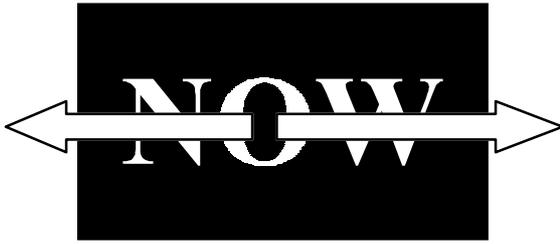


Issue 78 –January 2002



Meetings (10.30am - 3rd Sunday)
81 Greville Street , Chatswood
Next Meetings – 17 February 2002

17 March 2002

(02) 9419 7394 or amann@bigpond.net.au

		Page
Islam, War and Toleration	<i>Keith Price</i>	2
Warwick Wakefield on Douglas Harding	<i>Warwick Wakefield</i>	3
Dialogue		
Dialogue and Attention	<i>Barry Hora</i>	3
Dialogue about Dialogue	<i>Lyn Willmott</i>	4
As a Collective Undertaking	<i>Don Factor</i>	5
The I Process	<i>Gary Hipworth</i>	6
Responses to George Schloss's Essay –Now 77	<i>Warwick Wakefield</i>	8
	<i>Donald Ingram Smith</i>	8
	<i>Jo Willis</i>	9
	<i>Gary Hipworth</i>	9
	<i>Anne Seward</i>	9
	<i>Marian Nisbett</i>	10
	<i>Alan Mann</i>	10
	<i>Jim Clatfelter</i>	11
	Workshops, Retreats, Weekends	
	Richard Lang 27 Feb & 2 March	12
	Penny Fenner 22-24 Feb	5
	Krishnamurti Weekend – Katoomba 22-24 Feb	12
	Dialogue Meetings	5
	Other Sydney meetings	11

Editor's note

There are a lot of things happening in Sydney in February/March which means we are carrying nearly as much advertising as that famous glossy 'What is Enlightenment'. I'll try not to let it get out of hand. Thank you to this month's contributors. The contents include a number of responses to George Schloss's essay which seems to have generated both light and heat which, from the editorial viewpoint, is very encouraging.

For those of you within striking distance of Sydney I'm including (in the postal version) the brochure for the Richard Lang 'Seeing' workshop on the 2 March. I hope you will welcome his visit as an opportunity to get to the bottom of the Headless business I'm always going on about but never seem to be able to explain to your satisfaction. There is also a Penny Fenner retreat in February (see page 5).

We are grateful to the Theosophical Society for including Richard (see page 12) in their programme for the Wednesday talk. We have stuck out our necks for the Saturday all-day workshop by renting a large and rather swish air conditioned venue which will provide the perfect environment. We have set a low fee in the hope of attracting sufficient numbers to give us a break-even return. The Buddhist library people are including our leaflet in their February newsletter, we have put advertisements on two websites and I've written to the ABC religion/philosophy programmes in the hope of stimulating some favourable radio coverage. If you have any other contacts I could follow up or bright ideas in general please let me have them.

The Greville Street meetings are going through another "Are we in a rut" cycle. It has been suggested we consider the 'hot topics' approach again. I am in favour of an experiment along these lines notwithstanding the heresy of introducing 'agendas' into Dialogue. See Marian's note on page 10.

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 thoughts, experiences, discoveries and any responses to what you read here.

Subscriptions: Postal \$12 per annum, Email – Free

Islam, War and Toleration from Keith Price

Like most of you, no doubt, I have been reading a lot of the material about Islam that has been circulating in the list and elsewhere since Sept 11, and decided to do a bit of my own research, as I freely admit to a previous woeful ignorance of the nitty gritty of Islamic religion and culture, except of course in passing (eg. some bits picked up from John Julius Norwich's excellent History of Byzantium). The results so far have been very interesting. I have been reading *The Battle for God, Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, by Karen Armstrong (HarperCollins 2000), and *Why I Am Not A Muslim*, by Ibn Warraq (Prometheus 1995). Especially from the latter, it is clear that there has been much propagating of Western and Islamic apologist myths about Islam in the current flood of articles, etc, and the implications are rather disturbing, I'm afraid. Take the following from James Murray in *The Australian*:

' Contrary to what Christians have often claimed, conversion at the point of the sword is against the teachings of the Koran.'

