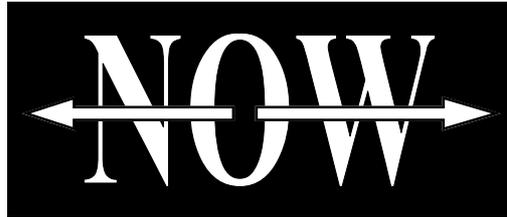


Greville Street
 Meetings
 21 Sept 97
 19 Oct 97



Issue No. 37
 September 97

***I was thinking today, - as I noticed, that the “Supernatural,”
 was only the Natural, disclosed -.....***

extract from Emily Dickinson’s letters (L280) courtesy Joan Kirkby

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Editor's Note

During the weeks since the last issue I have received more letters on the matter of the “Pearl in the Mouth” which are included in the first section of this edition. The Dialogue movement continues to move and Terry O’Brien and Barry Hora are running or coordinating about eight meetings between them. There are signs of Dialogue springing up outside the familiar framework. Terry is planning a newsletter which will cover the Dialogue scene in detail but I will continue to include some comment on the lines of what appears as section two of this issue. I have finally taken the leap into Headless workshops and there is a report on the first held at Greville St on the 30th August. You will recall my appeals for the borrower of Cherith Adams dissertation to own up. I am ashamed to admit that it was sitting like the secret letter on my mantelpiece all the time. It is, therefore, now available for loan. It is entitled “Who am I? A study of the impact of long term participation in a Dialogue group on members’ belief in, or sense of individuality.” There will be more mistakes than usual in this edition as the proof reader is away on a fact finding mission in North America and returns on the morning of the October meeting. Andrew Cohen is here this month, details on back page.

The NOWletter is an occasional paper which appears whenever there is sufficient material from readers and other sources to justify a mailing. (Between 8 & 12 issues every year)

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The additional item on your address label shows whether your subscription is paid up for the current period and the month in which it is due to expire, i.e., ‘May 98’. If your subscription has already expired you will see the word ‘DUE’. After sending a number of issues out with ‘DUE’ on the label and getting no response by way of a subscription I take it as a signal that the subscriber wants me to stop.

Barry Hora Letter

The June article in the NOWletter under the heading of the "Pearl in the Mouth of the Swine" holds very little interest for me as far as the content is concerned. After reading the article by Margot and Alan I wondered about, and questioned my disinterest for I assumed that this topic would be a Hot Potato even amongst friends.

So I attended the June Greville Street dialogue meeting with an agenda. My agenda was to instigate a group discussion about the "Pearl in the Mouth of the Swine" and, for my own self-interest, find out if I had a hidden investment in that particular topic.

The dialogue meeting was a delightful meditative encounter even though the topic still held no interest for me. However, the on going developments arising from the content, including the lines I write here, revealed my own assumptions at work. It is the process that is important to me.

Reading this months (July) NOWletter, the response articles to Margot and Alan's PEARLS seem to me to be coming from very strongly held beliefs / assumptions (vested interests) and brought to mind the other famous quote about pearls and swine from "The Sermon on the Mount" :-

"Don't give to dogs what is holy, and don't throw your pearls to the swine. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, then turn and attack you."

Matthew 7, v6

The responses exposed in me and reinforced my beliefs in the importance of "The Freedom of Questioning" and my investment in that belief.

It is all well and good for me standing behind what I feel is a righteous statement about the freedom of questioning, which is only another belief. In realizing my beliefs I could see further and finding that my memories (thought) hold beliefs and that my memory is what I have a vested interest in.

Who I Am has evolved from two limiting sources, one is learnt knowledge and the other is experience. Learnt knowledge downgrades, and inhibits my experience of being in the NOW, so I find myself sustaining my knowledge base (memory) rather than the "freedom of questioning" in the spirit of Socrates' translated statement:-

"Philosophy is a matter of public debate or it is nothing."

(from John Ralston Saul's book The Unconscious Civilization.)

Therefore my vested interest MEMORY is determined to obscure my present awareness and the living enquiry.

