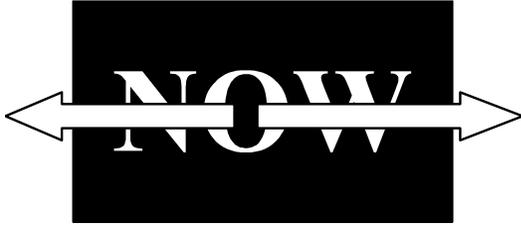


Issue 123 – February 2007



Chatswood Meetings—81 Greville Street

Dialogue – 18 March 2007, 15 April 2007

Harding – 5 May, 2 June, 4 August 2007

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Editor's Note,

There are two events coming up in March, the 'Friday Forum' at the Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society which is dedicated to the question 'What is Enlightenment', see page 10. I hope to attend these meetings and report in the April Nowletter on the answers offered by the speakers. The next Krishnamurti Seminar will be held at the mechanics Institute, 280 Pitt Street, on Saturday 10 March. (Andrew on 0412 445945 and/or Terry on 0431605374). Geoff Martin's account of fending off eagles in the December issue prompted Sam Blight, another fearless flyer, tormenter of eagles and author of the article on page 7 of this issue, to send me a photo he took when seeking out Western Australian eagles to tussle with. His photo induced a severe case of vertigo and, for your sakes, I'm glad space does not allow me to include here.

Gary Hipworth is considering whether the time is ripe for an Australian Consciousness Conference. His thoughts on this possibility are outlined on page 8 and he would welcome feedback on his proposal.

Greville Street Dialogue Meetings – Third Sunday of every month

For Melbourne and other Sydney Meetings, see page 12

Harding Meetings – usually first Saturday of every second month (See above for dates)

Douglas Harding Funeral from Anne Seward

(This letter was written by Anne Seward to distant friends unable to attend Douglas's funeral. She also wrote an obituary for the parish magazine which follows immediately after the letter. Both included here with Anne's permission. Thank you Anne.)

Dear Carl, Thank you so much for calling the other evening. I was so tired after all our travelling that I decided to leave ringing you back until yesterday. Tried you at work and at home several times. (Left an answer on your office phone but not sure it worked; something funny happened.) I also tried ringing George and Jan but they didn't answer either.

Anyway, here I am resorting to the next best thing and addressing you all together.

The funeral was absolutely beautiful I think. It was decided to hold it in the village church which seemed so much more intimate and linked with Douglas than an impersonal municipal crematorium with no local connections to the place in which he had lived for 50 odd years. Looking back from the church one looks right into the big window of course – kind of two-way Seeing. It also seemed appropriate that Douglas was being returned to the Ground via his Christian – if not Plymouth Brethren – roots.

The rector was extremely accommodating and did the absolute minimum; just let us do our own thing really. He had had the occasional pleasant meeting with Douglas over the years: Douglas called him "a sweetie" and so he turned out to be. It was hardly an orthodox service, as you can imagine, though Christian of course in a mystical kind of way!

We found his hymn book and chose the ones he had marked: wonderful words and tunes. Catherine chose some lovely Slavonic chanting for the beginning, some Mozart for the middle and stately Greek dance music (Misirlou) as the coffin left the church, all pieces Douglas had loved. It was perfect.

There were six memories/tributes, including two in French. Many French friends came of course. I suppose there were about a hundred people in all, including a few (non-Seeing) locals – 'Non-Seeing' being a ridiculous term of course but I found myself expressing some sympathy at the end of my tribute for those for whom all the Seeing references were probably not making much sense and inviting anyone who would like to know more about what Douglas's work had been about to make themselves known. Later someone from Ipswich responded to the invitation. We met up and I found her very responsive to the extent of hoping to organise a workshop.

I'm sure you would like me to forward the tributes but I'm afraid I don't have any of them and I based my own on a few notes (and consequently got somewhat lost in the void at one point!) I still haven't found out if a proposed recording of the whole thing happened. Richard, who is in charge of such things, is now in the States.

Carole Oliver and I (in charge of catering!) didn't go to the cremation after the service but everyone else did – or at least they didn't turn up at the Village Hall for the eats until an hour later, somewhat to our relief as we hadn't been able to do much preparation in the Hall itself beforehand. I suppose about 80 people came to that and then afterwards, 50 or so piled into Shollond Hill to share more memories and thoughts of Douglas. The rector popped in for a little while too. On leaving he asked if someone would write an obituary for the Parish Magazine. Am attaching my effort just for your interest and for what it's worth. Alan Rowlands has also written one for The Independent (which unfortunately insisted on sole use, or whatever the newspaper term is). Let's hope they accept it anyway. I hope to attach a copy of that too.

