

## **Issue No. 53 - May 1999**

### **Dialogue weekend at Glen Davis**

There were nine of us including the 'locals' (Alex & David) and we had wonderful weather, sunny days but cool enough for a log fire at night. This is not an attempt to provide a general summary of what happened but a personal account of what was important about the weekend for me.

We started off with a headless session as the original intention had been to hold a full headless weekend. I was interested in following up on Warwick's visit to Nacton where he and Douglas had an interesting exchange on which Warwick reported and I summarised in Issue No. 51, 'Warwick meets Douglas Harding'. The essence of the report was Douglas's insistence that it wasn't enough to 'get it' with our eyes closed (closed eye experiment), we don't go around with eyes closed. The point is to see wide-eyed as we usually are and to be honest about what we see.

We did the pointing finger experiment as a warm up for the session but my expectations of an easy breakthrough were dashed and I became embroiled in my usual explanatory and descriptive analysis of headlessness. Ruth said it sounded as though I was trying to convince not just the other people present but myself of what is revealed by the headless experiments. This has been pointed out to me on previous occasions. I remember Graeme politely interrupting one of my raves at a Greville St workshop by politely suggesting everybody stop talking and thinking about it and just 'look!' I suppose the difficulty arises from the fact that a successful outcome to the experiments requires a shift from knowing into seeing and the explanatory, third person, activity in which I seem to specialise, just sustains the barrier to seeing. Margot says I have too great an investment in successful workshop outcomes. I think that is right.

Warwick asked a question relating to inner and outer which I thought very challenging and I felt I needed to look at it at some length but the exchange rolled on and the uncertainty created by the question evaporated in the torrent of knowledge or ideas about it. Later, we talked about the failure of our sort of dialogue to provide 'space' in which to enable some seeing to arise. Some of us thought the imposition of delays, in order to consider specific questions, would be artificial and destroy the flow, would deny 'what is', others that the endless rush is not dialogue at all. This question will no doubt come up again. We considered the question of why we nearly always end up talking about the same thing or things and whether this was an inevitable consequence of the process.

On day 2 Brett and Ruth led us in an enquiry into guilt. We went into it at length and in some depth. Linking to the previous day's sessions, Alex asked what has headlessness to say about guilt. Terry replied 'nothing'. I later thought it might be possible to make an equally good case for 'everything' as a reasonable answer. When we asked whether anyone was feeling guilty at that moment, nobody was. We were in the place where guilt was not. The space where guilt or anything else might arise is the essential 'nohead' point of view or position. That, I think, would be my answer to Alex's question. It is rather like the ability to stand in 'no problem' which became clearer to me as a result of an exchange with Andrew Cohen and which I covered in Issue 43.

A couple of days after we got back to Sydney Barry drew my attention to an article by DEH called 'How to Surrender'. I'm not sure to what extent I can claim this arose from the weekend but it somehow rounded it all off quite perfectly for me. You may recall quite a long

article on surrender by Andrew Cohen which we reprinted in Issue No. 43, then we had Don Jones's contribution last month and now Rome's on page 5. The aspect of Douglas's article which Barry drew to my attention and which I find so compelling is the way he equates attention with surrender. I have reprinted an extract below.

*"The solution is ATTENTION, attention instead of intention. Attention to What is, in place of striving for what should be. Attention to how things already are, without any attempt to improve them. The fact is that total attention is surrender, and total surrender is attention. Attention to precisely what? To what's given right where you are at this moment, regardless of other places and times."*

This is a bit of a riddle in that the usual interpretation of 'what is' relies on a framework of observer and whatever is appearing to the observer in the moment. Douglas is asking for attention, not to this conceptual 'what is', but to what really is; the actual state of affairs. I never truly apprehend 'what is' unless my 'glassy essence' is included. (See also: p3, column 2, p4, col 2 of this issue)

*Alan Mann*

### **Issue No. 55 - August 1999**

#### **What is the point of dialogue?**

I was very interested in David Clouston's article, "Are we in a rut?", and coincidentally, "Who am I?" by Donald Ingram Smith, both in issue 54. In fact, Lyn Willmott's article, and Peter Crook's article also involved individual consciousness and thinking about oneself. The "self" and the possibility of change seem to be at the centre of most of our concerns.