This is at best a misleading half-truth. On the general question of whether the Koran sanctions war against the ' infidel' or not, it is possible to support either view from the actual text. What is not very well known (and which Koranic apologists never mention), is that there is a very convenient doctrine of ' abrogation' in the Koran, according to which later ' revelations' can contradict and cancel out earlier ones. Warraq:

' ...the doctrine of abrogation...does pose problems for apologists of Islam, since all the passages preaching tolerance are found in Meccan, i.e. early suras, and all the passages recommending killing, decapitating and maiming are Medinan, i.e., later: "tolerance" has been abrogated by "intolerance." For example, the famous verse at sura 9.5, "Slay the idolaters wherever you find them," is said to have canceled 124 verses that dictate tolerance and patience.' (p.115)

What this appears to imply is that the more orthodox and strict Muslims are in their faith, the more likely they are going to be taught that ' jihad' means actual war against unbelievers rather than some kind of ' spiritualising' notion like ' self-struggle' (Incidentally, I would like to know if the ' self struggle' advocated by Islamic modernists is likely to be psychologically benign, or perhaps some kind of neurotic and self-defeating self-hatred. Perhaps they should just toss the idea out altogether.) A related point is that, contrary to what writers like Karen Armstrong say, it is not really true that what we call ' Islamic fundamentalism' is an essentially modern phenomenon, caused by (in her terms) transformation of a religious mythos into a perverted pseudo-logos (i.e the literal truth). Dark Ages (i.e original) Islam, like its Christian and Jewish competitors, was a mythos which already took itself to be a logos - myths are always originally taken as the literal truth - and so Bin Laden and his minions are not mistaken in what they think their religion asks of them, just in thinking such a religion could possibly be true. Here is what the Ayatollah Khomeini thought about jihad, and he was a very close scholar of Islamic doctrine:

' Islam makes it incumbent on all adult males, provided they are not disabled and incapacitated, to prepare themselves for the conquest of [other] countries so that the writ of Islam is obeyed in every country of the world.

But those who study Islamic Holy War will understand why Islam wants to conquer the whole world...Those who know nothing of Islam pretend that Islam counsels against war. Those [who say this] are witless. Islam says: Kill all the unbelievers just as they would kill you all! Does this mean that Muslims should sit back until they are devoured by [the unbelievers]? Islam says: Kill them [the non-Muslims], put them to the sword and scatter [their armies]. Does this mean sitting back until [non-Muslims] overcome us? Islam says: Kill in the service of Allah those who may want to kill you! Does this mean that we should surrender to the enemy? Islam says; Whatever good there is exists thanks to the sword and in the shadow of the sword! People cannot be made obedient except with the sword! The sword is the key to Paradise, which can be opened only for Holy Warriors! There are hundreds of other [Koranic] psalms and Hadiths [sayings of the Prophet] urging Muslims to value war and to fight. Does all that mean that Islam is a religion that prevents men from waging war? I spit upon those foolish souls who make such a claim.' (Quoted in Warraq p.11-12)

There is a lot more, including how marginal official toleration of Jews and Christians - as bare third class citizens - was in Medieval Islam, and how other religions were almost always not tolerated at all, not to mention the terrible sexual chattel status of women. The point of all this, I should hasten to add, is most definitely not to back up John Howard's rockhearted and fear-based immigration policies, nor the conduct of the ' War On Terror' . It is to acknowledge the reality that orthodox Islam really is one of the problems we face, and that it is no good trying to whitewash it and pretend that it is a nicer and more ' spiritual' creed than it actually is. Give me orthodox Christianity any day - at least Jesus genuinely believed and practised the idea that love is at the core of reality! What is to be done, then?

In a sense, this is perhaps not our particular problem, but that of all those Islamic clergy and ordinary people who

are desperately trying to bring Islam into the modern world constructively. Can anything survive of it in the process? Will anything ultimately survive of Christianity, and if not, what chance would Islam have? These are very difficult problems. In the meantime, Ibn Warraq makes the point that the principal victims of Islam are the Muslim peoples themselves, so compassion and care should be stimulated by uncovering the rather unpleasant myths that so many of them are mired in. Perhaps we could encourage them to become Sufis.

Keith Price

The above article first appeared as a contribution to the Open Spirit List from which I lifted it with the author's permission. Ed.

