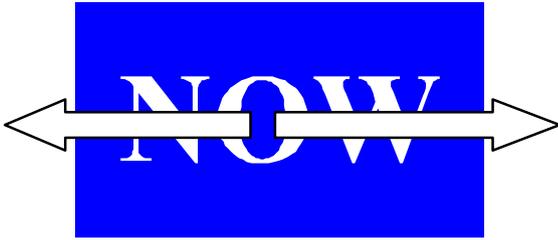


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**Harding Meetings: Monthly, on the first Saturday of the month.  
Next meeting Saturday 2 June 2012**

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## Editors note

This edition carries a farewell to Charlie Rufus from Gerald Reardon to which I added some notes provided by Charlie’s family. Charlie was a good friend, he helped me with my early website difficulties and proved to be a staunch ally in my attempts to demonstrate that the Harding approach and the Krishnamurti teachings are complementary.

**Thanks to this month’s contributors and please write whenever inspiration strikes.**



### **Charlie Rufus 7<sup>th</sup> August 1945 – 26 April 2012**

Charlie was much loved by his friends and colleagues in Krishnamurti Australia and he was highly respected by a global network of Krishnamurti enthusiasts. For the past two decades Charlie has volunteered his time generously and worked enthusiastically to represent Krishnamurti's teachings on the World Wide Web.

We have been fortunate to have him on our team and have benefited greatly from his expertise in this area. We all learned from his delightful presence and his good humoured and caring approach to life. Due to his commitment he has introduced many new members to the timeless inquiry inspired by Jiddu Krishnamurti.

Charlie will always remain in our hearts as a gentle human being who enriched our lives and his efforts have inspired us to continue with the work which he considered so important. It has been an honour and joy to have known and worked with him over the past several years.

Although he was known as the mastermind behind computers, he had his computer set up in such a way as to look out on to his garden where he could admire the greater wonder of nature at work. He was one of the most caring and delightful persons to know and he will always be remembered for his warmth, clarity and gentle good humour.

Farewell Charlie.

Extracts from the eulogy at Charlie's funeral

Charles Victor Rufus was born in Brisbane on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1945 to parents, Charles & Edna Rufus. He was an only child and the family lived firstly at Brookfield, then St Lucia, Cedar Creek and Rochedale. He was a very bright student and he attended Brisbane Boys College but his Dad took him out of school, to manage the family farm at Cedar Creek thus preventing him from completing his final year of schooling ..... In 1970, Charlie & Libby

met in Brisbane and they were married at North Tamborine in 1971. Andrew was born in April, 1973 followed by Lisa in March, 1976.

During the 1960's, Charlie spent time out in Western Queensland and the Northern Territory sinking Turkey Moulds (large dams on outback properties). He then came back to Brisbane to work with his Father in the family business, Charles Rufus Diamond Merchant in the CBA Building in Queen Street. Later he went into Real Estate and after that, he built satellite dishes before retiring, when he was just as busy as when he was working. Charlie created many Internet Websites and programs, including one which predicted share prices for the Indian stock market.

He designed and created websites for many friends and organisations including one for Krishnamurti Australia. He was fascinated with the teachings of Krishnamurti and made many very close friends through the organisation. His interests in Charlie's own words taken from his blog... Growing organic veggies, watching nature, philosophy, meditation, interesting conversations with friends, peaceful silence, the spirituality of daily life ....

He was a keen gardener and only needed a good cup of coffee and a nice view to make him happy. Charlie started a veggie patch up at Springbrook while he was caretaker of Health Options with Geoff and Shirley Miller and soon started digging up his own back yard to have a veggie patch closer to home. He made many close friends while on Springbrook.

The eulogy concludes with two Krishnamurti quotations:

You are on this earth to live fully, happily with your whole being, free of ambition, greed and fear. If you are greedy or ambitious, you cannot live fully, because greed and ambition dissipate your energy.