About four years ago, I put the following questions to myself, and the answers came to me as "insights", not as knowledge. The difference between the two kinds of learning? Knowledge is made up of concepts, which are "bits" of reality. Then we have to try and add the "bits" together to get the whole story. But reality keeps on moving, and so all that we achieve is a limited, and fragmented and historical view of the total picture. This is a big problem, because I could spend a thousand life times accumulating more knowledge and getting absolutely nowhere.

Insight happens NOW, and does not involve concepts or "bits" of reality, but sees the whole story unfolding and changing. How do we do this? We have to learn a whole new way of learning. We suspend judgement about what we are seeing. We learn how to look without ideas. We don't name anything that we are looking at. We simply perceive the whole process, in one go! But we have to be extremely sensitive about our subject. We have to start from the unknown, (not the known!) and admit truthfully to ourselves that we really don't know what the "me" is. We only think that we know. Then we observe the workings of the self, in relationship with the daily challenges that will inevitably come along. This does not need a dialogue group, but it obviously could happen in such a group. Then we relax and wait. We either get it, or we don't get it. If we get it, we understand the falseness or the truth about something. This deep knowing enables us to be finished with that particular situation. We drop it like a hot potato. Life moves on. We are now in a new situation of not knowing. To summarise, "Knowledge informs; Insight transforms".

I am asking these questions for myself, because I cannot answer them for anyone else. Why? Because my daily experiences and life are unique from any other person. I am a fragile, living

organism, with an advanced brain (?), and I am programmed by my genes and my mind to favour self-preservation and self-perpetuation. If I am going to change radically, then my “identity” program will want a bloody good reason, because a radical change, of my consciousness, is a form of death. Fear will stop me going through a terrifying transformation, if my whole organism, including my intellect, does not see that it is a sane, life-affirming thing to be doing.

#### WHY DO I WANT TO CHANGE?

I want to lead an honest, truthful, free, joyful life, without any fear of death, or underlying anxiety – every day! I am very discontented with my life as it is, with its never-ending inner conflict, constant search for something better, confusion, boredom and sense of separation from my fellow human beings. I want the whole truth about myself – for its own sake, and without a sugar coating. I see the same violence, conflict and disorder in the world. Maybe they are both part of the same problem. Then I ask another question? Am I really being honest about my motive? I had to wait for an insight. Perhaps I am kidding myself. But the answer came back – this is my true motive – I really am prepared to go to the end of the road. Something deep inside my guts is saying that I am not living freely and truthfully, and this is causing problems in the external world.

#### WHO AM I?

I must start here. I must understand my conditioning as a human being, not a plant or an animal. I am a conceptual being. I am full of ideas about life. I have been conditioned by society to see reality in a particular way. When I understand my conditioning, and I have to go into this in some detail first, I see that words (concepts), language grammar and structure are the keys to understanding the structure of myself. In particular, the straight line, one thing at a time, nature of my language, as in subject-verb-object, with “me” at the centre of this world, has been reinforced in my brain a million times since I was born.

My reality has been created, literally, and given meaning by the power of words, symbols, and the linear sequence of events. The self-concept is at the centre of this invented world of symbols, and uses memory and “freedom to choose” to reinforce its own existence and sense of immortality.

If I observe this mental process very carefully, I see that there is a flaw in the process. I have been taught to believe in progress – that in time I can become a better person, perhaps a perfect, moral being. If I believe this “belief” then I drive myself to become a perfect being, and this self-image is used to measure my progress. But I get continually disappointed with myself. If I am really honest, I can see that I can never attain this ideal image, or even get close to it. In fact, there never was any permanent evolving entity. I am really playing a “language game” that is only making me more and more confused, and full of contradictions. My shocking insight? “There is no psychological or spiritual evolution”. I am truly a figment of my own imagination. I am responsible for my own inner turmoil, and my growing mental baggage, by continuing to believe in, and make a continuous daily mental effort at becoming somebody. I fear coming to an end as a self-concept! This is not an intelligent response if I want to meet the challenges of life in a free and spontaneous way. The psychological “me” fears death, not the death of the physical body. I can’t really fear what I do not know. I fear the loss of the known. I have discovered for myself that all the ideas about there being seven stages of cosmic evolution, or that I can have an ecstatic spiritual union with the supreme XXX, is so much codswallop – it is just more work of the imagination – read ego.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