Warwick Wakefield on Douglas Harding *This is a sequel to Warwick's report in Now letter 51, Feb '99 in which he recorded his meeting with Douglas at Nacton, Suffolk. Ed.*

In the past I have been very dismissive of Douglas Harding and "headlessness". To begin with I certainly tried very hard to see what it is that Douglas is getting at. But none of my efforts, over a period of years, came to anything. It was not until I met Satyananda, a young South American teacher in London, that I had my first glimpse of the answer to Ramana Maharshi's question, "Who am I?" It was in the course of a discussion with Satyananda that it became clear that "I" is not a body and not a person – "I" is simply that which sees, "I" has no shape and no qualities at all. But that still left me completely unimpressed with Douglas Harding and his techniques.

I was talking about it the other day with John Wren-Lewis. I said something to this effect, "What is Douglas Harding on about? Why is he trying to make the point that you have no head? That doesn't get you anywhere. The real thing to see is that you have no body at all, no body and no mind. Just thinking that you are some kind of weird body, some headless monster, is no advance."

And John said something to this effect, "Douglas isn't really saying that you are a headless body. He's making the same point, that who you really are is simply that which sees. But he's devised these techniques to bring you back to that viewpoint easily. The ordinary understanding of things is that you see from your eyes which are in your head, but Douglas reminds you that your everyday experience is that you see from this emptiness here, that it happens all the time, you can get in touch with it whenever you want to. He brings the spiritual mystery into everyday life."

And at long last the pennies dropped. (In the unlikely event that the Nowletter has any young, hip readers who only ever use their mobile phones when they're out and about, they won't really appreciate what a joy it used to be, in the days when eighty percent of public phones were vandalised or just malfunctioning, to hear the pennies drop and get through to the one you needed to talk with.) And John Wren-Lewis is right, the Harding approach is something you can employ whenever you feel the desire to do so. It doesn't require a great emotional stimulus, it doesn't require that you wrestle with hugely difficult ideas, and you can get the feel of it at once.

But to put this all in perspective, it has to be stated that I would never have got the point of the Harding techniques if I hadn't already got the same point from another approach. And the only one I've ever met who got it first time was Alan Mann, who had spent years and years attempting to find this same viewpoint by listening to Krishnamurti and contemplating the writings of Thomas Traherne and other mystics. I think it is very unlikely, though perfectly possible, that an absolutely new beginner, if such a one exists, would walk in off the streets, try the experiments and get it straight away.

Warwick Wakefield

Dialogue 1 – from Barry Hora

On Saturday last I attended the second Dialogue meeting held on the Gold Coast. It's only a small group of people with two main common interests. The first being the work and writings of David Bohm and secondly the challenge of change.

At that meeting, right from initial conversation, I observed myself again being caught up in the context and this was because my statements (assumptions) were under attack. When I realized I was reacting by defending my assumptions (caught up in context) I chose, at that moment, not to go down that path. It was a very definite choice not to do something, not to be something else, but not to do.

I changed my path and direction by making another statement, that was a fact to me in that present moment, arising from my direct self-observation. In operating from this observation I found my attention increasing and in attending in this way I was starting to be WHO I really, really, really AM. I found this very catching for the whole group was also attending and the group observation and statement, at that moment was; "attention is the key".

Barry Hora

Dialogue 2 - 'Dialogue about Dialogue' from Lyn Willmott

Last Saturday I joined a group of about 20 people in Melbourne, meeting to participate in what Gary Hipworth titled a Dialogue. As he explained, Dialogue can offer fundamental learning through the exchange of ideas. It unravels meaning, offering insight and understanding instead of conflict and argument. Gary explained that he is drawn to this method because of his abhorrence of violence. A civilized and understandable position, and who would disagree? Yelling at each other will not change anything; but unfortunately, because our beliefs reflect who we are I don't think any type of intellectual interaction will bring about radical change. Certainly Dialogue helps with the process of listening, and accepting another point of view. It's claimed it can help bring a realisation of self, but can it impact on deep and fundamental beliefs that actually reflect who we are?

So here it is, the monumental chasm preventing real human intimacy. The structure of our beliefs; bringing into focus the vital question of how dialogue interacts with belief?

If we are able to agree that the human framework of personality ego and belief supports human action/interaction (without even considering the all important Self for a moment) then no matter how much meaning develops in dialogue, there will be very little real change. The personality type has built a belief system conducive to the personality's survival, and the ego is in constant support of this. Sooner or later a free exchange of ideas and information will come up against some mighty belief barrier. Call it dogma or brainwashing, it does not alter the fact that the belief system is the structure that supports the survival of the individual. Experience, which is constantly forming and reshaping this structure, is the major pathway to change.