A lovely touch: on the Sunday the neighbours opposite (in the newish house next to Under Shollond) who have been friendly since moving in but not to the extent of coming for a meal or enquiring about the work or anything) came over apparently and said they felt they had to call to say how very moved they had been by the service. Further, they had been to church that morning and the rector had talked about Douglas and said he had never experienced such a sense of oneness and so much love in the church before. (Allow for Chinese whispers as this is secondhand!)

Catherine is now doing ok with the help of her doctor. She was totally exhausted and has little energy or resistance to the emotional stress of it all. On Monday, Douglas' birthday, we locals will be sharing a meal in celebration of his *non*-death day I reckon!

Catherine will be returning to France when things are sorted out here. We hope the tenants at the lower house will leave without a court case (they have legal protection having been there for so long) and that she will be able to sell it without a sitting tenant so that she can afford to buy some land in France and build a replica of the top

house (for which she has Douglas' plans). Her idea is that there should be enough ground on which to put tents, large and small, for gatherings. She plans to take the library intact and to dedicate the rest of her life to translating Douglas' work.

So, dear friends, soon there'll no longer be a centre at Nacton. Let's 'create' the Boundless non-locatable Centre wherever we happen to Be and See what happens.

Yeats' line: "Things fall apart, the Centre cannot hold" has always affected me profoundly: hits me in the solar plexus every time. The enormity of the implications and the sense of dread it encapsulates, so well expresses for me the state of the Westernised world today. Actually one might think we've now gone well past that point.

Well, Douglas' work gives us a new way of Be-holding/expressing the Centre which equates to a new worldview whichever way you look at it. Will humanity survive to realise the full potential of such an extraordinary development? Or will it be played out in some other universe? Whatever... I'll BE there!

Infinite love to you Carl, and to you George and Jan – and any other friends I can think of sending this to.

Anne

Douglas Edison Harding

Douglas, born in Lowestoft in 1909, was brought up by parents belonging to the Exclusive Plymouth Brethren, a fundamentalist Christian sect. He qualified in London as an architect during The Depression. In 1935 his daughter Lydia was born, and by the late 1930s he had married his first wife, Beryl, and was living in India where Julian and Simon were born. Still in India when war broke out, he was commissioned into the army as an engineer.

Before leaving England he had publicly challenged the Plymouth Brethren's claim to be sole possessors of the Truth for which he had, predictably, been excommunicated. Freed from their authority he began exploring the question which was to occupy him for the rest of his life: *Who – or What – am I?*

On returning to England after the war, the family lived in Ipswich, Douglas dedicating the next five or so years entirely to writing what became a groundbreaking work of philosophy, *The Hierarchy of Heaven & Earth: A New Diagram of Man in the Universe* (published in 1952 by Faber & Faber) in which he attempted to share the answer to the question he had posed – if 'answer' it was – by investigating in depth every discipline which appeared to have anything to say on the subject. The end result was considered by the Christian intellectual C.S. Lewis to be "a work of the highest genius".

With that under his belt, he set up in business and the couple eventually purchased land at Nacton on which he built what was then the somewhat revolutionary Shollond Hill bungalow (mentioned favourably in Nikolaus Pevsner's *Buildings of England*). This was followed later by the house called Under Shollond on the lower side of the road.

So successful was the business that he was able to retire early from architecture and devote himself once again to what most engaged him, writing for a more general readership until the end of his life. (Some of his many books have been translated into all the main European languages as well as Russian, Chinese and Japanese).

After his divorce from Beryl Douglas married Catherine in 1995. Together they travelled the world responding to the many requests for workshops resulting from his work. What he had to share depends upon audience (or reader) participation and the experiments he devised for this purpose certainly represent something new in the world, but their essential message is deeply traditional, making conscious the mystery of Being Itself celebrated by the mystics of all the great religions. "The trouble with fundamentalisms" he was wont to say, referring both to his own past and their prevalence in the world today, "is that they're not nearly fundamental enough."

Having "fought the good fight" as he put it, Douglas died peacefully a month before his 98th on 11th January, 2007. Surely the scientific spirit of observation which drove him to look for himself will continue to play its part in uniting us all by igniting the Light that lighteth everyone who comes into the world.

Anne Seward

In the Moment V

Sabrina is worrying about growing up.
 She's ten.
 Her father takes her to Newtown cafes
 for smoothies: this is one of the good things
 about growing up, he tells her
 as they sip their grown-up drinks.

Sabrina, Lewis (7) and their cousins
 Ella (7) and Lauren (5) are like brightly coloured
 fish darting around Simon, the big black porpoise
 in our little rubber pool.
 Simon says the pool is shrinking, but we think
 it's just that the children are getting bigger.

Lauren started school the other day.
 I remember when she was born 5 years ago
 and Ella visited her mother and new baby sister
 in hospital. Ella was thoughtful
 for a while and then said to her mother
 "where's its mummy?"