I, the self-concept, the intellect, the psychological “me”, can’t do anything. It can only see that it has a certain place in the scheme of things, (practical, knowledge matters) but must really cease to exist as a belief system in psychological matters. It must stop becoming “somebody” and simply learn to go with the flow of life, and nature. The shocking truth hits me – I really don’t know how to live this way! I am like a young child, without a formula, because the old formula has looked at itself in the mirror, and seen its own limitations. It really is now ready to keep quiet on matters of choice, and personalities. I feel myself dying. I can’t do anything about it. I am in a state of shock. I go through the motions of daily existence. I feel terrible. But I also feel sane for the first time in my life.

## LOOKING BACK

I now see, with hindsight, that a transformation occurred of my consciousness, the very moment when I understood, for the first time that psychological evolution was a false game, an illusion of the mind. The whole organism had an inner “feeling” that the unknown was the Truth, and was life-preserving, in the whole sense of that word. The working out of this process is ongoing, and may never end. The amount of conceptual conditioning in my organism is staggeringly huge. Residual “me” is still trying to justify its re-invention, albeit in a “better” form.

## SO WHAT IS THE POINT OF DIALOGUE?

For me, the only question worth truly understanding is, “Who am I?”. Everything else follows. If the members of a dialogue group suspend all judgement and impersonally inquire into this question of identity, who knows what might transpire. It would be to understand the nature of the “me” in the mirror of relationships. What tools do I/we have to undertake this task? Knowledge and insight? What is insight? How does it work? What is the essence of a human being? What is a concept? What is my real motive for seeking the answer to these questions? Am I prepared to be ruthlessly honest with myself and every other person in the group? Truth liberates – but only if I seek the Truth, for its own sake.

## CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

I now understand why thought cannot find Truth, or merge with a “higher universal consciousness”. Thought is an invention of the human mind, limited and good at concentration, and grasping at objects, one at a time. But because of its very nature, it can never know the unknown reality, which is moving, dynamic, and alive right at this very moment. How does this unknown reality come into being? It is already here! Thought has taken over the driver’s seat, created its own “marks on paper and noises in the air”, and dominates every conscious moment of one’s existence. Thought, “me”, must understand that it is the problem, and wither away psychologically, of its own accord. That is the reason why I cannot help any one else see their own limitations as a self-concept. It means the death of themselves, the one thing we cherish above all else. What “nutter” would die voluntarily? A “false” nutter that really does see its own falseness.

For me there really is a universal consciousness, or language that we all share, with each other, and with every life form, perhaps with every rock, and atom. It is an integral aspect of you and me, and we can’t seek it. It is already here. I call it simply “silence”. Not the silence in which thought is still active, but the silence of “no-thought”. My dog just looked at me, and without a word, asked me for some “tucker”. I have to go. Love to all

*Gary Hipworth*

### **The extra Category**

I was interested by David's comments on dialogue and his questioning of "whether or not we are holding the meetings in the appropriate spirit." I think it is an excellent addition to the never ending dialogue about what dialogue is really all about. His analysis of our commitment to and willingness to let go of our levels of identification was fascinating and here is a reminder of what the table looks like with his identification levels as a percentage on the right:

1 Theories	0%
2 Ideas	10%
3 Opinions	60%
4 Facts	85%
5 Experience	100%

I read the percentages as an arbitrary but reasonably accurate assessment of how strongly I identify and, therefore, how willingly I let go of a particular category. As I was considering David's ladder of commitment, it struck me that there is another category which follows experience and which I would describe as 'experiencing'. I define 'experiencing' as what is actually happening in the meeting. It is whatever in-forms consciousness at any particular moment as opposed to experience which is the residue or memory of past activities. So I now re-write the table as follows:

1 Theories	0%
2 Ideas	10%
3 Opinions	60%
4 Facts	85%
5 Experience	100%
6 Experiencing	0%

You see that I have allocated zero identification to this additional category in the belief that present experiencing is regarded as ephemeral and insignificant compared to categories 3, 4 & 5 which are being continuously dredged up in our dialogue exchanges to bury any chance of category 6 getting a toehold. I am all too ready to let go of what is happening, my experiencing, in favour of what I already know to be 'true'. As David pointed out, categories 1 to 5 can provide a cage of separation from what is actually going on. And more importantly perhaps, they lock me into an idea of my self as separate and cut off from all 'other' rather than in and of the process which is revealed in experiencing .