Talking about it is a process of thought, an intellectual exercise that may sometimes touch the heart, but is only suitable for some personality types. That being said, Gary went on to talk about thought. And we all seemed to agree that thought was a human process, like breathing or walking, and that it could trick one into getting caught up in the process, and for many people, the ongoing cycle of thought was like a Ferris-wheel that never stopped, never allow them to dismount, making thought an ongoing, never ending process (whilst one was caught up in its power). We also seemed to agree that the Self was not the thinker. That the Self was a separate entity, standing apart from thought. The thinker is part of the thinking process, part of Gary's string of ideas giving the illusion of a personal reality. The Self is separate.

It was while we were discussing 'thought' that the subject of imagination was introduced, and this human function was lumped in with the thought process. Immediately an argument developed between two of us. One an artist, the other a psychologist. The artist maintained that imagination although seemingly a product of thought, was far different in function and intent. The psychologist claimed that all functions of the mind are to be classified as thought.

So here was an example of the two opposing beliefs. Perhaps before I go on to describe how Gary used this argument as an example of our need for Dialogue I should enlarge on the argument

This is where I have to identify myself as the champion of imagination, and because I was so busy arguing, I did not hear the psychologist's full explanation of how imagination fits into the thought process, so cannot include in this report. Ah-ha I hear Gary saying... but for me it does not really matter, because my absolute belief brought about by living experience (imagination has often freed me from the bounds of thought) will always power my passion. I know I am being unfair here because I am not giving a balanced account of the argument, but my belief claims that imagination flies far beyond thought. Imagination builds a personal reality, an internal place that stands apart from material reality. Imagination is not part of intuition, although this function can often enhance imagination. Imagination is not meditation, though this mental practice often stimulates imagination. Imagination is not dreaming (symbols within the dream often lodge in memory as if an actual experience) yet the dream can add to imagination. None of these functions belongs to thought, and all of them, dreaming, intuitive understanding, and meditative insight crowd into the imagination, lifting the Self beyond the shackles of thought, allowing expansion into other realities. So according to my belief imagination is not thought.

As mentioned, Gary interrupted our argument, using it as an example of a lack of dialogue, suggesting that if we had enquired and investigated each other's point of view, a third option would have been immediately obvious. Not that either protagonist would have changed their belief, but it would have added weight to the overall dialogue. It might have led to David Bohm's proposal that if we inquire into our content, motivation, and the beliefs we might bring about a better understanding of each other. The reasonable, rational part of me nods in agreement, but the passionate, belief driven, activist knows that dialogue will only bring about minuscule change. Experience is the real teacher.

Lyn Willmott

Dialogue 3 - from Don Factor

The following piece is a note from Don factor in reply to Terry O'Brien who sent him a copy of his essay on Dialogue which appeared in Now letter 76. Don is one of the Bohm, Garrett, Factor trio which kicked off dialogue in its present form. Ed.

'Since [David Bohm's] death we have attempted to continue our exploration [into dialogue] in this same direction. These days there are no stars or perceived leaders to whom members of the group can look for aid or advice.

Participation has thus come to be seen as a collective undertaking, a mutual responsibility for what goes on—or what doesn't go on. If someone attempts to control the group process or to guide it toward his or her objectives or personal viewpoint it is incumbent on other members of the group to query this, no matter what authority might be claimed.

If an individual in a group feels that the conversation has become stuck, circular or out of line with the intentions of dialogue, then it is important for that person to say so in order that the whole group can look at what is actually happening. The intent is neither to criticize nor to alter what is happening but to try and see how it arises and what it means. "In other words, your perception is as interesting to me as mine might be to you."

Don Factor

DIALOGUE MEETINGS				
LOCATION	DAY	MEETING PLACE	TIME & CONTACT	Phone Nos.
City	Third Saturday	Theosophical Society Level 2, 484 Kent St., City	2.30pm Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379
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
Nowra	First Saturday	The Tea Club, Berry Street, Opposite Roxy Cinema	4-6pm -Riche	4423 4774

PENNY FENNER SYDNEY WEEKEND RETREAT

22nd (7.30-9.45pm), 23rd & 24th February, 2002 (9.30 am – 5.30 pm)

The program is based on the discovery that effective action, underscored by deep stillness, is essential for creating a joyful, fulfilling life. Penny brings together the quintessence of the Asian wisdom traditions (DzogChen, Madhyamika, Advaita) with skills for actively engaging in the world. Her work breaks the artificial boundaries often created between spiritual practice and life. Working within a gentle contemplative environment we will move seamlessly between stillness and action, speech and silence, knowing and not-knowing, learning and letting go.