During the holidays the cousins
 have been playing libraries in the attic,
 with friends.
 There are posters all over the house urging grown-ups
 to borrow books and possibly win a book raffle.
 One of the prizes is "The Holly Bible".
 Sabrina (a school library monitor) wears a black
 velvet gown and big glasses to show that she's in charge.
 Lewis and Lauren frequently forsake the strict library
 environment to play monsters in the pool.

Ella has written a song, words and music.
 She sings it to us: "I let the wind guide me,
 I feel it in my face. The leaves are swirling around.
 I let the wind guide me, it shows me my path.
 The wind is a treasure to us.
 I let the wind guide me."
 She is cross when Lauren won't sing it with her,
 even though they have rehearsed it together.

Simon chases them all around the pool,
 eating their feet for his supper,
 as monsters do.

Margot Mann

Tantra and Headlessness: edited and expanded discussion notes from Shane Keher

(Shane gave the following talk to the Harding meeting on 3 Feb., and prepared these notes for those who could not attend the meeting and for this issue of the Nowletter. Ed.)

The aim of the discussion was to relate Tantric theory & practice to Headlessness. Similar in intent to Douglas's relating Zen Buddhism to Headlessness, and his references to Mystical Christianity in living a surrendered life.

Theme: does the Tantric view have anything to offer us, in enriching our understanding of headlessness, or deepening the sense of Presence, or understanding Headlessness in relation to the Great Traditions?

There are some problems in discussing Tantra in a short discussion. Tantra is a huge field, ranging from primitive magic and spells to refined nondual spiritual practice. There is both Buddhist and Hindu Tantra, and many variants and traditions of Tantra within both. I focused on the Kashmiri Shaivite School of Hindu Tantra, most active from the 6th to the 13th CE. Work mentioned in the discussion: the Vijnana Bhairava by Jaideva Singh, Consciousness is Everything by Swami Shankarananda, The Doctrine of Vibration by Mark Dyckowski, and The Marriage of Shiva & Shakti by Jnaneshwar (or Jnanadeva). It needs to be kept in mind that elements of Tantra have penetrated most forms of Hinduism. We focused in our short discussion on similarities in the **practice** of Tantric Shaivite yoga and Headlessness, in particular the "**Dharanas**" (centring exercises – similar to the Headless experiments), from the Vijnana Bhairava. Another problem in talking about Tantra is that it is sensationalised and somewhat cheapened in the modern western scene, e.g.: Tantric Sex Getaways for couples, and so on. The last problem is that the little non sexual Tantra which is known about, is generally obscure or superstitious (e.g.: Tantric bracelets to counter harmful moon influences).

It's important to have a basic understanding of the Tantric view of the world in orienting to Tantric practice. In Tantric philosophy, the world is not an obstruction to the divine or illusion covering it, but rather the expression or outpouring of Being, God or Presence. Therefore, the world and us are essentially non-different from the Source. Our thoughts, feelings, even our blocks, are therefore doorways to Being or expressions of God. There is nothing to be gotten rid of. For example: thoughts, ego and the world of thought are generally considered "less than" or "gross" in many forms of spiritual practice. In Tantra, the thoughts that arise in meditation are not an obstruction, but the bubbling of consciousness – "your thoughts are God's thoughts", as Anasuya Devi puts it. Paradoxically, this view of thought doesn't lead to indulgence – mental stillness and quiet is the result of contemplating thought, sensation and emotion as simply the bubbling away of Consciousness. In Tantric practice, our ordinary feelings and perceptions are the tools of spiritual practice.

I first heard of Tantra in the early 1980's, attending a class on the Dharanas of the Vijnana Bhairava with Swami Shankarananda. In a class devoted to experiencing "Shiva Consciousness", he drew attention to what he saw as a strong correlation between the Dharanas and the work of Douglas Harding. He considered Douglas's experiments as very similar to the Dharanas, and that the awareness of Shiva is identical to Capacitie, Headlessness, Silent Awareness. "Shiva" is simple awareness, unbounded awareness without "I". Shankarananda described Douglas's work, and then Dharana 62, in which the yogi contemplates that the entire visible universe is his head, or that the visible universe is more accurately the yogi's head (rather than the knob above his neck!). In other words: the yogi has no head, or his head is all that appears, and the space for that appearing.

The other side of Shiva in Tantra is Shakti. The simplest definitions of each term is that Shiva (male), is bare awareness, and Shakti (female) is all-that-appears in Shiva. Shakti is the "I" of Shiva, the "pride of Lord Shiva" as a scripture puts it. Without an I, nothing can come into existence. Shakti is not lower or inferior than Shiva in the highest Tantra: it's understood that without Shakti, Shiva literally has no existence. Shiva can only be known by Shakti. It's as if the manifestation is necessary for God to know her/his existence. Shiva and Shakti are completely interdependent – the eternal, inseparable couple.

