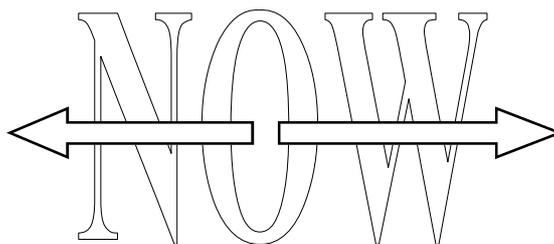


Greville Street
 Meetings
 20 June 99
 18 July 99



Issue No. 53
 May 1999

CONTENTS		Page
Who am I?	<i>Ingram Smith</i>	2
Watching the flow of Thought	<i>Peter Crook</i>	4
Response 1 to April Issue (No.52) Response 2 to April Issue (No.52)	<i>Rome Warren</i> <i>Carien McGuin</i>	5 5
A response to Phil Lanzon's article in Issue No. 52	<i>Katie Mann</i>	5
Dialogue weekend at Glen Davis	<i>Alan Mann</i>	7
Douglas Harding's 90th Birthday	<i>Ann Faraday &</i> <i>John Wren-Lewis</i>	9
Preparations for the Unknown	<i>Gladney Oakley</i>	10

Thanks to contributors to this issue and those of you who renewed their subscriptions in response to last month's reminder.

One of our readers, Gladney Oakley, is giving a public talk on June 1 in Sydney. I remember hearing a presentation by Gladney, who is well known to many of the Now Group as one of the original participants and as an occasional contributor to the Nowletter, about 12 years ago and the content of his wonderful talk is still reverberating in me after all this time. He thinks he is on to something new and is looking forward to sharing it with us on June 1. He tells me that new scientific discoveries have, in all likelihood, revealed the origin of perhaps twenty percent of the Gaelic, Roman, Scandinavian, South American Indian and Babylonian Gods and Goddesses. (See page 10 for details)

Douglas Harding turned 90 in February. I have included some great poetry which was penned to celebrate the event by two of our reader/contributors.

The Nowletter appears between 10 and 12 times every year and is a vehicle for news and views about awakening to what is really going on. Contributions from readers are considered the most valuable content so please think about letting me have your views, experiences, discoveries and responses .

Annual Subscription \$12

Who am I ?

Who am I? What am I? What constitutes me?

Descartes announced "cogito ergo sum" - "I think therefore I am" and this profound statement has influenced, some might say, dominated conceptual thinking in the west ever since.

The question "who am I?" subverts an understanding of the whole domain of existence, for it conveys, encapsulates the process of thought through to the very essence of consciousness itself. It means inward watching awareness of the subtle nuances of perception. And this involves experimenting with experience. When a human being experiments with experience there is no knowing what is going to be discovered. And therefore our investigation has to be free from imagined ends and preconceived outcomes. We do not know ahead what will be uncovered.

And further, this inquiry is inevitably immediate - not tomorrow, but today, now. Reality can only be perceived directly in the living moment.

I ask myself "What is the self? What is a self? and instead of trying to find out by *thinking* I begin watching my thoughts and feelings, my behaviour, what I say and do. And instantly I meet a deeper problem: what is it that watches?" The question now is "Is *thinking* separate from *self*?" "Is there a self that thinks? Is the self another idea that has taken root in the brain-mind? . Are not "beliefs" presumed to be true, and so permanent?

The truth is I don't know. All that I do know is my knowledge which has been accumulated in the past with memory as its base. To understand this process, or the so-called me, (the sum total of my knowledge) is to explore memory - my personal recollection as well as the total racial inheritance, the past.

While memory may be stable, my knowledge keeps changing, being added to or subtracted from. It is not stable, but in a state of flux, as am "I" and every other individual human entity.

So, is the traditional concept of our ego-soul-self simply a transient manifestation of our species which gives the individual person that sense of continuity which actually resides, is perpetuated, in the existence of the whole human race?

If such a perception is valid, and for me it is, it follows that Descartes' "I think therefore I am" makes a reality of the consciousness that thought flows out from the known, from memory, and that the "I" comes into existence with thinking. The "I" then is a thought, an idea and therefore the result of accumulated experience.