Barry

Letter from Terry O'Brien

I love Krishnamurti though I never knew, saw or even

heard of him till long after his death. I love the gentleness that evident in this nature, the bright compassionate eyes, the shy cheerfulness, his characteristic gestures and all that revealed him as a fairly ordinary though deeply caring man.

On the other hand I was suspicious about a number of contradictions that became apparent in his 'teachings', e.g. denying on one occasion that they were teachings and he was the world teacher, then on another occasion (according to reports) making statements about the world teacher and that the teachings must not be interpreted etc.

There were many claims that were at other times disclaimed, leaving a healthy sceptic somewhat puzzled as to whether he was fair dinkum or not. Concealing a 25 year relationship with another man's wife was an obvious misrepresentation, not because he had a relationship, but simply because he did conceal it (until disclosing at a very late stage to his trustees).

So he obviously had quite a healthy virile ego, complete with a sneaky shadowy side. Before anything else, he was a man undergoing the process and experience of being human.

I can easily overlook that though as I can empathise with the lunacy he was subjected to as a child, and the complexity of psychological scars that no doubt affected him (however much he claimed not to have a memory, though yet another contradiction revealed a selective memory to suit occasions). Radha Rajagopal suggested he was a pathological liar and I suspect to some extent he was.

But regardless of his good, bad and ugly sides, I love him just the same. I can relate to a man with flaws, whereas the man who claims none is only simplifying a dream.

The thing about Krishnamurti for me that endures beyond the personality and the teachings, is that much of what he said that I read or heard him say resonated deeply within me. It stirred me to action and alerted me to be aware. His directions empowered me with a universal authority beyond the limitation of ego. He freed me to be myself, to make my mistakes honestly and to learn from them, and I feel that he did too. In that way he was consistent with the teachings and grew into a man humble enough to declare - 'Don't get caught up with the personality of the speaker, he's not worth it!'

Terry

Katie Mann Letter

I enjoyed reading the NOW Newsletter, issue no. 36, and found the discussion on the marriage (or not) of words and actions very interesting.

Teachers/gurus are certainly not perfect, as they are humans like you and I. For this reason I do not see them as purely 'instruments'. They are just as responsible for their actions as we are - and the only reason they may be

more responsible is simply because of the status we have given them regarding their 'words' and their 'teacher' role.

I do not regard K as merely an 'instrument' - we could create all sorts of ogres/fascists by this approach - but a wise human who is responsible for supporting his 'words' with his behaviour. How else can we be satisfied with the words of our teacher?

Do we feel threatened if our teacher (with whose beliefs we may strongly identify) is questioned? The healthy process of Dialogue continues, and to question the behaviour of someone like K seems obvious and essential. This neither detracts from what anyone has learnt or 'gained' from their association with this person nor devalues the positive aspects of the teachings, it merely questions the authenticity of someone who has gained great status, power and possibly wealth from their teachings.

Surely a 'healthy' belief system should be open to (and in fact welcome) change and challenges, and even withstand the possible denunciation of the teacher who may have assisted the journey towards understanding. If we truly believe that the person is merely a teaching instrument and not to be trusted (K's suggestion about himself) then what we have learnt can remain unscathed.)

A human is a combination of what they say and how they act. Who is to judge which aspect of the human is more instructive. Maybe the more effective 'gurus' are those that live their lives according to their belief system, without needing to articulate them.

I like a good theory as much as the next person - and like discussing them even more. But I do not believe that 'living' and understanding 'living' is purely theoretical or conceptual. The way we interact with our world is paramount to consolidating and understanding our belief system. We make teachers/gurus accountable for their theories (by either supporting them or not), so why not their actions?

The assumption that a teacher is what s/he says not what s/he does concerns me - the assumption being that only real learning happens via words/theory. Surely the most effective lesson (for me, the only lesson) is when words and actions work together

I expect of my teacher/guru what I expect of you or me. Under what rationale can we allow teachers/gurus to NOT be accountable for their actions - unless of course we elevate them to non-human level. It may allow us to formulate our theories with less distractions, but in the long run I think we may actually miss a large and important slice of the 'understanding curve'."