As a result you will discover how to live and work from a base of effortlessness rather than stress and overwhelm. You will access skills for accurately reading the world and managing complex commitments with ease and precision. You will connect with the core of your being, the source of inner peace and self-nourishment always, already within you. Here we discover the experience often spoken about in Zen and other traditions as "effortless being" and "pure presence".

Penny's work is experiential rather than theoretical. It transcends boundaries, enabling people to experience depth and richness in their relationships and business. Penny is sought for her passion and ability to make profound spiritual truth available and accessible, and able to be integrated into business and daily life. Penny is author (with Peter Fenner) of *Essential Wisdom Teachings – the way to inner peace* (Nicholas Hays, 2001).

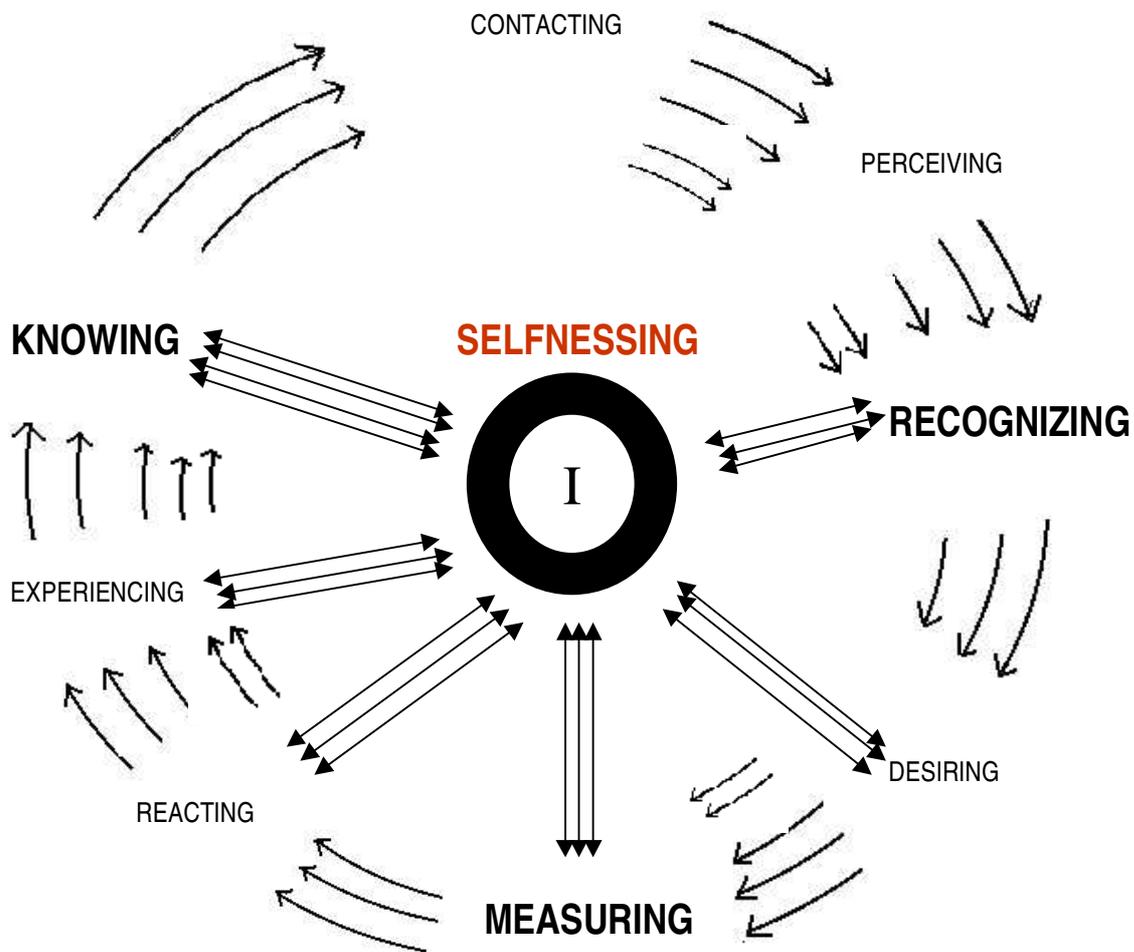
VENUE: Marist Centre, 1 Mary Street, Hunters Hill, NSW COST: \$295 (inc GST). Early bird (before February 1) \$265. Contact: 23a Britten Street, Glen Iris, Victoria, 3146

The I Process- from Gary Hipworth

Is it possible for the mind to be quiet, even for a moment, and discover if there is something beyond its own workings? Can one really find out for oneself what is true? I have been very serious and interested in these questions most of my life because otherwise life seemed to me to be stupid, trivial and absurdly pointless.