However there is another crucial factor: I am also related to everything else. We are not isolated - single entities. "To be is to be related".

In Colombo in December 1949 and in Bombay in January 1950, this universal interrelatedness was for me the centre of the Krishnamurti teachings, the talks and discussions. This reverie was the first of Krishnamurti's challenges which caught and held my absorbed attention. One outcome was a realization that I exist because I am related to everything else, that I am not separate.

A mad metaphor for the transience of every perceptible reality as noted elsewhere is the sky and clouds that form. They change, appear and disappear. They develop in a multiplicity of forms. There are storms, lightning and thunder, raindrops, snow, sleet, hail, creeks, rivers, lakes, oceans, evaporation, atmosphere, air, sky. No one drop of rain survives, only while it is falling is it separate. While on the earth it is living water, or a tree, a seagull, a passing part of the fluid that constitutes a human body, ever impermanent. As is the self

I breathe the same air as do you, and then there is water and food and language (the basis of ideas), thinking and laughter, all are common and interrelated cultural experiences .

It is the way we each use relationship that shows the basic absurdity in "the idea that I am in fact a separate individual". My sole separation is my reaction, and that is dictated by my own preconditioning, of which I am the residue. We use relationship as a means of fulfilling our desire for personal achievement, for becoming something more, greater.

Seen more deeply, more clearly, relationship is the prime means of self discovery, of uncovering "my" limitations. Relationship is existence. Everything is interrelated. Without relationship, I am not. To understand me I have to understand relationship in all its intricate subtleties and changes. Relationship is the mirror in which I find myself and the reflection has to be undistorted by knowledge, unresolved problems and beliefs. Isn't it obvious that only in the understanding of what is going on in my body-mind-thinking, and in relationship to what comes in from the outside, can there be freedom, freedom from the bondage of memory, from the condition we humans are experiencing?

Isn't it obvious that no real change can happen, that no transformation is possible, unless we are passionately aware of what we are doing being alive, ALIVE? !

We are so accustomed to accommodating, accepting the arrant non sense, our tragic and puerile behaviour, so used to condemning, justifying, explaining,

comparing, talking, debating about what can be done to change, that we fail to appreciate at depth what we are doing. We prefer to idealize, to dream about an imagined future, than to understand the confused present.

The whole process of our daily thinking is so shallow that we don't see what we are doing.

Of course there have always been individuals who were concerned and perseverant, urgent to comprehend the origin of life on earth, to uncover the source and cause of the human condition.

(There has been a pause here for me to note that the traditional process, as it has always been, is time consuming And so to ask myself is time and more thinking merely more of the same vain effort, the old evasive sequence?)

To date human beings have done everything to come upon that state of wellbeing, that wondrous wholeness. Some have fasted, sacrificed, done everything to find the origin of self, everything, and it has led nowhere.

Oh yes, there have been certain benefits - social and ethical improvement, but the actions of the "leaders" have also led to great misery, to social injustices and constant wars. And that ego drive, that effort-making, all takes time.

If in reading this, the falseness inherent in that procedure is recognised, a change in consciousness has already occurred.

With such a recognition, such insight into the shallowness of the traditional time-binding, future-orientated thinking process, the mind now is likely to say "I must go to the foundation of all life."

This appears to be the true, the ultimately necessary way to REALITY.

And once again it is another thought, another self-projection. Ancient and historical, as is the search for the source of life, it is just one more ego-pursuit. Obviously any willful ego-action that has a self-perpetuation as its motive is not the way. The way is not another drive to achieve, to become something more, and it is this that has to be understood and released. The belief that "I" as a separate entity can personally accomplish the totality of LIFE is arrogant and absurd egocentricity.

Deeper than the thought that "I must go to the foundation of all life", is the reality that I must go to the source of myself, the essence in me".

Am I in any way or at any time different from Life?

Living is not a problem to be resolved, to be comprehended or to go beyond. Being alive, mind consciousness is not a becoming. It has no beyond. The idea of self-perpetuation in some improved form is merely a different web of words for an old, mistaken belief.