“In oneself lies the whole world and if you know how to look and learn, the door is there and the key is in your hand. Nobody on earth can give you either the key or the door to open, except yourself.”  
J. Krishnamurti

*The Family*

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## **Wei-Tsin and Harding in NOWletter 158—Responses**

*(I received two more replies to my request for comment on this question, one from Greg Campbell and another from Judy Bruce. My thanks to both and apologies to Greg for not keeping strictly to his formatting. Alan)*

From Greg Campbell 1

Alan, First of all I must say I feel honored to know you and your wife. Particularly because we first came into contact over or thru something as nebulous as the internet and our consuming interests are also quite nebulous (or more directly "mystical"). And we are

both "fans" and/or students of Douglas H. And I must also add Zen Teachings. So I want to give you as full an answer as I can which will mean at least a couple of emails. But at least something off the top of my head for now. The quotation you discuss is, of course, definitely "canonical" in the Zen tradition. I once read a statement (from I forget who) that stated this passage actually describes the symptoms of a mental breakdown and subsequent healing ! I rather like that but I'm not sure how accurate that could be. I feel it can also be seen (as you so carefully describe it) as a maturation in consciousness - a maturation that historically has happened only sporadically. Unfortunately.

Part of this maturation can be described (*which you have already done but if I am to use slightly other words*) as necessary growth out of the "juvenile" but nearly universal subject-object dualism and into that awareness which can contain both affirmation and negation simultaneously. The movement from "either/or" to "both"/and". (And even on to "Life/Death"!) I know we both agree there is now in the world a certain urgency behind this tardy evolutionary development and what you and I are (hopefully) doing is exploring possible paths which could be more inviting to people than have up to now been available. (When I start writing sentences as long as this last one it is time to call it a day.)

I wish you and everyone great relaxation in your cabin and long periods of time to do nothing... Greg

From Greg Campbell 2

So Alan, Getting back to the interpretation of the Zen saying "Mountains and rivers, etc..." here is a wild possibility: the first phrase has to do with ordinary human life where there is this mutual dream or grand illusion of mankind which appears very substantial indeed. Mountains are mountains etc.

However then comes - sooner or later and in one way or another - the great "dis-illusionment". It may come thru the sorrows of life itself or it may come thru Death.

In any case, nothing whatsoever is anymore the way it has seemed to be.

Mountains no longer mountains etc...Actually there is only Nothing...Let's say the great dis-illusionment comes thru death. But Death also being a part of the Great Illusion we return - not necessarily as we previously appeared.

This time we no longer look because for the first time we See!!! In Seeing it is clear all that is Seen we are!!!

(Maybe I'm just influenced by the Easter season. Happy Easter to all...)

*Greg Campbell*

From Judy Bruce

Thank you for your message, good to talk. I liked what your friend Christopher said: words and concepts are really about interaction not the nature of reality. Zen masters keep saying it's all mind flapping, don't they? We use a different F word! I also liked your

"Emptiness is what I am", rather than the "I am empty" which is what, I guess, we mostly live from.

I find reality is like this: I see, and say, "I am you" but when you (not you!) give me hard time I want to bust your nose...

So why am I giving myself a hard time?? Sam's little ditty sums it up pretty well:

Sam Blight 6:28am May 6

An Advaita insider called Neil,  
Said while I know the world is not real,  
When I'm using a hoe,  
And clip my big toe,  
I dislike what I fancy I feel.

*Judy Bruce*

From Alan Mann

I thought I'd try a Judaeo-Christian reading of Wei-Tsin

When I was young the word God was still widely accepted in polite circles. I was taught that I was a small insignificant person here on earth and that God was an extremely large omnipotent person in somewhere called heaven.

When I grew up I found this explanation completely unsatisfactory and tried a series of approaches following a realisation that God of stage 1 could not possibly exist. I then adopted a series of explanations such as God is in everything and then everything is in God. I didn't find these explanations completely satisfactory either.

Finally, I came upon some wise souls who, with the assistance of the universe itself, showed me that what we refer to as God could not possibly be a matter of explanation however refined—it had to be a matter of experience—Being had to replace knowing. It then became clear that there is only God.

*Alan Mann*

*This correspondence remains open!*

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## **The Wondrous Journey...by Ilie Cioara**

Late last year I was introduced to the work of Ilie Cioara by Petrica Verdes who is coordinating his legacy and managing the preparation and publication of his work in three volumes. The first one which we mentioned in NOWletter 157 entitled *The Silence of the*

*Mind* is followed by *The Wondrous Journey into the Depth of Our Being* from which I have extracted the quotation below.

Each human being on planet Earth is – consciously or unconsciously – searching for happiness with unlimited persistence and greed. Happiness appears as a mirage; we try countless ways in order to find it in the external world, with perseverance and determination; nevertheless, each time, the desired happiness finally results in disappointing delusion.

