childlike interest in everything.
- Simplicity and the ordinariness of enlightenment—the extraordinariness of the ordinary.
- The observer is the observed. The awakened being can be a tree, a mountain, etc., p33.
- The necessary shift from knowing into being. P71
- The contribution of mystical Christianity, opening of the heart. P192
- Not a matter of finding the answer but the dissolution of the question.p190.

I don't think there's anything in that list we haven't endorsed at our get-togethers, so, there is no argument from me about content.

Many Advaita people seem to be trapped in a doctrinaire commitment to nonduality and the 'you and the world don't exist' stuff. Adyashanti gets a bit too close to this for my comfort on occasions, for example: 'nothing is actually happening', p98, and then goes on to talk about the flowering of life, e.g., p170. I think he is saved by his Zen training and sees that underlying wholeness (I think Brahman is his choice of name for it) appears as separation manifesting as the duality or multiplicity of living, i.e., *Eternity is in love with the productions of time*. I found an interesting and persuasive commentary on this thorny subject on the Dennis Waite's website. *A Realist view of Advaita* by Chittaranjan Naik.

http://www.advaita.org.uk/discourses/chittaranjan/realist_chittaranjan.htm

I thought, as I read, that Adyashanti should be more careful to make clear that his teaching is about what he has found to be true for himself. There is a danger in assuming that what has worked out for

the teacher is true for you and me or others in general. However, he put that objection to rest with a comment on page 70

No knowledge, no statement of the Truth touches what's eternal. What you really are. And no statement about how to get there is true either, because what gets one person there doesn't get another person there. A mind that likes to look for the one true path cannot find it. Of course, the mind doesn't like that. "No right path? Nothing that could be said or read that ultimately, in the end, could be true? The most enlightened being can't speak the Truth?"p70

One of my litmus tests for the claims of the realized is 'kindness'. Sounds rather banal I know but I have never been happy with the pearl in the mouth of a swine perspective. If the pearl has no impact on behaviour, if it does not transform its cruel, callous or merely uncaring custodian into a considerate human being it cannot, in my view, be the 'pearl of great price'. Many teachers disagree with this, not least Andrew Cohen. Donald (Ingram Smith) ascribed this unenlightened view of mine to my early Christian conditioning! I have never met Adyashanti so I don't know whether he passes the kindness test. Perhaps some of you who have met him might like to comment. What is the effect of the realization of the impersonal on the personal? (I have since spoken to or heard from three people who have met him and/or attended workshops, all of whom assure me that his teaching is reflected in his doing*). On page 68 he says;

When you see what you really are, no concepts apply anymore. You are so empty there is just consciousness. There is no inner child, and there is no adult either. None of your identities exist until you think them into existence. Consciousness can look down and see there is a body, but that's not the source of anyone's problem. The problem is what you add on after that in your mind.

(Or, as *we* might say with Douglas, 'look up', and see there is a body). One of the difficulties I have in reading the neo-advaitists is their constant switching between first person and third person perspectives without making clear where they are coming from and Adyashanti is no exception. This makes them sound as if they are constantly contradicting themselves. On page 127 Adyashanti opens his chapter with his version of the 'Closed Eyes experiment', dissolving the barriers between inner and outer. On the previous page however he had said "*Everything that happens between the ears is not the truth; it's just a story. What are you without your story?*" That's very much a third person perspective, a statement by the story, an objective observation on the workings of the brain—the first person perspective he begins to unfold on the following page, quoted above, would respond with 'what ears?' Not to mention the matter of holding your ears and asking yourself what it is that appears between these two sensations or what is it these sensations are happening in? Is whatever is revealed to you in that condition false? Check it out, it takes five seconds. I know what he's getting at but it's not a good explanation.

Finally, why no index? If this work encapsulates his latest teaching surely it's worth a bit of extra time to prepare an index. I made a few notes as I read but I'd like to review a few of my 'facts' without having to scurry through the whole book.

Alan Mann

* From: <http://www.globalserve.net/~sarlo/ReportsAS.htm>. I told Joe that I thought the one quality that stood out during the satsang was Adya's impeccable manners and incredible politeness and sweetness. I've attended satsangs with other teachers who did not exhibit these qualities, but it didn't occur to me at the time as a lack in them until I became aware of it so fully present in Adya. Only then did the comparison become obvious to me. He was gracious, generous, kind, a good listener, funny, friendly, very sweet, and never once introduced any kind of negativity into the discussions of the audience's questions or concerns.

More on Adyashanti at <http://www.adyashanti.org/> and <http://www.adyashanti.org/cafedharma/index.php?file=radio>

Nothing to do, No problem to solve. From Colin Drake

If you sit quietly noticing that awareness is always present it is very easy to see that for this to be the case there is absolutely nothing that the mind needs to do. Similarly there is no problem that the mind needs to solve to recognize this deeper level of awareness, as this very awareness is never absent being the constant conscious presence in which all thoughts and sensations appear. For without this presence we would not be aware of any thought or sensation.