Experiencing the source of "self" is not a matter of time and sequence. While I continue to understand duration as linear I have to learn what I have to do, to find a technique I can practice in order to realize what I am, what is in me, what keeps me alive Viewing the confusion, the destruction, brutality, wars, and displacement and degradation of people that has never ended, while everyone is attempting to become something more, urged on to achieve success, fulfillment, enlightenment. All our endeavours are illusory.

Without understanding desire and its thought directed goals, our observation is unreal. It is still future-orientated. Has the desire for change, for improvement ended? Is human interest and observation to go on missing the experience of being alive, still to be directed at what has to be done? Will we go on overlooking, looking out over, what we are doing, forever missing that actual reality of the lives we now live? Will we continue the confused existence we are perpetuating?

As what we are doing is the actual outcome of everything we have done until now, is it not obvious that the non-sense in the way we live has to stop.

As each absurdity is seen, to let it drop instantly, give the false no time and no energy to develop, no future. Only then does the false cease to exist. Only then is real freedom, selflessness, possible.

Reading these words, these sentences and ideas is somewhat similar to reading a menu and never tasting the food, denying any real nourishment.

"Do it, Sir" as Krishnamurti said every time I suggested a possibility. "Do it!" Stop thinking about Life. Live it. Don't think about it.

Ingram Smith

The following is the first of a series of short articles by Peter Crook who contributed the article 'Lightness of Life' for Issue No. 50. The article together with other material is also published on Peter's web page: www.itjustis.com and is available from the Awareness Acupuncture Clinic, North Tambourine, (07) 5545 1843.

Watching the flow of Thought

As the words of knowledge spin through your head,

you must see that the words you hear in your mind are not the actual. The word tree is not the actual tree itself. Words convey an abstract image, an idea, but are never the real. When you think, have a thought in your mind, including when you recognise the fact you *are* thinking (analysing, day-dreaming) there is a mechanical process in motion. The thinker and the watcher of the thoughts is thought itself.

It is only an abstracted idea of thought which wants to have a quiet mind. It is thought which is operating on itself when you say "I want to be still within", "I want enlightenment", "I must relax, or "There is something more beyond myself", or "Something lies deep within me". With this consciousness you live your life.

It is the thoughts that desire to meditate or to be a meditator, as well as the thoughts that precede the actual method of meditation which will set the pattern of your results and ultimate goal. When we want to become something - quieter, silent, happier, more aware - we want something other than what we are. This is the movement of thought in action. Thinking creates division, self-centredness and conflict. Thought is dualistic.

When you talk to yourself - think aloud - you are coming from an expression of your thoughts. Your language reflects in its very expression the division that exists within you. For example to express a thought or a feeling, you live in the opposite ideas of what you say. Example: "I feel good" - "I must know what it is like to feel bad". "I like peacefulness" - "I must dislike noise".

When you express your thoughts and sentiments you reveal at the same time your deeper dualism. It is revealed in the opposite of what you say. Let's make this clearer. If I have an opinion of what is bad then I must have an opinion of what is good. An expression of "I felt flexible in myself" shows that I come from a state of inflexibility.

It is the ideas that you base your actions on and therefore the direction in life that you take which is the most important point to understand. Even to say that you lead a life with no direction and take life as it comes, shows that you have known and still retain the memory (consciously or not) of a directed and structured way of living.

There is no way of escaping this expression of your thoughts. Thought itself is dualistic. If you can see this happening in yourself and at the same time see how your thoughts govern your life, then the very observation of it happening as you live your daily life is the beginning of breaking this self-enclosing and illusory human consciousness.

Dualistic thought is very easy to observe. If you have

a heart and mind to listen carefully to everyone and especially to yourself, you will see that this human consciousness is common to all. Everyone shares the same consciousness. It is not yours, you don't think separately your own individual thoughts. They belong to the human race as a whole. A collective consciousness. Everyone feels pain, loneliness, anger, and fear. Everyone the world over shares the same conditioned consciousness. If you see this in yourself, you will see it in others. To see the deepest implications of thinking is of the utmost importance. To break its movement in yourself requires a great energy which comes into you when you give absolute and total attention to what you are doing. Thought reveals itself when you give this quality of observation to everything you do and to thought itself when it moves through you. If you watch carefully, you will see that thought actually occurs outside of your self. It comes to you. In truth there is no thinker of thought, it is just thoughts moving through you. Watch carefully and you will see. Give some energy to this. You must look. There is nothing to figure out or understand. Only to observe and behold. True knowledge (not conclusions, opinions, judgements or recognitions) is *what is*. *What is* has a benediction of its own. What is looked upon reveals itself before you.