This is what I am discovering. I have developed a model of the I process by simply observing what is actually happening on a moment to moment basis. You may have a different viewpoint and, if you are willing, please get in touch so we can exchange/ share our insights.

THE I PROCESS



I have discovered that in the moment to moment seeing of the I process, there is freedom. This did not happen for some time. It was only when I saw **the whole process** repeating itself over and over 'ad nauseam'. This insight suddenly made me aware of how silly and unintelligent it was to live this way for one second more. It also made me see that the self was an illusion. No, I don't mean the I process is an illusion, but the feeling that there is a permanent entity somewhere in my head. How simple! Just turn your attention 180 degrees and be aware inwards as the I process unfolds. Don't use memory...it will try and rationalize what it sees. Use objective awareness.

I have deliberately used verbs for all the individual steps because this seems to me what is actually happening – all movement and no fixed anything! On the diagram I have shown KNOWING, RECOGNIZING, MEASURING and SELFNESSING (see my definition below) in bold and larger type than the other steps in the process as these 4 sub-processes occur later in the development phase of the I process, but then assume a central role. I may not be making

this clear...I mean that contacting, perceiving, desiring, reacting, experiencing and return to contacting is the process that seems to occur in very early childhood before self-consciousness has even got going – very much like the animal instincts. Then we learn to associate words and things and this is when *knowing, recognizing, measuring and 'selfnessing'* start up, almost simultaneously.

The following are the steps in the I process:

Step 1: CONTACTING occurs when I meet directly with any of life's many and varied challenges. There is contact with the world at all times although I am not aware of many of these contacts.

Step 2: PERCEIVING is the faculty of my consciousness to become aware of specific contacts that fall within the frequency range of my senses. If I am concentrating on other matters or day-dreaming, perception will not take place.

Step 3: RECOGNIZING is the conscious act of 're-knowing'. I can only recognize what I know. We are rarely spontaneous in our behaviour because we are endeavoring to know what we are dealing with before we do anything and hoping like crazy that there is an internal rule that will inform us how we should behave.

Step 4: DESIRING arises from recognition of the thing perceived. I either want to possess the thing or want to avoid the thing or in most cases I don't care one way or the other. I find that desire can consume me unless I am constantly aware of my true motives ie the deepest ones.

Step 5: MEASURING is the conscious act of weighing up the 'pros and cons' of possessing or not possessing the object of my desire. I find myself applying this judgement almost before I can do anything about it...other than be aware of it as it is happening.

Step 6: REACTING follows very quickly the steps of desiring and measuring. Most of the time this is an automatic reaction unless again I am sufficiently awake to the whole of life at that moment. Then right action which is an intelligent response to the whole situation that is unfolding may occur.

Step 7: EXPERIENCING is the following through of the reaction, sometimes with unintended consequences for me and unfortunate others. It is only after the event that I might realize my mistakes. These learnings are memorized as knowledge.

Step 8: KNOWING is the accumulated knowledge that I have gained from many life experiences and the learnt knowledge of my education years. Without a conceptual framework I would not be able to write this article in a way that communicates meaningful information. Knowing also includes the distilled insights and wisdom of living and learning from one's major failures and successes and emotionally traumatic events.

The centre: SELFNESSING is a self-coined word (ah, the power of the pen!) which comes from the word 'SELFNESS' *n.* meaning individuality, personality, essence. I have simply turned it into a verb. WHY? I have found no evidence of an entity, a fixed, unchanging 'I' of any kind. (If you can prove otherwise you may have whatever wealth and money that I possess. I know when I am safe!) I find a living, changing process that has a past, a name and a projected future and is full of accumulated knowledge, core values, beliefs, unfinished or residual desires and related feelings (that is, ideas about ourselves and the world that we believe are absolutely necessary for our continuation as separate individual personalities...in fact these core ideas are us! It may also include a self-created life purpose that is supposed to produce happiness and fulfillment but can only postpone the day of Self-realization).