My argument is that if dialogue is to function in the spirit of 'letting go' and 'enabling the new' then the one category which we should be happy to identify with 100% is Category 6. That is, the flow of the meeting. Whatever is going on and whoever is speaking is what I truly am, in terms of awareness, at that moment. And, paradoxically, I have to be prepared for 100% letting go of whatever enters this stream if I am to 'enable the new'.

We have been told by a number of people over recent years that group dialogue doesn't work. What they usually mean by this is that we rarely if ever find that the group as a whole is 'in dialogue'. This criticism, I think, misses the point as it focuses on change occurring in 'others'. Dialogue always works for me when I focus on the change that matters which is

always 'right here'. And it occurs immediately when priority shifts from the cage of knowing, categories 1-5, to the seeing/experiencing of category 6.

*Alan Mann*

Are we in a Rut - Terry O'Brien replies.

I feel it is important to respond to David's observations about the Dialogue process, specifically at Chatswood. He has certainly put forward a very stimulating challenge. I think he's also tuned in perceptively to 'what is' actually happening.

I guess those who have considered David's suggestion that we may be in a rut, and Warwick's point that much of what we say is predictable, are reacting in different ways for different reasons. I for one was moved to shut up for a while to reflect on the implications of these statements. I've since begun to wonder whether many of us are truly able to realize and confront our own limitations, or even admit they exist?

I reacted strongly to a number of recent articles from various contributors to the "Nowletter" who seem to me to imply that their knowledge, understanding or insight into the nature of self, thought and consciousness is informed by some mysterious source other than their own mental constructions (conscious or unconscious). I seriously contest such assertions as I found much of what was written to be a reinterpreted synthesis of Krishnamurti's teachings interspersed with a projection of ideals as to how other people 'should' think and behave. Rarely among the articles was there an owning of what was asserted. I respect and appreciate the contributions to the dialogue though I question whether the authors are alert to just how self-deceptive and undetectable a tenacious illusion and/or the persistence of an old insight can be (not other people's illusions but our own). Shakespeare provides a poetic warning for aspiring mystics in 'Love's Labour Lost' - "Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile....."

I may sound harshly critical but I'm not excluding myself from scrutiny. My strong reaction is equally due to the battle with my own tendency to assume the authority of some marvellous insight I think I've had - I then wonder why the rest of the world doesn't want me to share it with them. The trouble with insights, I've found, is their paradoxical nature. We think they are a gain when really they are a loss.

As I see it, I am not a separate entity having a special insight and gaining a deeper understanding of myself. Real insights penetrate the ego structure so that less of 'me' can prevent direct contact with the truth of 'what is'. The trap is that an insight may only be relevant to the particular conditioning of a particular individual at a particular moment. It's not a flag to wave or a feather to add to one's plumage, it's an opening from which reflection can take place more accurately on the psychological conditions that constitute the identity known and felt emotionally as Terry (or Jack or Jill).

The impact of my own experience of Dialogue over several years has effectively brought to the surface, and helped disperse, a number of delusions and misconceptions that had previously distorted my perceptions for decades.

It continues to humble me in the face of growing realization of how limiting and destructive my attachment to identity has been (the obstacle being the 'attachment' aspect not the 'identity' aspect).