Whatever thought that comes to you is not yours. It has nothing to do with you. Thought condensed is the you. The manipulator of the thoughts, feelings and emotions which arise within yourself is thought itself.

What occurs within you when you hear someone else say something? What happens within you when you read some words of your favourite guru or philosopher? What is happening when you think deeply about something? What actually takes place? Is there a reaction? A stirring of sentiment? A sense of deep appreciation or a sense of absolute stillness. Do these arise in you in the reflection of what you have read or heard or seen happening around you? Can you see these very subtle movements are in response to something? Even though we feel they happen within us and to us (the experiencer), it is thought (which is memory) that is reacting. These inner movements of feelings and emotions are based on an image (an illusion).

Peter Crook

Response 1 to April Issue (No.52)

What a joy to read the April issue on - of all days - Mothers Day. A true gift from the universe!

Sometimes it is easy to see Life as a lone journey until serendipitous encounters ignite comets in the sky. Thank you, thank you to the writers so willing to expose their inner being and perception with open generosity!

When I was 15 and refused to undergo Confirmation (C of E), it seemed to be by blind instinct. Acceptance of conditioning was not, and is not, the way to go. Instead, the Universe itself frequently proffers true Confirmation through message delivery; little reminders of sign posts past.

Warwick meets Francis

This resonates so very strongly with the lone path I've travelled in the past 15 years any criticisms simply seem like nit-picking over semantics. It is so obvious that there is only consciousness from which the manifest emerges. (My old song "Every thing is in Emergence. Without Emergence there is no Thing).

It is equally obvious that Life's 'pulse' is manifest - unmanifest; visible - invisible; matter - immaterial which is also abiding as a tidal motion. Truly exciting 'revelations'.

Life IS bliss but we can think our way out of it and usually do. We ARE aspects of Universal Consciousness or "Godd". (I've just this minute concocted a spelling to demasculinise the loaded term and incorporate 'od' which the dictionary defines as 'an invisible substance that interpenetrates and connects with every living thing. A Holy (Whole) Spirit (breath) indeed!

Godd IS and 'remains' as an aspect within (AS the aspects of consciousness) and as the breath that maintains the physical body. Without these we are NOT and without choice to 'remain', though we CAN exist physically when we choose to exclude aspects of Godd.

In short, every one of us is a channeler of consciousness with the power to control the right of entry (which is bad news for those who like to blame others for their own wrong choices).

"Does a dream mean that the dreamer is asleep? No, for a dream can only exist in consciousness" : WE ARE DREAMS OF GODD. It is only when we are 'awake' that we sense this and dream up escape routes. 'Awake' and 'Asleep' we are still aspects of consciousness with the ego-split and its urge to separate and control still but a fragment of channelled consciousness. Once this is perceived EVERY ADVERSITY CAN BE INPERIENCED AS A VALUABLE LESSON IN LIVING!

Letter to my son

I found Lyn Wilmott's honesty and integrity deeply moving (if she would like to contact me through Alan, I'd love to meet her)! She has obviously been on a long lone journey with a happy ending.

By now her evolving perceptions have probably told her that memories are simply residual ghosts

manifesting in the physical channel. Her recognition of this can exorcise them: they can return only by 'invitation'. Ghosts of any kind cannot 'emerge' without a willing thinker!

Other Letters

Azra-Ben's picture summarises them all. The more we habitually look at what is in front of us, the less we see; and even when we DO see the mystery, it still comes and goes.

Even 'enlightenment' is a movement in consciousness along with sleeping, waking and all points in between. It cannot come from any person outside oneself, nor can it remain as a dead unmoving object. (Consider the disaster of Krishnamurti's life in between flashes of brilliant perceptions).