Other, more subjective individuals turn to their inner world; in this case as well, their thirst for happiness is satisfied by sheer deceitful imagination. In each of our attempts to search for it, we start from what we know or imagine. Such happiness is always motivated by an object we anticipate or desire.

True happiness ensues indirectly. It always appears in a state of non-search. Practically, we do not know what happiness is, but, when the mind is completely silent, in a state of total passiveness, our whole being experiences harmony. In this state, as complete beings, integrated into Life, we are overwhelmed with an immense Joy and Happiness without cause.

Only when It appears as a real experience can we truly know Happiness and Its constant freshness, without turning It into a memory. Ever renewing itself, It is a natural gift offered to the individual who is free from his time-space structure. Only in this way do we discover the true Happiness that the wandering mind of the conditioned man has been searching for throughout the millennia.

This book is now available and its description on the Amazon website reads:

The Wondrous Journey is Ilie Cioara's follow up to *The Silence of the Mind*. It is a practical book on meditation and enlightenment, a must read for any spiritual seeker. A less rational and more poetic Eckhart Tolle; Kahlil Gibran meets Krishnamurti. His message is original and unique, as Ilie Cioara has never travelled to India and never belonged to any traditional school. By practising the silence of the mind, through an all-encompassing attention, we discover and fulfill our innermost potential of becoming one with the divine spark that lies dormant within us.

Amazon Link <http://www.amazon.com/Silence-Mind-Ilie-Cioara/dp/1846948290> Available as paperback or Kindle edition.

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## Re-envisioning Mysticism

In traditional Eastern mysticism, it has been said that the unborn, uncreated, unmanifest empty void out of which the entire material cosmos emerged is infinite. It has no beginning and no end. It is what the Buddha called the Unborn. It is an Absolute dimension of reality that is both birthless and deathless. The material universe, on the other hand, is considered to be finite. Even though it is vast in its expanse, it is ultimately relative, because it has a beginning and an

end. It was created. However, cosmologists are now making the extraordinary discovery that the material universe is in fact not finite but infinite. And if what these cosmologists are discovering is true, we need to rethink this traditional mystical assumption. If the evolutionary process and everything contained within it are part of an *infinite* unfolding as they are finding—if it's not merely inconceivably vast but it's *literally* infinite—then we don't have to close our eyes or even transcend the mind, time, body, and universe in order to discover that which is infinite. All we have to do is behold the universe that we are already an inherent part of. And that opens the doors for a whole new definition of mysticism.

*Andrew Cohen*

The full post from which this quote is taken at [Andrew's blog »](#) (Might be slow to load)

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### **'Trust' from Robert Penny**

I have an abundance of hope and confidence, the basis of which are a few insights, which I outline herein, that I've found in Douglas Harding's teachings.

Once I know Where, When, and What I am (which is Here, Now, Nothing and Everything), I'm perfectly placed to ask myself 'Why am I?' A good question to contemplate, Douglas suggests. Furthermore, he gives us the answer that surfaced from within him, when he asked this question. He gives this answer for our consideration and certainly not for us to take on board as a dogma for blindly believing.

What is Douglas Harding's answer to the question 'Why am I?' Correction: What is the answer of the One whose home is at his Centre, at the centre of his universe? The One whose home is equally at our Centre, and at the centre of our universe. The answer that arises is not a human level answer. All of our questions and answers are a product of the Void, they're instigated from there, and they surface at, and they also belong to, the regional level in question. With respect to the 'Why am I?' question, in the context that it is being asked here, both question and answer belong exclusively to the Void.

The answer that Douglas gives is this: (I paraphrase him a little, and I bring together a few ideas that I've found in his work): 'For no reason and with no outside help the Being and Awareness that I AM Self-originates from the Abyss of absolute nothingness and unconsciousness right here and right now. Based on this magnificent feat of Self-origination, Who I really, really, really am (which includes its products), is worthy of our trust, however difficult or deplorable our circumstances may seem.'

In addition to this I add a couple of other inspiring ideas that I've found in Douglas's teachings and that I've also taken on board: 1. Everything, without exception, is made whole and holy in the Whole. And 2. Ultimately, it is not *what* exists that is most surprising and marvellous; what is most surprising and marvellous is that anything at all exists!

I thank Douglas for his expressions of these and many other insights; old insights that he shares with us in his fresh and clear and up-to-date language. In so doing, he is helping to keep alive these important ideas from tradition.