Katie

Letter from Chris Parish

Dear Alan,
Thank you for the thought provoking piece from you and Margot in the June "NOW" which has generated

such a lot of letters. I've been fascinated by all these responses and also have wondered about the strength of feeling behind them.

It seems to me that your conviction that a spiritual teacher or mentor should live a life in accordance with what they teach, is of great importance and is really a matter of common sense. All throughout history, great spiritual figures have made a transformative impact on fellow human beings purely by their example- not just by their words but by the total expression of their lives. It is the very fact that their lives and what they teach, have become indistinguishable, which gave their message such power. That is why they were naturally revolutionary figures. It can only be confusing and potentially disillusioning when a teacher acts in ways which are clearly opposite to the message he or she propounds. Of course, as we all know, this is unfortunately common among spiritual figures, at least in today's spiritual scene. This tends to make people cynical about the possibility of radical transformation.

For someone to expect that teacher and teaching be of the same cloth is reasonable and rational and to my mind does not reflect a limitation imposed by that person's own conditioning, or suggest any moralistic or judgmental prejudice on their part.

In any other endeavour, it is fair enough that someone's life does not have to match up and be whole eg. a great musician who may inspire us with transcendental notes may be privately a small minded, selfish individual. Or in the example you quote, it is true that "even if Einstein was a complete psychotic, E still equals mc2 ". But in the spiritual arena, this isn't applicable. Spiritual teachings are about human beings. They don't exist in abstract and in the end only have real value if acted upon by human beings and manifested in time and space. Becoming enlightened/ realised/abiding in thenatural state, could only ultimately have to do with a human being becoming whole - becoming an expression of something other than the usual condition of self interest and self importance. If people don't actually transform, what, in the end, would be the use of teachings?

Interestingly, the Buddha is much quoted as saying " be a light unto oneself ", but it is often overlooked that the pillars of his Dharma are the Triple Gem - teacher, teaching and community - and these are meant to be inseparable.

Thank you, Alan and Margot for having the courage to broach such a harged and yet such a vital subject. Keep up the good work ! With best wishes

Chris

FACE (Friends of Andrew Cohen Centre) Sydney

The Vision of Dialogue

At the July meeting we talked about meaning and the possibility of shared meaning. We wandered and there was even a suggestion that there is no such thing as meaning. I subsequently listened to

a tape on the way up to Glen Davis from which I extracted the following notes.

Editor

(From David Bohm's talk at Oak Grove School - Sunday Dec 2 1990)

Thought is more cultural and social than individual.

Dialogue

dia = through

logos = word or meaning

Picture meaning as flowing through people - what is between us.

If you have two people you may say there are two points connected by a dotted line showing their relationship or the other view is a solid line ending in two points. The relationship is the main thing and the people are the extremes of it.

Just as thought separates the process, the self, into into the subject and the object, the observer and the observed, when we are really in communication (communion) a oneness arises between people as much as inside the person.

The word dialogue is not commonly used in this sense but is usually used to describe what is better described as negotiation or discussion.

What does it mean to really communicate?

Culture the 'shared meaning' which holds a society or group together. The need is to come upon the meaning which is common. Assumptions act as reflexes. They are very powerful because they are assumptions of necessity. powerful because they are collective; they form the basis of our culture.

Watching and staying with the movement, for example, of anger we see that this watching is far more important than resolving the issue which gave rise to the anger. The enquiry leads to the deeper meaning the meaning of the whole thought process.

The elements or aspects of meaning are: significance, value and purpose.

Something which has great significance for me is given high value and value is the energy which leads me to do something about it. The value flows out of the perception of the meaning and the purpose arises out of the associated necessity. (necessity itself is a sort of meaning)

Thought gives, imposes meaning which may be incoherent because of reflex responses. We must sustain the meaning of dialogue for it to work, Failure to perceive the meaning of dialogue is a cultural blockage, which obscures the higher order fact of the meaning of and need for dialogue.

You cannot start from the purpose because the purpose arises from the clear perception of the meaning and necessity for dialogue. To start with the purpose is to put cart before horse. Can we have an insight into the necessity.

The first thing for any group to do, if it is to succeed, is to share meaning.