As I see it, insights are the jewels of consciousness. They come as magical holograms that disintegrate and disperse immediately they are communicated. Like joy, love bliss, they can be inperiened solely within a timeless moment: they can never be held, contained or controlled. They come uninvited when there is total surrender. So okay: I give in unconditionally.

Rome Warren

Response 2 to April Issue (No.52)

Greetings Alan and Margot.

Your April NOW newsletter has given me much food for thought. Margot's experience of gurus finds recognition here. But the search for enlightenment in my purview, far from being allowed to just rest in the "there's not a single thing you can do" seems to have a mind of its own, or a pressure of its own, or a pressure out of the known.

So never mind the deep and meaningful now.

I am forwarding my subscription and I would very much like a tape or transcript whichever you are offering of Gary Hipworth's talks with the Sydney NOW Group called "Insight & Transformation".

I am also very interested to make contact with Phil Lanson. I am very interested in his proposal for parenting education. I have a house at my disposal though its location at Wamberal, or alternatively Darwin, is perhaps not helpful. Perhaps you could connect us to see what might eventuate.

Hope all is well for your Glen Davis weekend. I'll get to see you guys again one of these days. Cheers

Carien McGuin

A response to Phil Lanson's article in Issue No. 52

My first child is due to be born in 4 days* and I therefore read Phil Lanson's letter (NOW Newsletter No. 52) regarding the education and 'conditioning' of children with interest.

Having experienced a very liberal, or 'alternative', education myself (both in terms of the structured education system and parenting) I felt I could draw on my experience to comment on some of the points Phil makes in his letter. Phil appears to link the conditioning of our children to the need of government for economic growth (ie. capitalism) which has led to a loveless society, and concludes a New Education is needed.

I question whether aspects of conditioning in the education of our kids, like routine, certain habits, structure, aren't in fact expressions of love for our children - and expressions our children revel in. Also, the total impact of education on our children should be considered, ie. the experience of socialisation, the process of discipline and sharing resources. I also question whether all children would benefit from being educated away from their peers, even if their parents were willing and capable of giving them their undivided attention over a long period. I don't dispute that our current education system can be improved in all sorts of ways, but we must allow for different educational needs of children.

When faced with abused children it is hard not to want some screening process for parents to ensure they are up to the job. But it is important to recognise that the process of having and raising children is a reciprocal education between parent and child - where both can learn from and teach each other. This also means that parents should not be giving up their lives in order to love and educate their kids - - the two experiences are not mutually exclusive. Love, support, encouragement and guidance should be provided without question.

I went to 'alternative' schools for most of my school life, with a 2 year interval at the local state primary school (5th and 6th class). Devonshire (Primary) School was started in the early 70's by a handful of dedicated parents, unhappy with educational alternatives at the time. My parents were part of this 'communal' initiation of a 'new' school, where the student group was small but varied in age and backgrounds. The parents of the students were of necessity very involved in the running of this school, and the students were encouraged to express themselves via the creative arts in particular. Normal subjects (Math/English) were taught, but the process was not rigorously structured and the kids were excused from attending these classes if they had a reasonable alternative activity (eg, working on an art piece, developing film in the dark room).

My home life was loving, supportive, and my parents gave my brother and I the space and trust to do whatever we wished to do, while still providing structure and routine. Discipline was minimal by many people's standards.

The interesting thing is, I do not feel I really 'blossomed' until I went to the local state primary school for 5th and 6th class. I learnt all the necessary 'standard' educational requirements (grammar, math) in my first term at this school, which highlights just how quickly kids can learn, and that the first several years at any school are really about learning about life and being socialised. I felt more academically challenged and the social and peer experience was liberating and fun. Life is often scary and intimidating and I loved the structure and guidance of the state school - elements obviously I felt were missing from Devonshire Street. Suddenly I was faced with *more*, not fewer choices and opportunities, no doubt the result of being in a bigger community.

My high school years were spent at the Australian International School in Sydney. Again, small classes, with a high teacher to student ratio, a strong push for the creative arts, creative thinking and being responsible for what we get from our education. In other words it was up to us to pull, rather than have it pushed into us. My high school years were not unhappy, despite the usual trauma that affects every adolescent to varying degrees. In hindsight though, I would probably have chosen to go to North Sydney Girls High. Why? Because I think I would have enjoyed it more, had more opportunities and challenges, and more chance of fulfilling filling my potential.