But these are merely ideas, and there's no place for ideas in spirituality, I can hear some people object, including some Seers who I've met. Well, I'm with Douglas in saying that this quite prevalent attitude is stupid. Douglas proposes that the ideas that arise in the regions, expressed in poetry and philosophy and other forms, are a part of the way that our universe arrives at its completion here at this and other Centres. However Douglas goes on to suggest that it is the ineffable Centre itself, and not any of the ideas that arise from it no matter how inspiring, that is worthy of our trust.

There's a seeming contradiction here. To trust the Void, or to trust both the Void and Its products taken together? That is the question.

*Robert Penny*

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## Quotes and Notes

### Tolle

Friends on LFY inform me that the Tolle website has adopted the pointing finger experiment . All to the good I suppose but there is no acknowledgement of its creator as far as I could tell. The experiment is cut off half way through and you are invited to subscribe to the service if you really want to find out what your finger is pointing to. If any of you have signed up I'd welcome additional comment.

<http://www.eckharttolletv.com/free/?f=1#/839086717/Kim-Eng-Is-there-a-region-of-the-body-that-is-rooted-in-the-eternal>

### Rig Veda, I, 164, 20.

A footnote from Christine Williams book on Krishnamurti explains why I hang on to my heretical support for what I call the 'essential dualism'.

... 'Like two golden birds perched on the selfsame tree—Intimate friends, the ego and the Self—Dwell in the same body. The former eats—The sweet and sour fruits of the tree of life—While the latter looks on in detachment'

Non-dualism is a common concept, applicable to all traditions, philosophies, and to scientific enquiry, the latter preferring the word 'universe'. So, what's the big deal when it comes to talking about nondualism as something that we don't already know about, experience and accept?

Well the answer is that nondualism, as presented by some of the Advaita and Buddhist traditions, often carries with it the concept that the world is illusory, that you and I and things in general do not exist. It's all a dream! When challenged about this, the response is that by illusory we mean things are not what they seem or that there is an interdependency rather than separate existence of 'things'. I can grudgingly accept that but would prefer dream-like as opposed to dream.

We are human beings and as such enjoy a highly dualistic existence as both human and as being, an interwoven expression of the all in all. To deny this dancing dualism strikes me as sacrilege. Alan

### **Rabindranath Tagore**

From Beryl Starke

"The subject on which all my writings have dwelt: the delight of attaining the infinite within the finite"

Here rolls the sea  
And even here  
Lies the other shore  
Waiting to be reached  
Yes here  
Is the everlasting present  
Not distant  
Not anywhere else

### **Sri Ramana Maharshi**

Do not fix your attention on all these changing things of life, death, and phenomena. Do not think of even the actual act of seeing them or perceiving them but only of that which sees all these things. That which is responsible for it all. This will seem nearly impossible at first, but by degrees the result will be felt. It takes years of steady, daily practice, but that is how a Master is made. Give yourself a quarter of an hour a day. Keep your eyes open, and try to keep the mind unshakenly fixed on That Which Sees. It is inside yourself. Do not expect to find that "That" is something definite on which the mind can be fixed easily; it will not be so. Though it takes years to find that "That", the results of this concentration will soon show themselves in four or five month's time-in all sorts of unconscious clairvoyance, in peace of mind, in power to deal with troubles, in power all round-always unconscious power. I have given you this teaching in the same words as the Masters give it to their intimate chelas. From now onwards let your whole thought in

meditation be not on the act of seeing nor on what you see, but immovably on That Which Sees. " Conversations with Sri Ramana Maharshi'

## Rumi

I don't know why; When I look at you, I see myself.

Savannah Considine posted this Rumi quote on the Krishnamurti Springbrook Facebook page together with this photo from Nipon Boonkhian which can be viewed at this lengthy address.



'Happiness'

<http://1x.com/photo/45593/portfolio/37606>

## Ruins of Empire from The Guardian

A letter in the Guardian Weekly from Edward Butterworth, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada explains his fascination with ruins and collapsed civilisations and points to evidence that a major contributor was the depletion of resources. However, none of the past civilisations consumed the irreplaceable at the rate we are now doing. He believes the rise of China is no solution to our present danger, on the contrary it represents only more problem, as the country buys into the consumerism model. He concludes, "A new culture will rise as consumerism falls. It will, I believe, be based in a new spirituality that sees us as parts, as microcosms of a living biosphere and an evolving universe". Guardian Weekly 18-24 May 2012

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## Nisargadatta Maharaj and Peter Madill MD

I received a note from Peter Madill who has had dealings in the past with John Wren-Lewis and Douglas Harding and who'd stumbled on the Capacitie website. He comments:

...Beginning with life on the farm then a prolonged sojourn at two typical Anglican British Boarding Schools to my current involvement in neuroscience and biotech in Northern CA. My life was also inoculated with a major dose of Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj along the way and fertilized later on by Douglas Harding and John Wren-Lewis.