Now the mind is basically a problem solving device, so when it realizes that there is nothing it needs to do, and no problem that it needs to solve, it naturally quietens leaving the cloudless sky of awareness in its full glory. Provided one has the intent of identifying with this deeper level of awareness, then thoughts and sensations appear as clouds in this sky, which come and go leaving the sky unaffected. In this context the mind will not follow, or identify with, these clouds as the task it has set itself to perform is to identify with awareness itself.

The mind is akin to an ‘onboard computer’ which is a wonderful tool for problem-solving, information storing retrieval and processing, and evaluating the data provided by our senses. However when it is not ‘engaged’ it tends to search for other problems to solve, and if these are not available in the present moment it tends to speculate in the future, wallow in the past, or imagine in the present, creating non-existent problems which it then tries to solve! Whereas a computer will just sit idle until it is given a task to perform, so to put the mind into this same ‘idle’ state one has to ‘engage’ it in a task thus disabling its ‘search’ tendency. If it turns out that this task entails no problem to solve the mind will not resume searching as long as it remains totally engaged in the task it has been set, and if this entails ‘nothing to do’ then the mind will ‘do nothing’!

In this mode thoughts and sensations come and go effortlessly without luring the mind to follow, or identifying with, them. This is why committing, or having the intent, to identifying with the deeper level of our being, pure awareness, is so important; for this sets the ‘milieu’ in which the mind is to operate. This in turn leads to the realization that for this identification there is truly nothing the mind has to do, or problem to solve, as awareness is obviously already here and is a constant presence (the perceiver) whilst thoughts and sensations are just ephemeral objects (the perceived).

At this moment you can totally relax letting go of all striving, seeking, desiring and longing; in fact of all effort. As this relaxation deepens, and the mind quietens, one becomes totally open to further revelations stemming from the recognition that one is pure awareness. For this reason the intent to identify with the deepest level of our being, pure awareness, and the realization that for this there is truly nothing the mind needs to do, or problem it has to solve, is of great value in going totally beyond identification with the surface level of thoughts and sensations.

This total relaxation and letting go then effortlessly leads to merging with awareness itself, with all the peace and bliss that this entails. For in this state there is truly ‘no mind’, as the mind is still due to the fact that it has nothing to do, and no problem to solve; and thoughts and sensations are merely witnessed as they spontaneously arise and subside, without re-activating the mind.

Colin Drake

(Colin advises that his book *Humanity, Our Place in the Universe. An Introduction to the Central Beliefs of the World’s Five Major Religions. (How They Answer the Five ‘Big’ Questions of Life.)* is nearing completion. Chapters of the book have appeared in the NOWletter from time to time and I’ll let you know when the book is available. Alan)

The Missing All from Alan Mann

William Franke takes Emily Dickinson's poem 'The Missing All' as the title for an essay in which he argues that her poetry is best understood as 'a form of negative theology', what he describes as apophatic discourse. See the link below.

I stumbled on this essay when looking for the definition of 'apophatic', which is one of the words whose meaning constantly escapes me. I regularly draw on Emily Dickinson and I discovered on reading the essay that the poems I most admire are, according to Franke, the result of her attempts to represent her apophatic understanding. That is, her experience of an underlying wholeness of being beyond words.

The essay filled some of the gaps in my recent consideration of the question of the beliefs of unbelievers and the nature of faith, as well as providing examples of occasional uncanny experiences of a reality outside my normal consciousness. They seem to come as though openings to a dimension from which I am excluded yet to which I somehow belong.

This is the one of the Dickinson poems which captures the sense of these experiences:

701
 A Thought went up my mind today—
 That I have had before—
 But did not finish—some way back—
 I could not fix the Year—

 Nor Where it went—nor why it came
 The second time to me—
 Nor definitely, what it was—
 Have I the Art to say—

 But somewhere—in my soul—I know—
 I've met the Thing before—
 It just reminded me—'twas all—
 And came my way no more—

I find her poem 'The Missing All' from which the essay title is taken to be particularly hard to unravel:

985
 The Missing All, prevented Me
 From missing minor Things.
 If nothing larger than a World's
 Departure from a Hinge
 Or Sun's Extinction, be observed
 Twas not so large that I
 Could lift my Forehead from my work
 For Curiosity.