The vision of dialogue is the possibility of a shared insight. There is a level of contact in a group in which the electro-chemical process in the participating brains may actually function as one mind, become attuned, as one body. If we can all listen to all the opinions and suspend them without judging them then we all have one mind. We are of one mind with the same assumptions-content. So the differences, at that moment, are secondary. The point is that you have in some sense one body one mind. It does not overwhelm the individual the individual may have another assumption and share it with the group. It is not important whether you agree or not. No pressure to agree or disagree. We don't have to agree that a particular thought is right but see it and what gives rise to it.

The vision of dialogue is to share the meaning which underlies or gives rise to assumptions not to agree on a set of assumptions. Impersonal fellowship arises from this sharing of meaning. By seeing the meaning we will then begin to feel the value of it and then establish the purposes which may help us bring us towards it.

Dialogue might lead to a shared insight, a perception that we share the material process and that the material process we share is far more important than the thoughts which separate us.

Extract from David Bohm talk

From Cathy Lo

"One Who is Basely Timid"

Finally the long-awaited D-Day arrived. It had been creeping its way upon me just **too** slowly.... (But then I should have remembered that old unwritten law:- that to which you look forward the most, becomes invariably something of a let-down.)

Once you get the bug, Dialogue becomes a bit of an addiction. I had been eagerly gobbling up any and every available session over the past year, and was delighted to stumble upon yet another venue, in yet another trendy inner-city location. To top it off, the organisers were to conduct a special dialogue session at my monthly network meeting. I couldn't wait! At last the evening arrived. We were asked to visualise an occasion when we'd felt really heard, and to describe how it felt. The leader wrote all our expressions on the flip-chart. We were to just let it go wherever it ledto leave a gap between our interventions....the Chinese character for "listen" was on the whiteboard.....

Silence, as is its wont, became so rapidly a substitute for itself - so many compulsive words dribbling out, about something which barely emerged at all. Five seconds on average, then so many words, words, words, to banish it away. Where was the exquisite discipline? The ruthless suspension of assumptions. The courageous challenging? The quivering knife -edge dilemma of 'will I - won't I' - "do I **really** feel compelled to speak?" - the pounding pulse probing process, the ego in an agony of imminent self-torture?

So, smug and self-contained, I remained aloof. But wait.....The sharp-witted, deep-thinker, (the spunky-chunky-hunk with the pony-tail), dared to probe the possibility of saying something unacceptable:oh good value!.....this thing is starting to hot up! (he didn't actually **say** anything unacceptable, mind, but it was a tantalising thought just the same). Sadly, we were all just too nice. And me - I was just a coward. The best I could do was whimper rather petulantly (in the debrief period), that of course we had focused on content to the exclusion of process, and that I couldn't agree with the leaders on how well we'd done - ouch, even that oh-so-mild-mannered criticism brought a cascade of self-deprecation.....

"Stars, hide your fires - Let not light see my black and deep desires. . . "

(... oh well, at least there's always next week.....

"Till then I'll sweat, and seek about for eases;

And, at that time, bequeath you my diseases.")

Cathy Lo

Finite - Infinite

Written by David Bohm for the memorial service for Malcolm Sagenkhan. The piece was also read at Bohm's own memorial service, held at Birkbeck College

In considering the relationship between the finite

and the infinite, we are led to observe that the whole field of the finite is inherently limited, in that it has no independent existence. It has the appearance of independent existence, but that appearance is merely the result of an abstraction of our thought. We can see this dependent nature of the finite from the fact that every finite thing is transient.

Our ordinary view holds that the field of the finite is all that there is. But if the finite has no independent existence, it cannot be all that is. We are in this way led to propose that the true ground of all being is the infinite, the unlimited; and that the infinite includes and contains the finite. In this view, the finite, with its transient nature, can only be understood as held suspended, as it were, beyond time and space, within the infinite.