Each child is unique and individual, with differing needs, so we must keep in mind there is no one perfect education for all children. For some, my schooling may have been ideal, particularly if they had a very strict and rule-driven home environment. Balance is a very important, and often neglected, element of educating or raising kids. Kids are basically on a path for self determination right from the start. Their biggest goal is to achieve self sufficiency and to be independent. So maybe we should also accept that whatever we offer our children they will need to react to it by going in the opposite direction (even if just mildly) so they can assume their independence and define themselves. We can apply a law of physics here - *for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction*. I remember wishing my parents would give me a curfew as that would show how much they loved me: makes it hard for a parent to get it right really.

No child should be abused, and all kids should be given the opportunities and appropriate learning environment to reach their potential and, lets face it, feel good about themselves. But parents compromising their own lives to provide undivided attention to (some would say indulge) their children for the sake of their 'education' is not a realistic or even a healthy approach. How will this help the children when they eventually do venture out to 'see how the other half live'? Socialisation is crucial for all

kids from the start, an essential part of the education process, if these kids are to grow up happy. Is undivided attention really a good way to start the education process, creating expectations which we know are impossible to follow through for the rest of their lives? Besides, to quote a pop song, “*every move you make, I’ll be watching you*” could be a tad off-putting. Again, balance is the order of the day - love and trust and structure and guidance/ boundaries in equal portions.

Conditioning is a tricky concept - because it is so reliant on our society and the mores and principles we endorse for a community to function as a whole. I agree there are aspects of this process which can be destructive for kids. However, kids can respond very well to structure, routine and discipline. And can in fact feel lost without it. Life can be pretty terrifying, and parents and the education system are responsible for guiding, supporting and helping to define what will help their kids get through life, what tools they need to establish their identity and independence and what makes them feel good and able to live happily in their community.

Rules for communities have been here since human society began, to help a diversity of individuals co-exist as amicably as possible. It is important to challenge and question these rules on an ongoing basis, but maybe they are not always negative forces.

Katie Mann

**Ella arrived at 13.30 on May 10.*

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

Douglas Harding’s 90th Birthday

Douglas recently celebrated his 90th birthday.

Contributions to the surprise party, which was held at Douglas’s home at Nacton, Suffolk, were sent in from all over the globe. I have permission to reprint two brilliant contributions from Sydney Nowletter readers which appear below plus a birthday card from the Sydney headless.

Ed.

A channelled update through John Wren-Lewis from Gilbert Sullivan (now happily back in one celestial piece after trying to make out in two incarnations on earth a century ago) of Colonel Calverley's song from Patience. Originally intended to sum up the virtues of British nineteenth-century soldiery, it is now sent to celebrate the ninetieth birthday of Britain's 'headless sage' on the eve of a new millenium.

If you want an insight into that puzzling mystery,
Known to the law as just Harding, D E,
Then take all the best quotes from the sages of history,
Put them together, find what you See.

The essence of Eckhart on heaven’s proximity -
Wisdom of Wittgenstein’s mystical “show,” -
Teresa of Avila’s prayerful sublimity -

The down-to -earth Teachings of Master Huang-Po -

The vision of Saul on the way to conversion -
St John of the Cross’s dark night of the soul -
The verses of Rumi, that passionate Persian -
And Ibn’ Arabi’s, pursuit of the Whole

Thomas Aquinas on rational entity -
Zen’s Third Patriarch on your changing identity
Heracleitus’ and Loa-tsu’s celestial flow -
Young Thomas Traherne and old Henry Suso -

Of every tradition take all that is sensible,
Remove what is narrow, for that’s reprehensible,
Add ninety years’ wisdom, with humour as larding,
And you’ll be on your way to find Douglas Harding

John Wren-Lewis

Not to be outdone, Lewis Carroll, no longer bound by former earthly ecclesiastical ties, sends the following through Ann Faraday: -

You are old, Father Douglas, the young man said,
And your hair has become very white,
And yet you persistently take off your head.
Do you think at your age it is right?