Recently two spiritual radio show hosts and a fine spiritual book store owner coaxed me out of my reticence to talk about my experience and practice, especially as a doctor to Nisargadatta by way of a radio interview, the link to which is below. Perhaps some of the visitors to your website might be interested in the conversation.

Here is the link to the show that we did together last week:

**<http://mysticalpositivist.blogspot.com/2012/03/mystical-positivist-is-now-weekly-radio.html>**

In speaking of his visit to Nisargadatta he says:

The fundamental question that I brought with me was one regarding Maharaj's view regarding the core of spiritual practice. I felt that it was very important to me to engage him in conversation about the teachings presented in I Am That. I had understood the sense of "I am" to be the fundamental sense of oneself, and also that it served as a key that can lead us to the heart of our Being, which is beyond any conceptualization. Maharaj confirmed in many ways that this indeed is the essence of spiritual practice, and that it was more than just believing yourself to be the "I am," but required understanding of what lies prior to "I am" or beyond "I am."

*Peter Madill*

The introduction to the "The Mystical Positivist," (Radio programme) is described by its host and creator Robert A. Schmidt as dedicated to the application of reason in the pursuit of spiritual practice and development. He says, I look to this format to be challenging and a bit controversial in that the New Age community tends to have an overly romantic picture of the gritty pursuit of spiritual transformation. My thesis is that rationality is in no way the antithesis of deep mystical experience, in fact, I assert that it is a necessary ally - hence the blog name "Mystical Positivist."

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## Completely Giving Our Selves to God Is ?

What if Embracing Enlightenment  
depends upon  
Embracing Slavery ?

There appears to be a tendency recently  
to equate Enlightenment with Liberation.

There is indeed Truth in that.  
There is Deeper Truth in equating Enlightenment  
with Slavery.

Eventually We may Realize We are all already Slaves.

In this degree of Maturity  
the option that becomes unavoidable is  
shall we be Unwilling slaves or  
will We surrender to the Necessary Sacrifice?  
Surrendering to The Communal Sacrifice is  
Obviously, unquestionably,  
Our most Compassionate—Our most Graceful choice.

Yet astoundingly  
We generally  
Ignore  
That!

*Greg Campbell*

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## TAT in Galway from Art Ticknor

Hi Alan, Tess Hughes invited Bob Ferguson and myself to help her put on a TAT-like gathering in Galway, Ireland on 3/31-4/1. We had a nice turnout of 18 people from around Europe and the US ... a wonderful group of serious seekers. The European folks are interested in establishing a group like TAT in their region and are currently looking for a place to hold a fall gathering. While in Europe, Bob and I were interviewed by Renate and Iain McNay of Conscious.TV. I haven't looked at the videos yet, but from what I've heard they came out pretty well. In friendship, Art

Both interviews are now available on the website and can be found under the Non-Duality/Awakenings sections.

Here is the link for Art's: <http://bcove.me/8zobm2h2>

This one is for Bob's: <http://bcove.me/uguh54j2>

(Art's new book *Solid Ground of Being* is now available and I hope to complete some comments after reading my copy in time for the June NOWletter. Alan)

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## In the Eye of Ra from Floco Tausin

I first came across Floco Tausin when we reported on his article Entopic Phenomena in NOWletter 151 in December 2010. Floco has alerted me to the latest addition to his website. It is a beautifully illustrated article entitled *Floater structures in the visual arts of ancient Egypt* in which he extends his work of research into subjective visual phenomena in connection with altered states of consciousness and the development of consciousness. In his book *Mouches Volantes* explores the topic of eye floaters in a much wider sense than the usual medical explanations. It merges scientific research, esoteric philosophy and practical consciousness development, and observes the spiritual meaning and everyday life implications of these dots and strands.