The field of the finite is all that we can see, hear, touch, remember, and describe. This field is basically that which is manifest, or tangible. The essential quality of the infinite, by contrast, is its sub-tlety, its intangibility. This quality is conveyed in the word spirit, whose root meaning is a wind, or breath." This suggests an invisible but pervasive energy, to which the manifest world of the finite re-ponds. This energy, or spirit, infuses all living beings, and without it any organism must fall apart into its constituent elements. That which is truly alive in the living being is this energy of spirit, and this is never born and never dies.

From Infinite Potential

David Peat's biography of David Bohm -p322

Article from Terry O'Brien

'I celebrate the man who knows nothing'

What kind of man was he, recorded by Plato to have been summoned to Delphi to sojourn with the gods - 'You are the wisest of them all Socrates' - 'But how can that be?' he replied, 'I know nothing.'

What innocence, what simplicity, what complete integrity he displayed, and his name has endured across several thousands years. Acknowledged as one of the great founding thinkers of our western civilization, he proclaimed nothing about himself to be special, he just questioned everything - especially established thoughts and ideas, the paradigm of his era.

How then do those of today, self proclaimers who imply an authority based on some assumed state of

'enlightened' superiority, shape up in contrast to a man who would reject such a claim unless scrutinised beyond all possible delusion? To me they pale into insignificance, legends in their own fantasies desperate people attempting to cover up complex complexes with sophisticated, flowery compositions of persuasive theories and philosophies - (There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy . . . ' Shakespeare's Hamlet).

Often speaking in soft deliberate intonations with carefully placed pauses and punctuations to assure the sheep that flock to them of their 'sincerity'. Yet behind this facade I suspect they are 'control' driven - bent on bending others to bind to their brand.

Sad they are, though destructive in their obsession to perpetuate cycles of domination and subservience - thus the irresponsible attract the irresponsible and so must dance a tango together. I remember a tape of a Krishnamurti talk (if pressed I could locate it) - *'If a man says he knows what truth is, distrust him completely! Such a man does not know . . .'*

The true colours of the self proclaimers become obvious when they come under pressure (though many are cleverly skilled in elusive ways to avoid or deflect probing questions.) The subtle contempt in their tone and words reveal a closeted shadowy state. They panic and stumble clumsily, threatening all manner of spiteful retribution when confronted with the probing, yet honest, enquiry of latter day folk of even temper, humble by nature and widely acknowledged as well intentioned. It is to them that I look for dialogue. Not to be patronised with platitudes and anecdotes, but to think together, enquire together, and on occasion, gain insight together.

It is my belief that only those who know nothing, empty of will and open to truth can explore, learn and 'live' the ever new wisdom of an eternal mystery. Those who imply they have a hold on it are simply caught in a web of their own deceit.

I take responsibility for the above letter as 'my' opinion. It may be accurate, it may be inaccurate. It may be partly right, partly exaggerated or partly wrong. I believe open honest dialogue, as 'equals' is the only sure way to test its truth. I am always willing to acknowledge my faults and learn from mistakes. I have difficulty in respecting those who can't (or won't).

Terry

Headless Meet at Geville Street

There were 10 of us at the first full scale headless meeting we have held at Greville St. These notes are my record of the day and I would welcome any additional feedback participants feel like contributing after reading this.

I thought it a more effective workshop than earlier ones I have organised. It is very important to have others present who have been through the process. They provide a corrective and supporting influence. It is easy for whoever is leading the experiment, intent on getting the message across, to overlook quite important elements. I find reminders that I have missed something, going too fast, etc., are very helpful. Graeme was also good at bringing us back to the essential simplicity of what is being revealed when I became too deeply involved in explanation.

We adopted a more analytical approach than in the past. That is, we carried out an experiment and then assessed the outcome and discussed what worked and what didn't. We used the revised pointing finger experiment which we modified after Barry showed me why it hadn't worked when we used it at Springbrook. I finally got the message about the use of different types of experiment. I had the feeling that once the pointing finger experiment worked for me that was the end of the story; why bother with anything else? Well, it doesn't work for some people and there were examples on the day of experiments which worked for some being quite meaningless for others.