Selfnessing begins with a small 'I' process in early childhood, and gradually builds to a relatively stable position in early adulthood (nature loves a balance) and finally develops a thick outer wall that isolates itself from all but its closest friends and family by middle age.

So there it is. The thought process has created the I! When I am not aware of the whole dynamics of this process, I become trapped again in confusion, stupidity, conflict and sorrow. Each new moment gives you and me the possibility of waking up to a miracle or remaining asleep in our self-created dream world. Yes, each moment we get another chance. Much better odds than the one I just gave you about proving the existence of a permanent entity!

Gary Hipworth

PS I have also developed an animated version of the diagram in this article (it shows the continuous movement that I have tried to convey in this article much more effectively) – you will need Powerpoint and preferably sound on your computer. I can email this version to you. My email address is seachange@ozemail.com.au

Responses to George Schloss's Essay –Nowletter 77

Warwick Wakefield

Thank you for sending me the latest Nowletter. I couldn't read it. It is a very strange mixture of classical references and journalistic cliché.

Mr Schloss seems to be saying that all spiritual movements/teachers were just a preparation for Douglas and his "experiments". Is that what he's saying? Because, if that is what he's saying, he seems to be suffering from the particular mental aberration that takes the form of asserting that "my guru" is the greatest of all time. The key word is "my".

Haven't we seen this with Christians, with Muslims, with Rajneeshes, with Cohenites with Byron Katie's, with the followers of Free John and Ram Das and Karl Marx and many, many others?

It's understandable behaviour in adolescents, but in grown men and women...?

Sorry, Alan; I was very much looking forward to reading this piece but.....

I replied to Warwick: *"I don't think he's saying all that hogone before is/was of no value but, on the contrary, that it is/was essential to the transition from believing to seeing. What he describes as a change in kind rather than degree."*

Warwick then said:

Do you mean by this that his position is that none of the thousands of Buddhists in India or Tibet or China or Japan or Burma etc., etc., was able to "see"? Or that very few of them were able to see? How would he compare the Buddhists' success rate, amongst devoted aspirants, to the success rate amongst ~~the~~ who try the DH experiments?

Papaji and Ramana Maharshi seem to have been able to assist many to see; how does he compare Douglas to them? It does seem to be a comparison that he's doing, don't you think?

I don't think it is viable to say that ~~all~~ you had, amongst the Sufis and the Advaitists and the Buddhists and the other great Indian teachers was faith or belief, even if that is what you see amongst nominal Buddhists today. I think there was and is a fair amount of seeing going on, even if they call it Self realization rather than "seeing". (I don't think that Douglas's specialised use of the word *seeing* should be allowed to obscure the pre-existing use of that word by spiritual chaps.) Even amongst the Christians there were people such as Thomas Traherne, whom you and I agree were able to see their true natures, and I have no doubt that there were many more that I haven't heard of.

But I must confess that it is the style rather than the content of his writing that most daunts me. He does ramble awfully. He reminds me of the children you occasionally meet, who, when you go to their houses, want to show you all their toys at once. When you talk to John Wren-Lewis he likes to cover a very wide field, from personal reminiscences to the viewpoints of scientists, philosophers and spiritual teachers, but when he writes he goes straight to the point in prose that is as clear as a bell.

Warwick

Donald Ingram Smith

I found George Schloss's Essay into Headlessness and the End of History to be an expanding experience.

As I read the essay I realized I was being permitted to appreciate the diverse ways thinking takes in its attempts to understand an old problem, and in this instance, the way George reaches his comprehension of Headlessness. His often convoluted form of writing sometimes makes his intended meaning difficult to grasp because it embraces not only what he desires to say but includes the twists and personal side-tracks that expose the detail and complexity in his working through the startling implications of Headlessness and selflessness.

The essay, Alan's questions and George's replies openly reveal one man's understanding of the non-existence of a permanent self. George does not see the self as an ego, accumulating (ever-gathering greater experience, more knowledge) but as an eliminating process and free from the implications of the inaccessible past and the unforeseeable future: neither actually exists.

In exposing himself and his sightings George presents the possibility of an infinitely pliable mind free from concepts.

The 77 issue of NOW, devoted solely to the Schloss essay has a proper place in the investigation of uncovering the belief in an ever evolving self.