I was somewhat bewildered by this subject when I first encountered it and don't feel qualified to comment except that recent eye cataract procedures have left me with an unusually high incidence of floaters and, consequently, free to explore on a regular basis. In close observation of the floaters there is an interesting shift in awareness in which the floaters appear as phenomena neither of the 'inner' nor the 'outer' and thus a key to dissolving the assumed separation. I haven't had time to check to what extent this observation relates to what Floco is exploring.

*Alan Mann*

For the full story: [www.eye-floaters.info](http://www.eye-floaters.info) <http://www.eye-floaters.info/news/news.htm#1>

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## Letters to Carl by George Schloss

Letter 10 – May 14, 2004

Dear Carl, A tale, indeed. “There is one story and one story only...” (Robert Graves). Constant, unchanging and, because unchanging, roomy enough for the happy ending so beloved by children of all ages in all ages including ours. And as Ishmael, the narrator if not hero of Melville’s *Moby Dick*, found to his horror as well as delight, the reward for living to tell the tale was....well, living to tell the tale. And now we’re in a position to.

Which brings me to Altizer who tells it very well as far as he goes, in fact, probably tells it as well if not better than anyone else I’ve come across absent the experiments. At least from our angle which, set at zero, turns out to be the really really right angle. In any case, though I may have cited it before if only in passing, I think that, despite its length, the following paragraph from his *Genesis and Apocalypse* is worth quoting in full if only because, with one exception (which I’ve underlined), it just about encapsulates all that can be said. (The italics will also be mine):

“Now we can see that modernity is not simply a reversal of the medieval world; it is far rather a deepening or extension of that world, even as the medieval world was a deepening and extension of the ancient Christian world. And nowhere is the modern world more fully itself than in its discovery of history as an irreversible and forward movement, and even if that discovery is an extension of medieval visions of history, it is nonetheless revolutionary, and most revolutionary in apprehending *the totality of history as the embodiment of providence or God*, a providence or God which is now the total immanence of God, and a total immanence reversing the transcendence of God even as ancient Christian visions of the transcendence of transcendence reversed the incarnation of God. If incarnation only fully enters the mind and the imagination with the full advent of the modern world, that is a consequence of a profound historical transformation, a transformation that only gradually evolves in history, and one generating deep regressions and reversals, but nevertheless one proceeding by a forward-moving process of historical evolution, an evolution that is a reversal of the backward movement of return. But if that reversal is ultimately and finally real, it is a reversal grounded in Godhead, and grounded in a reversal occurring in Godhead itself. Nothing less than such a reversal can be evoked by the symbol of the incarnation, and if historical Christianity has ever attempted a reversal of that symbol, that is a reversal which itself has been reversed by the actuality of history, and most clearly so in Western Christian history, a history that has very nearly completed a movement from the transcendence of transcendence to the immanence of immanence.”

Though I might wonder at ‘a reversal occurring in Godhead itself’ which, unless ‘defined’ as to where, exactly, Godhead is or isn’t, seems to me somewhat moot, I find this passage so packed with suggestion and meaning we could parse it till kingdom come and still have grounds for discussion, and more than discussion, agreement, the first of which might very well be the very real presence of that kingdom itself. That said, what seems to me its most salient point for our purposes is the “very nearly completed” I’ve underlined and which, as far as I can see, constitutes the major difference between us and not only the

difference between us but between everything and, I dare say, everyone that's come before us, even someone who's come as close as Altizer. And that difference is, quite simply, the difference, on the one hand, between speech and faith in whatever shape and form they take and, on the other, the sure if silent knowledge manifest in the absolute certainty provided by the experiments. And by "silent" I most certainly do not mean the deliberate withdrawal from communication of any kind so favored by ascetic practitioners but, on the contrary, the language that literally speaks louder than words, the conscious participation between someone and no one in the one medium capable of fully surpassing itself because capable of fully delivering itSelf and which we sentimental late-comers now only know more familiarly from every pop-tune ever written as the language of love. At any rate, are we entitled to claim on the strength of the experiments alone, that the "very nearly" is no longer operative but has been superseded by the "fully completed" and, as we're now equipped to demonstrate beyond all contention, the arena for this finishing touch is or, at least, was provided by history? I think we are. I think we must. But I'll reserve that for next time.