Speaking from a very personal basis (I can hardly speak from anyone else's) my ongoing 'experiencing' (in the sense of Alan's 5th category - Nowletter 55) is that of nagging torment - the torment of duality, of selfishness, of discontent, of disgust in the face of a grotesquely brutal world. I am naturally concerned, and fortunately alerted to what has become clear - that the source of my woes (and potential salvation?) resides within. I'm also fortunate to have realized that anything I attempt to do 'pro-actively' to alter this state of affairs, can only serve to add to it. The situation doesn't require 'doing' any more to change it, it requires understanding that which continues to cause it.

I see Dialogue as an essential feed-back loop, a mirror that helps us to see ourselves through the eyes of others, more objectively than through introspection. I don't think very many people are willing or perhaps ready to confront a direct and true reflection of the subtly sophisticated 'self' with its great myriad of clever deviations and concealed double standards. In too many ways we have proven to be a plague on the planet - an insatiable parasite consuming not only life sustaining resources but the right to life of all other species. Our arrogance, our ignorance and our fear define what we are, and confine what we could be.

I've found evidence in everyday life of selfless benevolence and heart-warming kindness which I believe to be inevitably within the reach of human potential. Though we are capable of gross atrocities we are even more capable of overwhelming compassion. To question the nature of ego is not a rejection of life, it is to explore the causes in consciousness that substitute fantasy for reality. Our handicap is a paradoxical dilemma because we have to realize the fantasy before possibly seeing the reality. I think dialogue offers the best hope of effecting the necessary change.

Are we in a rut? Yes, of course - and we have been for thousands if not millions of years.

To those who think they have an answer superior to the arduous process of dialogue, I ask you humbly to consider who it is you are really trying to get the message through to - in your heart of hearts, is it not truly anyone else but you?

Now that I've put my foot in it as the latest self-appointed review critic for the Nowletter I'd better distinguish a few articles that I thought were inspiring, simple and (heaven forbid) 'personal' renditions of first hand experience :

the headless email letters from Lucian Loren-Rymaszewski and Joel Agee were a joy to read - they were pragmatic, matter of fact and courageously honest. They shared their experience with us without preaching it. The golfing article was very entertaining and I enjoyed Peter's and/or Celia's writing style. It's probably a good book.

It was delightful to read Lyn Willmott's masterful piece of thought provoking imagery. Rushcutters Park made me feel seven again. Thanks Warwick! Katie Mann's response to her primary school education was an important indication, I thought, that what might be right for one child isn't necessarily the same for them all. Alan's sixth category was insightful and a useful pointer to what I believe dialogue is wanting from us. The value of 'experiencing' may not satisfy the agenda hungry but it may provide a powerful learning shift for those willing to avail themselves of it.

All the articles from the last few Nowletters (whether I agreed with them or not) had various pearls laced through them and all were interesting and significant contributions to Dialogue process. I object to the condescending tone of some but even they provide a contrast which

helps me to appreciate the diverse thinking styles, varying perspectives and different motives that collectively shape our humanity and steer our course.

*Terry O'Brien*

### **Issue No. 57 - October 1999**

#### **Dialogue**

The Greville Street dialogue meetings often end with a post-soup review of the days events - and after the September meeting there were some questions raised which some of us thought it would be good to follow up at future meetings:

Can we be open enough to really hear one another?

Is it possible to put aside our resistance to a particular speaker, particularly a speaker who comes across as a teacher?

The resistance to people who present themselves as teachers has become almost automatic in our form of dialogue . Is this a healthy or a fearful response?

Is it possible to listen to whoever is speaking and however they are speaking with complete openness?

Should we deliberately cultivate an openness which can withstand unwelcome content and all manner of presentation. And would this enable a real meeting at our meetings?

Some of us, particularly those who have arrived by the Krishnamurti path don't think very highly of the sort of dialogue we practise and prefer groups of two or three, preferably duologues. Krishnamurti himself frequently decided to "dialogue with himself" when the Q&A sessions were not running smoothly.

I don't agree with this approach myself and prefer a larger group. Nevertheless I think K has said some of the most penetrating things about what dialogue might offer. The points he made in the following answer to a question about transformation are critical to what I understand to be effective dialogue: the need for a radical change; a perceptive turning inside-out not a revolution based on another concept; the transformation not to be achieved as the result of a new process but in and as process. And the idea of acquiring this transformation as accumulated truth just another crazy concept.