I didn't keep a record of the discussions which followed the experiments so what I remember is what was important for me. At one point Jonathan said something like 'there is no comfort in it'. That had a great impact on me as I have an ongoing problem with 'backsliding'. That is, in spite of seeing headlessness as the primary or 'first person' mode of being irrespective of the circumstance. I continuously drop back into third person mode. The idea of gravitating to the comfort zone seemed to describe it well. I interpreted the Jonathan's comment to mean that there is no comfort for 'little' Alan in this 'mode'.

Val came up with a very neat way of revealing to someone else what is going on 'here' which I will not spoil by describing in this note but save for the next workshop. It is a useful extension to the 'pointing finger' experiment.

During the discussion which followed the 'hole in card with mirror' experiment David said something on the lines that headlessness seems to give with one hand and then take away with the other. I might have misquoted him but it led to a

discussion about whether this 'capacity' is free-standing or whether it is interdependent with what's it contains.

In the same discussion Margot made a comment likening the closed eye experiment to meditation. This was reinforced by Barry who reported some interesting consequences which arose when he pursued his interest in this experiment later the following week. And I suppose this raises the question of what aspect of Headlessness are not to do with meditation. Earlier in the workshop Margaret (Gracey) raised a question as to where is the heart in all this so I dug up these words of Douglas in answer to that one.

.....Here at last is the true Sacred Heart, the broken heart that heals all heartbreak. Also warning for those whose hearts are still intact: in particular for anyone who imagines that "losing one's head" is enough, thank you very much. I say that till the loss of one's head issues in the finding of one's heart - a heart so tender that it is mortally wounded by the world's appalling suffering - till then one falls far short of the goal which is the love that transmutes all suffering - till then one falls far short of the goal which is the the love which transmutes all suffering. And here a near miss, just because it can so easily be mistaken for a bull's eye, can be worse than a mile off-target. No, headlessness is not enough, for the simple reason that it can, by itself, be quite loveless. I have some evidence from others' lives, and plenty from my own, that this is a solemn fact.

Douglas Harding from the article 'On Having a Head'

What happens next? We decided to have a follow-up meeting which would be loosely arranged around a video tape on which Douglas answers a few questions. We will deal with the question first and then see whether he comes up with the right answers. I will continue to hold the same workshop, as described above, from time to time as an introduction for interested people. Finally, we thought it might be an idea to trial some of the less well known experiments, for anyone interested, after lunch at the Greville Street NOW group meetings.

Apologies to those participants whose comments I did not capture for this note but if there is something you would like to add let me have it for the next issue. The 'One True Way is Silly' was prepared as preliminary reading for the workshop. It was taken from an email exchange and is included here for those who might be interested in future workshops.

One True Way is Silly

From: Janice E. Hamer,

Dear conference, Although delighted to participate by reading, I haven't had the opportunity to write recently. Now that I'm in London for the summer, I have a few moments to address the many issues that have arisen, and will tackle one of them on this occasion. I've been thinking about the matter of spiritual authority that has been raised several times recently, both the many statements of sages and spiritual texts that our erudite members regularly cite, and the fascination with the people behind the illumined statements.

Regarding the spiritual texts and quotations, I often feel inspired by them, and of course moved when they have literary quality. But for me, there is a necessary translation that has to occur before I can bring the text "home" to the point of my actual Seeing. The actual Seeing is always so much clearer, more immediate, than the metaphors and allusions of the sages. Does Headlessness really require justification and amplification from canonical sources, does reading these assist one in Seeing? In addition to this problem of "translation," I am always left wondering whether the quoted sages really saw this very Point, or had some different, although parallel or analogous "realization," "perception," whatever you want to call it. How can one know? I'm always tempted to wonder why, if they did see Absence here, they didn't come up with a paper tube or pointing finger, though I know that's an erroneous line of reasoning. You guys have spoken about these matters from time to time, but it would be interesting to hear more on the subject.