George

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#### Nirvana, Awareness and The Absolute from Colin Drake

Although the Buddha remained silent when asked about the existence of an Absolute Reality, here is an 'inspired utterance' he is said to have been made about *nirvana*:

There is monks a domain, where there is no earth, no water, no fire, no wind, no sphere of infinite space, no sphere of neither awareness nor non-awareness; there is not this world, there is not another world, there is no sun or moon. I do not call this coming or going, nor standing, nor dying, nor being reborn; it is without support, without occurrence, without object. Just this is the end of suffering.i[1]

This suffering is overcome when one stops craving by realizing that 'phenomena or sense objects are impermanent ... and empty of self or anything belonging to self'. ii[2] This cessation of craving leads to escaping from the *samsaric* cycle of conditioned arising and to *nirvana*, as Nagasena pointed out when answering the questions of King Milinda:

The cessation of craving leads successively to the cessation of grasping, of becoming, of birth, of old age and death, of grief, lamentation, pain, sadness and despair – that is to say the cessation of all this mass of ill. It is this cessation that is Nirvana.iii[3]

That *nirvana*, or 'awakening' is achieved by realizing the truths of *anicca and anatta*, which leads to the cessation of craving, is also stated in the *Dhammapadda* : 'Him I call a Brahmin who is free from I, me and mine, who knows the rise and fall of life. He is awake: he will not fall asleep again.'iv[4] One is free from 'I, me and mine' when one realizes that there is no essential self, *anatta*, and one knows the 'rise and fall of life' when one realizes the truth of impermanence, *anicca*.

It is interesting to compare this with that which is discovered when one investigates one's direct experience which consists of thoughts/mental-images, sensations and the awareness of these. This reveals the properties (or non-properties!) of awareness, the constant conscious subjective presence which is found to be:

|             |           |   |
|-------------|-----------|---|
| Motionless  | Still     | Aware of all movements occurring in it.         |
| Noiseless   | Silent    | Aware of all sounds occurring in it.            |
| Formless    | Void      | Aware of all forms occurring in it.             |
| Flavorless  | Bland     | Aware of all flavors occurring in it.           |
| Odorless    | Neutral   | Aware of all odors occurring in it.             |
| Senseless   | Insensate | Aware of all touch/feelings occurring in it.    |
| Thoughtless | Quiet     | Aware of all thoughts occurring in it.          |
| Imageless   | Empty     | Aware of all mental images occurring in it.     |
| Stainless   | Pure      | Untainted by anything occurring in it.          |
| Faultless   | Pristine  | Undegraded by anything occurring in it.         |
| Limitless   | Infinite  | The source/container/dissolution of all things. |

If one truly identifies with awareness by seeing (and 'feeling') that this represents the 'aware nothingness' relative to which, in which and by which all 'things' are seen; and that this is the underlying substratum in which mind/body (thoughts, mental images and sensations) appear and are 'seen', then one can merge the mind into this resulting in peace. For this one has to remain 'aware of, and identified as, awareness' throughout the investigation. In this there is 'no self' (*anatta*), all things are seen to be impermanent (*anicca*) and there is the absolute cessation of craving ... which is *nirvana*.

Let the wise merge the speech in the mind, and the mind into intelligence (philosophical reason); let him merge intelligence in the great self (pure awareness), and that self into peace.

Beyond the unmanifested seed is Brahman [aware nothingness] ... None beholds him with the eyes for he is without visible form. His words cannot reveal, mind cannot reach, eyes cannot see.

Yet in the heart is he revealed through meditation ... When all the senses are stilled, when the mind is at rest ... That say the wise is the highest state. He who attains it is freed from delusion.

(Verses from the *Katha Upanishad*)

This 'aware nothingness', consciousness at rest, is the Absolute Reality in which all things, cosmic energy – consciousness in motion, arise, are spied, abide and subside. As all motion arises in stillness, exists in a substratum of stillness, is seen relative to that stillness, and subsides back into stillness. So the realization of the Absolute, by

investigation of experience, leads to *nirvana*. Or you could say that *nirvana* is synonymous with being totally identified as, and with, awareness - The Absolute Reality.

*Colin Drake*

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<sup>i</sup>[1] Udana 80 in, R. Gethin, 'The Foundations of Buddhism, 1998, Oxford, p76-77

<sup>ii</sup>[2] Choong M., 'RELS305/405 Buddhism: A History, Lecture Notes', 2004, Armidale, p.14

<sup>iii</sup>[3] Conze E., 'Milindapasha in Buddhist Scriptures', 1959, Harmondearth, p.156

<sup>iv</sup>[4] Easwaran E., 'The Dhammapada,verse419', 1986, Petaluma, p.199

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