Shankarananda described how the "Bhairavi mudra", (translation: "the position/posture of the Goddess". The Goddess always perceives the world from her source, Shiva), is identical to Douglas's Two-Way Looking – looking at the world, objects, thoughts while simultaneously noticing the Capacitie from which they are seen. Bhairavi Mudra, like Douglas's two-way looking, are foundation attitudes for random practice throughout one's day. The point of them is the continuous noticing that object is not different from subject, that the object arises IN awareness, and there isn't some "meatball" or ego-object pretending to be the seer. Some descriptions of variants of Bhairavi Mudra:

Dharana 57 – "having fixed his gaze without blinking on a gross object, and directing attention inward, the aspirant recognises the state of Shiva without delay";

From the "Spanda Nirnaya": "with one's aim inside while gazing outside, eyes neither opening nor closing – this is Bhairavi Mudra...";

From the “Kaksastotra”: “if you project the vision and all the other senses simultaneously everywhere onto their respective objects by the powers of awareness, while remaining firmly established in the centre like a pillar of gold, you will shine as the One, the foundation of the universe”;

From “Spanda Nirnaya”: **“by penetrating into Bhairavi Mudra, the yogi observes the vast totality of beings rising from, and dissolving into, the Sky of Consciousness, like a series of reflections appearing and disappearing inside a mirror.”**

We practiced the Closed Eyes and two-way-looking experiments, and then experientially bought in some of the elements of the quotes above. We also considered questions such as: is any object separate from Capacitie or Shiva? Is ego, thought, identification and so on inside or outside Capacitie? In actuality, is it possible to “lose” Capacitie, when identification returns ?

There is a lot of acrimonious argument in the modern spiritual scene between those who proclaim direct or indirect paths to awakening; those who believe in practice, and those who see practice as an obstruction; arguments about whether the world is “real” or otherwise, and so on. The inclusive approach of Tantra may offer some points on how to bridge such conflicts. In Tantric Shaivism, practice is notionally divided into four “upayas” or “modes of practice”:

- Anupaya; which literally means “no practice”, in which there is a sudden and final awakening to the always and already nature of imminent divinity. At this level, “liberation and ignorance are but fairytales told to children” (from the conclusion of the Vijnana Bhairava);
- Iccha upaya; in which the aspirant is already established in nondual understanding, and the “practice” is a bare noticing, e.g. the space between the breaths, the space between any two words, noticing that whatever happens is already and always the Will of Shiva (which is pretty much what Douglas sees as the life of surrender);
- Shakta upaya; in which the aspirant has some access to nondual understanding, but then apparently loses it. Practices include Bhairavi Mudra, Self Inquiry, e.g., from the Vijnana Bhairava: “when activity, desire, identification and thought have not arisen in me, what am I in that state?”, which is very similar to the Closed Eyes and other experiments;
- Anava Upaya; in which the aspirant has a strong sense of duality, and active effort and work is called for, e.g.: devotional prayer, breath control, concentration practice.

There is little sense in the Tantric texts that some modes or upayas are “higher” or “lower” than others, because all apparent duality is divinely “willed”. Duality is part of the sport of the divine. Someone who “gets it” is not superior or more worthy than someone who doesn’t. So, on one hand some aspirants go from one apparent level to another, and on the other some aspirants merge into the divine through only one Upaya. An example is the poet saint Tukaram, who performed dualistic worship of Krishna. After awakening he exclaims in a poem: “I pined and searched for you Krishna, you trickster, and now I find that there is only you everywhere.” Contrast the inclusiveness of Tantra to the virtually abusive tone directed at anybody who doesn’t agree with the “enlightened” correspondent, found in most internet nonduality groups, and a surprising number of teachers.....

Many of the Dharanas of the Vijnana Bhairava use everyday sensations and experiences as “doorways” or openings into Capacitie, Awareness. A few examples:

Dharana 49: “when one experiences the expanding joy arising from the pleasure of eating and drinking, one should meditate on the perfect condition of this joy, then there will be supreme delight”;

Dharana 93: “at the commencement and end of sneeze, in terror, in sorrow, of deep sighs, of curiosity, of hunger – at the commencement and end of these is the state of Brahman”.

And not to overlook sex completely, Dharana 46: “...the final delight at orgasm is the delight of Brahman. This delight is, in reality, that of one’s own self”;

The subtle difference between these dharanas and the usual relationship with feeling and perception, is that instead of associating joy, pleasure, fear etc with food, sex and so on – the yogi focuses on the core of the perception or feeling itself. What occurs is that the feeling or perception will then naturally merge into Capacitie.