The fact that the All is missing, or is excluded from everyday perception, is the condition that allows the appearance of things and events. Well, that's my take on the opening lines. As for the rest of the poem I'm uncertain. Maybe she's saying the most drastic action or event in our world of things and

events such as the earth flying out of orbit or the collapse of the sun, could not disturb or distract the All. I'd be interested in other interpretations readers may have but my real interest lies in her emphasis on the wholeness of life and the apparent inaccessibility of this 'ground' to everyday consciousness. I'm surprised that Franke left out the poem I think addresses the issue most directly:

959

A loss of something ever felt I—
The first that I could recollect
Bereft I was— of what I knew not
Too young that any should suspect

A Mourner walked among the children
I notwithstanding went about
As one bemoaning a Dominion
Itself the only Prince cast out—

Elder, Today, a session wiser
And fainter, too, as Wiseness is—
I find myself still softly searching
For my Delinquent Palaces—

And a Suspicion, like a Finger
Touches my Forehead now and then
That I am looking oppositely
For the site of the Kingdom of Heaven—

I'm particularly appreciative of this poem because it concludes with the most familiar of the Harding experiments, designed specifically for redelivering us to the *Missing All*.

Alan Mann.

The William Franke essay "*The missing all*": *Emily Dickinson's apophatic poetics* can be viewed or downloaded from a number of websites. I used this one—
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_hb049/is_1_58/ai_n31041796/

The Centre for Progressive Religious Thought

Doug Lloyd— who has contributed a number of articles, issues 114, 118, 134 and, after discussing his commentary on why Headlessness would not be acceptable to orthodox Christians in Nowletter 139—drew my attention to the Progressive Christian Network of Victoria:

<http://www.pcnvictoria.org.au/>

I subsequently found an Australia-wide organization with similar aims *The Centre for Progressive Religious Thought* with chapters in all states.

This is their introductory commentary from the site's home page:

The Centre for Progressive Religious Thought was founded in July 2002 in Canberra, Australia, with a further Chapter established in Sydney in 2004. Each Centre is open to any and to all who wish to explore a more progressive and open theology, in a safe environment. They stand in deep contrast to

a general tendency which often requires a theology be built on what should be believed. As such, folk who will find comfort in each of the Centres will be those who either (i) remain in the institutional church but find their progressive theology not reflected in much of the local church's thinking, or (ii) have already stepped outside the institution and are 'exiles' or members of the 'church alumni association' yet looking for a friendly and safe environment in which to share discussions and push boundaries. On this site you will find information on various events being staged, some articles from our presenters, listings of resources you might like to check out further, as well as For Sale resources. You will also find links to several other 'progressive' Centres, who with CPRT, form an informal progressive religious network in Australia and New Zealand. It is our hope that both the Chapters, will become fertile soil in the rebirthing of a new awareness of and thinking on, the sacred in today's post-modern society. So welcome to an exciting journey. You are not alone!
Rex A E Hunt, National Director

<http://www.progressivereligion.org.au/?q=node/1>

Those 'Silly' Experiments from Pete Sumner

Someone in Sedona, USA, ordered one of the 'Headless' posters designed by our very own Sam Blight, then sent the following message:

"I want to express my gratitude to you for continuing the work of Douglas Harding. I had come across the Web site many months ago, had saved my favorites, but my rational mind completely dismissed the experiments as silly.

A few day ago, I was again drawn to it, did the experiments and it blew my mind away. I have been meditating daily since the mid 1970's, studying Advaita Vedanta teachings for about 3 years now, and just by doing a few of the experiments, I was finally able to see the Spaciousness, the clear emptiness of the Awareness That I AM. What an incredibly simple, fast and effective method! We must continue to spread this message."

Lifted from *Clearsight* at <http://peterspearls.com.au/>

The 2009 Templeton Prize

PARIS, MARCH 16 – Bernard d’Espagnat, a French physicist and philosopher of science whose explorations of the philosophical implications of quantum physics have opened new vistas on the definition of reality and the potential limits of knowable science, has won the 2009 Templeton Prize.

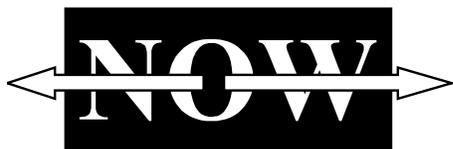
In his nomination of d’Espagnat for the Templeton Prize, Nidhal Guessoum, Chair of Physics at American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, wrote, “He has constructed a coherent body of work which shows why it is credible that the human mind is capable of perceiving deeper realities.”

These perceptions offer, d’Espagnat has said, “the possibility that the things we observe may be tentatively interpreted as signs providing us with some perhaps not entirely

misleading glimpses of a higher reality and, therefore, that higher forms of spirituality are fully compatible with what seems to emerge from contemporary physics.”

Notes from the website at <http://www.templetonprize.org/currentwinner.html> where you will find comprehensive coverage of the reasons for the award and information on d’Espagnat’s work.

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If unable to deliver please return to:
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