Dorothy was rapped over the knuckles for quoting K at the September meeting so I now join her in the corner. Whilst I acknowledge that what follows below carries the weight of K's authority for me I am putting it in here primarily because it expresses so clearly what I understand to be the case for dialogue.

### **From a Krishnamurti talk at Banaras on 20 February 1949**

Question - what do you mean by transformation?

Krishnamurti -: Obviously, there must be a radical revolution. The world crisis demands it. Our lives demand it. Our everyday incidents, pursuits, anxieties, demand it. Our problems demand it. There must be a fundamental , radical revolution, because everything about us has collapsed. Though seemingly there is order, in fact there is slow decay, destruction: the wave



of destruction is constantly overtaking the wave of life. So there must be a revolution -- but not a revolution based on an idea. Such a revolution is merely the continuation of the idea, not a radical transformation. And a revolution based on an idea brings bloodshed, disruption, chaos.

Out of chaos you cannot create order; you cannot deliberately bring about chaos and hope to create order out of that chaos. You are not the God-chosen who are to create order out of confusion. That is such a false way of thinking on the part of those people who wish to create more and more confusion in order to bring about order. Because the moment they have power, they assume they know all the ways of producing order. But seeing the whole of this catastrophe - the constant repetition of wars, the ceaseless conflict between classes, between peoples, the awful economic and social inequality, the inequality of capacity and gifts, the gulf between those who are extraordinarily happy, unruffled and those who are caught in hate, conflict and misery -- seeing all this, there must be a revolution, there must be complete transformation, must there not?

Now, is this transformation, is this radical revolution, an ultimate thing, or is it from moment to moment? I know we would like it to be the ultimate thing, because it is so much easier to think in terms of far away. Ultimately we shall be transformed, ultimately we shall be happy, ultimately we shall find truth, but in the meantime, let us carry on. Surely, such a mind, thinking in terms of the future, is incapable of acting in the present; and therefore such a mind is not seeking transformation, it is merely avoiding transformation. And what do we mean by transformation?

Transformation is not in the future, can never be in the future. It can be now, from moment to moment. So, what do we mean by transformation? Surely it is very simple: seeing the false as the false, and the true as the true. Seeing the truth in the false and seeing the false in that which has been accepted as the truth. Seeing the false as the false and the true as the true is transformation. Because when you see something very clearly as the truth, that truth liberates. When you see that something is false, that false thing drops away. Sir, when you see that ceremonies are mere vain repetitions, when you see the truth of it, and do not justify it, there is transformation, is there not, because another bondage is gone. When you see that class distinction is false, that it creates conflict, creates misery, division between people -- when you see the truth of it, that very truth liberates. The very perception of that truth is transformation, is it not?

And as we are surrounded by so much that is false, perceiving the falseness from moment to moment is transformation. Truth is not cumulative. It is from moment to moment. That which is cumulative, accumulated, is memory, and through memory you can never find truth; for memory is of time -- time being the past, the present, and the future. Time, which is continuity, can never find that which is eternal; eternity is not continuity. That which endures is not eternal. Eternity is in the moment. Eternity is in the now. The now is not the reflection of the past, nor the continuance of the past, through the present, to the future.

A mind which is desirous of a future transformation, or looks to transformation as an ultimate end, can never find truth. For truth is a thing that must come from moment to moment, must be discovered anew; and, surely, there can be no discovery through accumulation. How can you discover the new if you have the burden of the old? It is only with the cessation of that burden that you discover the new. So, to discover the new, the eternal, in the present, from moment to moment, one needs an extraordinarily alert mind, a mind that is not becoming. A

mind that is becoming can never know the full bliss of contentment; not the contentment of smug satisfaction, not the contentment of an achieved result, but the contentment that comes when the mind sees the truth in 'what is' and the false in 'what is'. The perception of that truth is from moment to moment; and that perception is delayed through verbalization of the moment.