Shane Keher

The Headless Way Out of Stage Fright from Sam Blight

I first encountered headlessness about a year and half ago with the capable help of Richard Lang. In my youth I remember reading an excerpt from Douglas Harding's beautiful "On Having No Head" in an anthology of articles about self-reference. I noticed at the time that what he said about my human trunk terminating upwards into infinite space filled with the universe was actually true, but as I was chasing the next "high" at the time rather than being particularly interested in the truth of my Being, the significance of what I had noticed was largely lost on me. It just seemed to be too ordinary and obvious and I was looking for something exotic, hard to reach and probably Indian.

When Richard visited us here in Western Australia recently for the first time I was initially sceptical about the sheer simplicity of the approach he was advocating until, that is, I performed the first of the Harding Experiments in a group situation. This time the light went on and has pretty much stayed on since with varying degrees of engagement and intensity. My recognition of its significance was this time probably facilitated by the preceding (many) years of groping about for the "switch" with the help of whatever substances, meditation techniques, gurus and spiritual teachers seemed promising. This phase was not without tremendous revelations of course, for which I remain eternally grateful and I wouldn't change a thing with respect to it. It's just that whatever expanded consciousness I seemed to discover seemed fleeting and required varying degrees of effort and self manipulation, albeit at times of a very subtle nature. The bottom line was that these no doubt real exalted states never seemed to be readily accessible when I actually could have used them most – say, during an argument with my wife or a trying situation at work.

The simple and instantaneous recovery and practice of the First Person view on the other hand, continues to be a wonderful, transformative adventure, affecting all aspects of my "everyday" life in surprising and unexpected ways. It is noticed perhaps most dramatically though, and from a practical standpoint in the field of public performance. I'm a passionate amateur (more or less) guitarist and occasionally perform to large crowds. Historically this has involved a high degree of anxiety accompanied by a range of physiological symptoms less than conducive to producing the best possible performance, including feelings of breathlessness, stiffness, sweating and dizziness. As a guitarist, the most distressing sensation was of having had my fingers replaced temporarily by what felt like sausages. I'm sure similar symptoms are familiar to most performers both professional and amateur and I'm aware that stage fright has ended more than one promising concert career. Thespians too are prone to this curse, most famously in recent years British actor Stephen Fry who ran off into hiding during the run of a play in which he had a major role, so dire did the effects of stage fright become for him personally.

Over time I developed strategies for coping with the problem as most performers no doubt do, but it always lurked in the wings and greatly reduced the pleasure I took in performing to large audiences. A few months after losing my head (or rather noticing that it had never actually been there), I accepted an invitation to provide the supporting act for my professional musician friend Kavisha Mazzella who was giving a charity concert. At the time I had a fair bit of new material I'd written and was keen to try it out on a live audience so my enthusiasm outweighed the terrors I could expect to encounter at showtime.

It wasn't until I was standing in the wings on the big night, being introduced by the show's compere that I was astonished to notice a complete absence of stage fright. Nor, even more surprisingly, did this realization proceed to trigger it. Instead I became aware that the naturally heightened energy in the situation was helping me to notice the Void from which I was operating. As I walked onto stage (or more properly, as I walked the stage into me) the usual dread and anxiety was replaced by a joyous curiosity about what it was going to be like to perform on stage as the First Person. I sat down, plugged in the instrument and began to play as effortlessly and with as much enjoyment and precision as if I'd been alone in my living room at home, if not more. Somehow the arms and hands emerging from the Void in the foreground knew what to do and just got on with it, free of any interference from an anxious self. If anything, the attention of the large crowd seem to draw out the best playing I'd ever managed. The relaxed joy I was feeling seemed to be infectious too and within a few bars I could feel that the audience was on side and having a good time. At the end of the first tune there was enthusiastic applause. My usual slightly nervous and stilted stage manner was replaced by an easy acceptance of the crowd and amusing things to say seemed to emerge spontaneously to enliven the breaks between pieces. All the while I experienced the audience, individually and severally as being held safely and lovingly within me. Quite a revelation really.

And nor was it a one-off. In other potentially "stage frightening" situations since then, the Seeing of Who I really am has continued to bestow immunity from my erstwhile internal freeze-up. The only thing more terrifying perhaps than a live performance (which is after all mercifully fleeting) is a recording session in which the shortcomings of the performance are cruelly preserved for posterity. The recording of my most recent album proceeded in stark contrast to that of the previous ones. The latter seemed to require endless "takes" conducted in a tense and demanding atmosphere, leaving me drained and more or less disheartened at the results. While

technically of a reasonably high standard, they nevertheless seemed to me, despite (or perhaps because of) the heavy cost in effort and anxiety, not to really capture the essence of what I was attempting to express.