The second part of my query is about our occasional interest in the person of the sage himself/herself--the fascination with his/her alleged spiritual experiences, bodily changes, personality. (Concerning the recent conversations about UG Krishnamurti--I was taken to see him once, and can report that he seemed to me a rather joyless, self-absorbed [small "s"] gentleman who was clearly male--even male chauvinist--blinking his eyes at normal intervals--in short, a human being.) I was reminded by recent discussions about him and other sages of something that happened at last year's summer gathering with Douglas at Douai. A woman at the gathering told me that she actually didn't get much out of the Seeing exercises, but did feel that Douglas had tremendous presence, and that being with him gave her a special feeling. I mentioned this episode to Douglas with some alarm, and suggested he

might consider doing something disgusting from time to time, in order to deflect the ardor of potential devotees--perhaps belching. "But my dear," countered Douglas, "they would then proceed to worship the Holy Belch!" He reported as evidence that at the Ramana ashram, even the out-house where the master relieved himself is memorialized with candles and incense!

I don't feel there's anything wrong with an interest in fascinating people and their amazing stories. (That's one reason why we read biographies and the newspaper.) But if we are going to trade guru stories, it seems to me that each of us in this conference has had dramatic and magical spiritual experiences equal to or surpassing those of the sages with exotic names whose stories we recount. I breathlessly await accounts of transformation--minus the welts and sex changes --of Guru Alan, Master Richard, Isabella-ji, ShriThomas, Maharaj David, Baba Brian, and the rest of you folks, to all of whom I send reverential greetings. Jnani Jan

From: Alan Mann, Re: Holy Belching
Dear Conference,

I enjoyed Jan's last message which struck a very responsive chord. I did the pointing finger experiment at Douglas's first Sydney talk in '91. Apart from the effectiveness of the exercise I recall being stunned by my stupidity in failing to realise the obviousness and accessibility which had been obscured by all the years of earnest enquiry. I also felt a bit nonplussed by the lack of the need for 'anything else'. It was such a contrast to my habitual reliance on the wise. The feeling of 'look no further' following the realisation there was, after all, nowhere else to look seemed to leave a hole. I even felt my interest in Douglas's writing was just more evidence of my determination to get the search habit going again.

On the other hand, I wonder whether my reading, wrestling with Krishnamurti, Zen & so on was part of the process. And whether this created the fertile soil in which the fruits of the pointing finger could flower. I would have thought not but for the fact that the experiments have absolutely no impact on some people. I do quite a lot of what I call 'parallel' reading, e.g., Goswami, Deikman and so forth. Yes, as Jan says: why, if they did see Absence here, they didn't come up with a paper tube or pointing finger. For me, the genius of DEH is the experiential aspect, the 'suck it and see' approach to seeing which is direct and free of the intermediary processes of most 'teachings'. Jan's final comments about 'gurus all' is also something which has popped up here from time to time. In my

case it asks why for heavens sake don't I really be what I really, really am. What is the problem, fear, false modesty, the need to get it 'absolutely right' that makes me hide behind the realisations of others? Best wishes to all, Alan

From: Thomas Petruso

One True Way is Silly

Alan Mann wrote: On the other hand, I wonder whether my reading, wrestling with Krishnamurti, Zen & so on was part of the process. And whether this created the fertile soil in which the fruits of the pointing finger could flower. I would have thought not but for the fact that the experiments have absolutely no impact on some people.

Of course it was! How could it not have been? This is the same point I wanted to make about UG - how can he have spent however many years trying desperately to meditate, understand, abandon himself, etc. and then have his big experience or whatever it was and claim that it came out of the blue with no cause and effect applicable to his previous life?

Also, as Alan says, there are people who miss the implication of the experiments altogether, for want of previous orientation, preparation, discipline, one might suggest. I would think that those who simply see the finger and are transformed (not unlike the Sixth Zen Patriarch, who, without having read a sutra, heard a line from one in the street and was enlightened) are relatively rare. As for parallel readings, along with parallel discussions such as take place here, I say why not? There are different paths because there are infinite facets of truth, different times and places and temperaments. It would be naive to think that in the history of humanity, no one's been here before. Some of the predecessor's have worked out in tremendous detail the signposts, suggestions, pitfalls, byways, etc., and these are of great value to many people. Basically, I still don't see how anyone can get around the need for "having one's attention" for want of a better phrase. What I mean is, seeing the pointing finger is one thing, but one must also be able to place one's attention there, as opposed to being the passive plaything of the discursive, associative "radio" of ego-driven "thought". And this is where all those other disciplines, preparations, past searches, and so on come into play. Douglas himself did not just jump out of bed one day and see the void, did he? His insight was the fruit of a very intensive search, after a rather unusually god-focused childhood, was it not?