So transformation is not an end result. Transformation is not a result. Result implies residue, a cause and an effect. Where there is causation, there is bound to be effect. The effect is merely the result of your desire to be transformed. When you desire to be transformed you are still thinking in terms of becoming; and that which is becoming can never know that which is being. Truth is being from moment to moment; and happiness that continues is not happiness. Happiness is that state of being which is timeless. That timeless state can come only when there is a tremendous discontent - not the discontent that has found a channel through which it escapes, but the discontent that has no outlet, that has no escape, that is no longer seeking fulfilment.

Only then, in that state of supreme discontent, can reality come into being. That reality is not to be bought, to be sold, to be repeated; it cannot be caught in books. It has to be found from moment to moment, in the smile, in the tear, under the dead leaf, in the vagrant thoughts, in the fullness of love. For love is not different from truth. Love is that state in which thought process as time has completely ceased. And where love is, there is transformation. Without love, revolution has no meaning; for then revolution is merely destruction, decay, a greater and greater, ever-mounting misery. Where there is love, there is revolution, because love is transformation from moment to moment.

*J Krishnamurti*

*Copied from the Winter/Spring issue of the Krishnamurti Bulletin with the permission of Krishnamurti Australia.*

### **Issue No. 58 - November 1999**

#### **Comments on Bohm Dialogue**

It seems to me that most of David Bohm's work proceeds from an assumption that is more metaphysical than scientific. He proposed that "all that is" composes one unbroken whole in flowing motion. He called this "the holomovement." In other language he also called it the implicate order out of which unfolds the explicate orders of our everyday awareness.

Now the questions arise, What is the cause of any particular unfoldment? And What organises its content?

It seems evident that what we can know about this explicate order exists in our conscious awareness. If it exists anywhere else, we can know it only through inference. So, we have to take seriously the notion that all "things" -- which is, by the way, a word derived from an Old English root meaning literally "to negotiate" -- are simply abstractions made by thought and sustained by thought within certain limits. Thus the "things" that we know about; the "things" that we take for granted, and that includes our "selves", are products of the images and languages which order and create the meaning which -- since they too, are a part of this totality -- are, by definition, in a state of constant transformation. All this, I think, must be addressed if we claim to take David Bohm's proposals seriously.

But this is not to deny the possibility and the probity of making distinctions. If we are to be able to enquire into any domain of experience, the nature of our thought process makes it

necessary for us to create distinctions. But if we forget that these distinctions can never be more than conveniences -- valid in a limited domain where they are actually relevant -- then we are left in a seriously incoherent predicament, and I believe that this is the case more often than not for most of us.

Our distinctions and the categories and meanings derived from those distinctions have value only to the extent that they give us an opportunity to see how that part of the system works. Thus if I am in the African bush, I would do well to distinguish a movement in the grass and the flash of something yellow with black spots against the background of the surrounding flora before a leopard leaps out and eats me. But such a distinction would more than likely be pretty incoherent across a dinner table in London. This example is, perhaps, trivial and obvious but I trust it makes a more general and subtle point about the nature of thought.

Bohm made the point that thought is a material process. It functions, in other words, at the level of the material body or, in his terms, "soma". But this process also has an aspect that he termed "significance". Significance is the part of the "soma-significant" process that invokes and produces meaning. I must pause to apologise here because "meaning" is yet another term that has to be taken into account in this model. And it is important to keep in mind that it is only a model -- a collection of distinctions that allow us to predict the directions of a part of the overall flow and to perhaps participate more intelligently and coherently in that flow -- for we are clearly something more than mere flotsam or jetsam driven by an all powerful stream flowing from somewhere to somewhere else or in strange or infinite loops.

So this brings us to dialogue, a form of activity aimed at learning how to participate in this holomovement more intelligently. The methods of this sort of dialogue have already been well documented and are widely available, but the meaning of the activity is subject to constant appraisal and reappraisal. For me this aspect of dialogue is what gives it value, excitement and broader significance in the larger picture beyond the individual group that gathers to talk together. For in the idea of the implicate order there is not only the unfoldment into the explicate but a re-enfoldment back into the implicate which, in the non-local and probably non-temporal, domain of the implicate brings about changes in each succeeding unfoldment which are intrinsically unpredictable, but none-the-less highly significant, at least, in their potential.

*Donald Factor*

*(Reprinted from the Bohm Dialogue web page with the writer's permission.)*