In contrast, the recording of the most recent collection of pieces was a much more relaxed affair which started as a day devoted to exploring the best way to record the instrument, with a view to getting three or four tracks “in the can” if we were lucky. Instead take after take went smoothly and expressively as I allowed the Void to do the heavy lifting. We got the entire album of fourteen pieces in a single day’s recording and for the first time I’ve been pretty happy with the result. The recording engineer found it particularly amazing and is still dining out on the experience.

It’s come to me since that all anxiety is in a sense “performance anxiety”. For a third person a poor performance in any situation can be expected to lead to a kind diminishment or death of self. Performers even talk about “dying” on stage. It’s as if our entirely proper instinct for physical self preservation comes inappropriately and devastatingly into play when we mistake what we look like as a third person for what we really are. Remembering the First Person seems to put things to rights instantly and without recourse to any other internal or external antics.

Sam Blight www.samblightmusic.com

Ideas for ‘Australian Consciousness Conference’ from Gary Hipworth

Many people over thousands of years, and in modern times have been calling for an inner transformation of the human mind as they believe that this is the only thing that can save our species from self-destructing. I am a great advocate of honest and constructive feedback for learning and building greater awareness of where one might be in the journey of life. I don’t believe we have very good feedback in the consciousness movement, if indeed there is such a movement. A national conference that brings together people who are vitally interested in this subject could be very beneficial for ‘closing the loop’ and getting feedback on how individuals and groups are faring. For example, some of these questions spring to mind:

- How do we know if inner transformation is the right solution to the human condition, with our propensity for violence and greed? Is it working? For whom?
- What are the experiences of individuals who are on this journey of self-exploration? Are they getting somewhere? Is it working in their own relationships and their own lives? Are they happier? What are the costs?
- Can we scientifically show a direct link between the breaking down of our global environment and human behaviour related to ordinary human consciousness? It is timely because the media and the politicians and other groups and individuals are now acknowledging the critical part played by humans in destructive climate change. However, I don’t see much talk about what is causing this human behaviour!
- Is there a scientific way to establish ‘once and for all’ the nature of the self/ ego/ soul?
- What is ordinary consciousness? What is transpersonal consciousness? • Why do so many people appear to follow ‘gurus’, and have great difficulty being their own light and guru?
- What is ‘conditioning’ and what is an idea or concept? The conference should be open to anyone passionately interested in this topic, and willing to speak or submit a paper, not just the high flyers in the consciousness movement. The venue/ timing/ length of conference are details that can be agreed and finalized once/ if there is sufficient interest in holding the conference.

Kind regards *Gary Hipworth*

(I’d be interested to hear your views on this suggestion and I’ll be talking to the various groups around us here in Sydney. If there is sufficient interest we could work out a proposal and target date. Ed.)

Interesting Reading from Richard and Maria Maguire

We found this article "View from the Future" by Rebecca Solnit in The Nation magazine, which we felt was a great way to start 2007. It's very positive, while aware of the challenges we face. It basically takes a look at what things could look like in 2025 if certain trends continue and others are shifted, and what it might take to do both, including meeting some crises. It was published in at the end of last year. If you are not familiar with The Nation, it's a journal with a long track record of progressive reporting and opinion and well worth looking at. www.thenation.com Hope you enjoy it. You might also like to take a look at The Great Transition on www.gtinitiative which includes a lot of collaborative thinking on possible futures backed up by computer modelling.

Best wishes, Richard and Maria

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Transforming individuals and organizations toward a future

Empiricising the Mystical from Alan Mann

This title is drawn from a talk by Azizan Baharuddin at the June 2005 Grafton Festival. I take it to mean exactly what Gebser calls 'concretization of the spiritual'. It made a big impression on me as it encapsulated my interests and activities; everything that I had been trying to do without having been fully aware of what I was up to. The mystical has been regarded as the province of a few exceptional souls who, through hard spiritual labour, open up to what is referred to as enlightenment. I have been interested in a particular representative of the mystical tradition, Thomas Traherne, whose declared aim was to persuade us to 'enjoy the world aright' as a result of awakening to what we really are. He regarded this neglected aspect of our being as our birthright and its recovery the absolute priority; the de-mystification of the mystical. This interest eventually led me to David Bohm and a long-term commitment to Dialogue as a means of loosening the tight grip that thought has upon our world view, thereby entrenching that deep commitment to identification with the past and consequent denial of the hereness of being. I found the work of Douglas Harding the most helpful in breaking that stranglehold. Recently, the Cohen-Wilber exchanges have stimulated interest in the possibility of collective enlightenment and the significance of an evolutionary approach to consciousness. This is an interesting parallel to the work of George Schloss who has charted the evolution of consciousness in terms of western/eastern thought – as explained in his letters on the capacities website and summarized in the Gebser-Schloss chart (Nowletter 104 – Dec 2004).