I refrained from such tricks in my youth, the Sage said,
For fear it would injure the brain,
But now that I’m sure I don’t live in my head,
Why, I remove it again and again!

With your years, said youth one would hardly suppose
That your gaze is as steady as ever,
Yet you hold the whole world on the tip of your nose
What makes you so frightfully clever?

With no head, said the sage, there is only one eye,
But that Eye is the I of Infinity,
Which sees every detail of earth, sea and sky
All held in the light of divinity.

Ann Faraday

Barry Hora

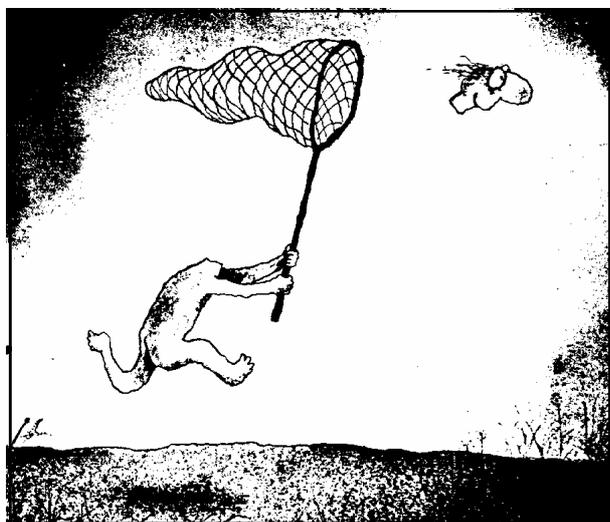
Barry Hora, who has been a tower of strength in the Sydney Dialogue movement and a great support in helping me with the headless workshops, is moving to Queensland.

He is taking up the position of caretaker at the Theosophical Education & Retreat Centre at Springbrook which some of us know through the Krishnamurti gatherings and the work of Geoff & Shirley Miller.

Whilst we will miss his regular appearances in Sydney we can look forward to keeping in touch by email and catching up with him at seminars, gatherings and on his occasional return visits.

*Wishing Douglas and
Catherine a happy 12th
February and a wonderful
10th decade*

90



**Some
of
us
are
not
quite
ready
to
let
it
go
completely**

Cartoon by Leunig

*With great affection from
all your friends involved in the
Sydney Workshops*

Preparations for the Unknown

(Previously unrecognized Origins of some Traditional Figures in World Mythology and Religion)

Slides -Talk by Gladney Oakley

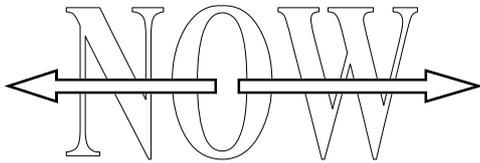
Phone 9264-5169 - Admission \$7 - \$5

Tuesday June 1st at 7pm

Rudolf Steiner House

307 Sussex Street (South of Bathurst St)

Correlating Modern Science, Ancient Mythology, and specialist Religious Imagery yields radical insights into the source of a significant proportion of the traditional Iconography of Artemis, Athena, Coatlicue, Cybele, Demeter, Epet, Gaia, Garuda, Hathor, Hera, Inanna, Ishtar, Isis, Kuan-Yin, Nu-gua, Ra, Rhea, Sesha, Ta-urt, Tammuz, Uma, Vishnu, Ymir, Yu Nu, and Zeus.



If unable to deliver please return to:

81 Greville Street, Chatswood 2067

WARNING - This is the last issue for subscribers with "May 1999" heading their address.

DIALOGUE MEETINGS SYDNEY AREA				
LOCATION	DAY OF MONTH	MEETING PLACE	TIME & CONTACT	Phone Nos.
Clontarf	First Wednesday	49 Peronne Avenue Clontarf	7.30pm Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379 0415 410 127
City	Third Saturday	Theosophical Society Level 2, 484 Kent St., City	2.30pm Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379 018 410 127
Chatswood	Third Sunday	81 Greville St. (off Fullers Rd) Chatswood	10.30 am Alan & Margot Mann	02 9419 7394
Clontarf	Fourth Sunday	49 Peronne Avenue Clontarf	11am Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379 018 410 127