It seems to me that people are generally so focused

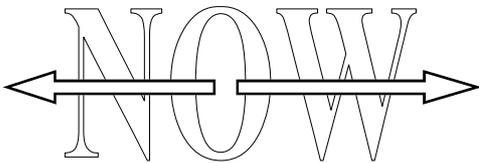
on what "masters" say, that they neglect to investigate the perhaps more relevant information - how the "master" got to the place from which he speaks. Jesus didn't get there by following "christianity," Douglas didn't attend a workshop, etc. I'm leaving out the Buddha, since I'm accepting the view that buddhism is in fact precisely a description of how Siddartha Gotama got to be the Buddha. Likewise, the living segments of zen are centered on learners replicating the procedures that got their teachers to be where they are. I think zen's way of "testing" the validity of one's insight - in other words verifying its correspondenceto the insight on offer -- gives it an advantage over the no head workshop system, insofar as the latter says that if you get it, you get it, there's no way to miss it, etc., but literally has no way of knowing just what an individual is seeing. I think the kind of gurudom that ought to be objected to - as opposed to Douglas and the side of buddhism I just mentioned - is the sort that focuses on devotion to the guru. This seems to have very little to do with training in what the guru did to get there, but everything to do with "the Holy Belch," i.e. getting kicks out of subservience rather than doing one's homework.

In short, it seems to me that the experiments are marvelous tools that can facilitate a breakthrough for people otherwise en route but stuck (and cut through a lot of intellectual baggage, as Alan noted), and they can awaken nonseekers to the notion that there is something to seek. On the other hand, there are the occasional testimonies of people who just got the finger all at once and reoriented their whole lives (the case of Douglas's typist comes to mind), but few of the regular contributors to the list seem to fall into that category. Jan says: why, if they did see Absence here, they didn't come up with a paper tube or pointing finger. As much as I enjoyed Jan's anti-guru spirit, I really do have to question her logic on this one. This is like saying if Douglas really found the heart of compassion, why didn't he have himself crucified. Or if Albert Einstein was such a genius, why didn't he invent the phonograph. I just don't see the connection, and must heartily disagree with the implication that a view of Absence here must necessarily result in the same expedient means of pointing to it. This notion simply makes 'What Is' much too limited and inflexible. Conversely, I might also say that Lao-Tse, for example, did indeed come up with a pointing finger -- what else are the individual verses of the Tao Te Ching? -- but we must charitably allow for differences in time and place, and the fact that Old Lao, unlike Douglas, was

not an architect, ergo not graphically visually oriented to the same degree. In sum, I would say the Way is too slippery to be contained in any exclusive, fundamentalist approach, including the one without a head.

Regards to all, Thomas

DIALOGUE MEETINGS SYDNEY AREA				
LOCATION	DAY OF MONTH	MEETING PLACE	TIME & CONTACT	Phone Nos.
North Ryde	First Saturday	Swedenborg Centre !, Avon Road	12.30pm Barry Hora	043 622 843 Wk.9997 4412
McMahons Point	First Wednesday	Community Centre 165 Blues Point Rd	7.30pm Terry O'Brien	044 438 353 018 410 127
City	Second Saturday	Theosophical Society 484 Kent St	2.30pm Barry Hora	043 622 843 Wk.9997 4412
Chatswood	Third Sunday	81 Greville St. (off Fullers Rd)	10.30 am Alan Mann	By Arrangement Ring 9419 7394



Dates for Andrew Cohen Talks and seminars

Friday September 19th at 7.30pm Theosophical Society, 484 Kent Street Sydney

**Saturdays September 20th and 27th at 8pm
University of Sydney, The Holme Building Common Room (off Science Road)**

**Sunday September 28th 9.30am to 6pm University of Sydney
One Day retreat**

September 24th Byron Bay

FOR INFORMATION RING FACE Centre Sydney (02) 9555 2932