Cohen's ideas about objective measurement of the effects of evolution beyond ego (see article below) may seem crazy at first sight, but why not? See, for example Sam Blight's article on page 7. One of the questions we are always asking ourselves in dialogue is 'does it work?'. We have never been able to answer, but maybe we haven't discovered what that answer might look like, or how to go about testing the process. Coincidentally, Gary Hipworth makes the same point in his letter (previous page). Recent emails on this question included one from Brian Kay in which he said: *There is a progressive movement, inward (quantum physics) and outward (cosmology), in the sciences but it does not go far enough it requires a self-conscious human being to finish the journey as first person, and tell the scientist what it's like centrally as Subject not Object - the view from within. Traditionally, this has been the province of the mystic - I hope to see this change in the not so distant future, and that SELF-Consciousness becomes the NORMAL *mature* stage of adulthood in human beings vs. adult self-consciousness.*

Perhaps Gary's plan for an Australian conference, where we could share our ideas about and experiences of this subject, might have arrived at the right time.

Alan Mann

Krishnamurti Pittwater Gathering – May 2007

When: Friday 11th May after 12pm till 3.00pm Sunday 13 th May 2007

Where: Pittwater Youth Hostel overlooking Morning Bay on Pittwater's western shore. Arrive by Ferry/water taxi from Church Point to Hall's Wharf. Last Ferry 6.15 pm after this a water taxi may be available.

Theme: What is Preventing Us Changing?

What to Bring: Bed sheets, pillow cases, and towels. Other bedding provided. For further information: Leon Horsnell Phone 02 623 16738 or 0418 627 196 Email: [leonh\(o\)pcuq.org.au](mailto:leonh(o)pcuq.org.au) Or Terry O'Brien Phone 0431 605 374 Email: [terryobrien\(d\)optusnet.com.au](mailto:terryobrien(d)optusnet.com.au) Or Geetha Waters Email: cjwaters@optusnet.com.au

<http://www.krishnamurtiaustralia.org/>

WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT?

A series of 5 Friday evening sessions throughout March, exploring this question.

March 2 Isira Sananda – March 9 Bernie Prior – March 16 Dr Tim Mansfield – March 23 Alex Goncalves – March 30 Discussion forum

All Friday Forum Sessions are from 7.00 to 8.30pm
Contribution toward Expenses: Non-Members \$7, Concession \$3

At the Theosophical Society 484 Kent Street, near cnr. Bathurst Street, Sydney 2000,
Tel: 02-9267 6955

For further information contact:

Graeme Burn <graeme51@gmail.com> 0416 177 012
Alex Goncalves <uprising@bigpond.com.au> 0418 646 159

Session presenters:

Isira Sananda – Every great sage has echoed and reflected a radiant truth throughout the ages: a jewel that is said to be waiting within us all – an infinite presence of peace and joyous freedom. That truth - this peace and freedom - is already here. It is the reality of who we really are. And in order to discover, to experience this reality, we have to be willing to let go of our concept of reality. <http://www.isira.com>

Bernie Prior – A power that beckons you to be new, that calls you to be new, that calls you to dare to live, to dare to be, to dare to live on the edge of life, in the unknown, because really that's what you are, you are totally unknowable. <http://www.bernieprior.org>

Dr Tim Mansfield – Sydney Integral Tim is one of the core members of 'Sydney Integral', a community network working together to explore how Ken Wilber's 'Integral Framework' can be deeply understood, embodied - and lived. Wilber's work is inspired by many wisdom traditions, from Vajrayana Buddhism and Vedanta in the East, to shamanic & contemplative traditions in the West. <http://www.kenwilber.com/home/landing/index.html>

Alex Goncalves – Alex is a member of a Sydney community, committed to practicing a new way of living. He has recently presented workshops on Evolutionary Enlightenment based on Andrew Cohen's teaching that unites the Eastern concept of enlightenment with the Western passion for innovation and change
<http://www.andrewcohen.org>

The series concludes with the open discussion forum on March 30th

Making Enlightenment Meaningful

The beginning of a new phase in my teachings...My latest passion-what I not-so-humbly like to call the third significant phase in the evolution of my teaching-is what I have been referring to as the integral manifestation of enlightenment. I've borrowed the term "integral," used by my friend Ken Wilber and many others back to the great Sri Aurobindo, because there is simply no other word that is able to capture the four-dimensional, multileveled expression of enlightenment that I am striving to make manifest. I've just come out of an intensive weekend retreat with my core group of students from around the world, in which I began to share with them this emerging edge of my own thinking,

The truth is, I have been busy almost since the day I started teaching with the very important question: What is the relationship between higher states of consciousness and human transformation? Or, to put it more bluntly: What is the relationship between enlightenment and human behavior? It seems that over the last decade or two, enlightenment has commonly been reduced to being nothing more or less than a higher state experience, which is ultimately not that useful when it comes to the nuts-and-bolts reality of our ever more complex human lives. For a long time, I've been defining enlightenment as the experience of consciousness beyond ego, and when we put the notion of enlightenment in an evolutionary context (which was the second phase of my teaching), the question becomes, what does it actually look like when real human beings evolve beyond ego and continue to develop, in our world, in that new enlightened context, together?

For many years now I have been speaking about the extraordinary potential that emerges when the manifest expression of enlightened consciousness as the creative impulse or Authentic Self emerges in a shared, intersubjective context. That potential, simply defined, is an egoless field in which apparently separate individuals meet in an enlightened state, in full possession of their creative faculties and autonomy while temporarily freed from the hindrance of self-consciousness and egoic boundaries. The ecstatic and self-liberating nature of the experience of meeting another beyond ego is extraordinary in and of itself. But what has always captivated me is the creative potential inherent in such an event. As of late, I've begun to not only realize but attempt to define what the fruits of intersubjective enlightenment can actually be – in all four quadrants.

It was a few weeks ago that this all started to come together in my mind's eye. We have been in the midst of a major restructuring of our entire organization as a result of finding ourselves in quite a financial crisis, and I remember being struck that day when our uncompromising consultant (who had been kicking our spiritual butts real good for months and telling us in no uncertain terms to grow up and join the real world) declared that in her thirty years of experience, she had never seen any organization turn things around and achieve results so quickly. She had never seen individuals work together with this level of commitment, autonomy, and responsibility. It was obvious to me that this was happening only because of the intensive and often challenging spiritual work and practice we have been doing together for such a long time. And this got me thinking more deeply and comprehensively about my passionate conviction that higher state experiences, if they are to mean anything at all, must translate into significant changes in all the important domains of human life.

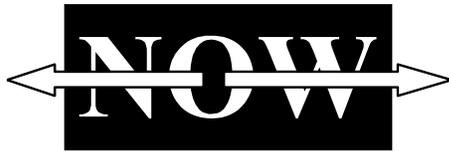
I even got very excited about the possibility of developing and publishing measurable, objective criteria for demonstrating the results of evolution beyond ego, both individual and collective, and how it directly relates to the way in which we are actually living. For example, if we had evolved beyond ego to a significant degree, how would that be reflected in our personal relationships – with our sexual partners, with our friends, with our children, with our bosses, with our colleagues? In what way would it be demonstrated in our organizations and our social structures? How would it affect our relationship to our work, our creative potential, our capacity for leadership and collaboration? What impact would it have on our relationship to our own bodies – our health and fitness? The list could go on and on, and the implications are profound. Of course, there have always been spiritual teachers talking about many of these things as a means to develop and attain higher potentials, but what I'm talking about is something different. I'm talking about using these concrete examples as windows through which to discern and dare I say judge the degree of an individual's or a collective's actual attainment, in such a way that has the potential for making the usually intangible, inner, subjective experience of enlightenment or consciousness beyond ego meaningful for our own times.

For a long time I've been instinctively attempting (often in the face of great resistance) to hold my students to a standard in all these areas of life that reflects the degree of revelation that they have actually experienced. But this is the first time I've tried to make it concrete in such a way that objective observers would be able to appreciate. I'm sure the rest of my life will be dedicated largely to this endeavor, together with others who are committed to making enlightenment really mean something in the twenty-first century!

Andrew Cohen

Regular Dialogue Meetings				
LOCATION	DAY	MEETING PLACE	TIME & CONTACT	Phone Nos.
Sydney City	Third Saturday	Blavatsky Lodge of the Theosophical Society - Level 2, 484 Kent St., City	2.30pm Terry O'Brien	0431605374
Chatswood	Third Sunday	81 Greville St. (off Fullers Rd) Chatswood	10.30 am Alan & Margot Mann	02 9419 7394
Nowra	Second Saturday	Grant's Restaurant	3.30 pm –Riche du Plessis	4423 4774
Melbourne	Third Saturday	Bells Hotel, 157 Moray Street Sth Melbourne	11am-1pm Gary Hipworth	0416 121 142

These are all 'open', that is, everybody is welcome. If it is your first meeting, I suggest you ring and confirm time, etc.



Nowletter 123 February 2007
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 **Friday Forum for March—What is Enlightenment**

Mountain Heart Retreat – Meditation retreats of two or four days offered in a peaceful bush valley in the southern tablelands close to Braidwood, NSW. Phone Maria Bakas on 02 4842 8122 or 0421 5476 65

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

Krishnamurti Fellowship – Every Monday 6.30pm at Blavatsky Lodge see address above.

Melbourne. First Sunday, 2 to 5pm, Room MR B311 Level 3, CAE Building, 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