Donald

Jo Willis

Well! what can I say? For someone like myself, endeavouring to get a little bit of a grip on "headlessness" - it sent me to bed with a head(less)ache. I kept asking "Err, what' s the point here?" I gather Mr. Schloss is an educated and extremely well read man. The way he answers, or in fact doesn' t answer the questions or get to the point, makes me think he would make an excellent lawyer. Even the biography, which I could have found very interesting - took me down meandering paths I didn' t need or want to go on. I again picked up Douglas Harding' s book and found a concise, articulate and understandable account on the subject. (I am still grappling with it however.) Mr Schloss lost me in his wanderings by page two - although I did stick it to the bitter end. Even Homers Odyssey was far less of a floral arrangement and vastly more entertaining.

Jo

Gary Hipworth

Well, if George Schloss' article was meant to answer the question that you stated in the first paragraph of the article, namely, ' why the significance of Headlessness was not more widely acknowledged' then ~~it~~ it did not do it for me. I have the feeling that George has something important to say about this subject, but it gets lost in tangential issues and as Douglas Harding put it, "the fog of words". Pity.

Gary

Anne Seward

George Schloss's historical perspective on the significance of headlessness is, as far as one knows, the first serious intellectual development of Douglas Harding's work. Like George, I find myself drawn to the longest possible view, the widest possible embrace, and, like him, I have always been convinced that the emergence of the experiments is itself an event of great import in the larger scheme of things (though of minimal import ultimately no doubt!).

My conviction rests on what I believe is their potential to generate a *universal* (and not merely individual or group) *reassessment of what it is to be*. This potential for a new *collective* consideration of the most fundamental of all questions (which of course invites any number of potentially equally valid responses) is down to the fact that the experiments have been thrown up by the global scientific spirit of our age. In so far as Western science drives the modern world, they speak *out of* and therefore *to* our condition.

It is true that little or no sense of the profundity of what the experiments show may be grasped at first sight, and that if it is, it may be strongly resisted. But, in the view we are exploring here, the subjective consensus which a Seeing workshop yields in the arena of pure science is not to be despised, for in the long-run, and in terms of involving everybody, what may look like merely superficial and grudging acknowledgement may nevertheless play an essential part in establishing a sane environment. And it may require very few actually applying this science of life to hold the world together. (In fact, it takes only One.) In any case, as John Wren-Lewis has shown in his account of his near death experience, even outright dismissal may not constitute an individual's last thoughts on the subject. There is plenty of evidence to show that even the briefest of glimpses can have long-lasting underground effects.

In making sense of the past, George presents quite another kind of evaluation regarding the appearance of the experiments. I am astonished, to put it mildly, at the amount of evidence he brings to bear on his claim that headlessness reveals the meaning and constitutes the fulfilment of history, no less – and *world* history at that, if modern science is judged to be the result, which it is. I cannot overstate how much I appreciate what he is doing to show the world the relevance of what has happened. His thesis is simply staggering, and, which is of particular interest to me, it clears the ground for looking to the future.

On this front, I believe that Douglas' emphasis on *perception*, and the *spirit of science* with its demand for *evidence*, opens up a category of religious experience ripe for development. WHO or (perhaps more relevantly) WHAT ARE WE in the light of our rapidly increasing ability to manipulate genes, replace human with animal, vegetable and computer parts, clone ourselves, download brains onto silicone chips, redesign our bodies for space travel, and many other equally nightmarish things? Not only that, WHAT MIGHT WE BECOME?

While we may once have been shocked and disoriented to find ourselves displaced from the centre of the universe, technologies like these are creating what must be an even more disturbing situation, for they rupture that sense of

ourselves as *human* beings, that sense of *person*-al identity, the demarcation which has so creatively and for so long connected us with Spirit.

It is the story of this God-man relationship, in which traditional religion has been the dominant factor, which makes up George's history. However effective these religions may – or may not – have been in serving humanity (as we have known it) by grounding us in Reality, they can have little or nothing to say that is relevant in respect of these unprecedented technological advances, which must change forever our assumptions about what we are and how we should live.

The question is, how can we cope with this self-dissolution (or is it self-expansion?) without recourse to That which we *eternally* are? Without awareness of That which does not change we have no bearings, no conscious connection with Reality and therefore no wisdom base. The beauty of the experiments is that, independently of religion (so tainted by irrelevance), they address this need for immutability and groundedness, and indeed for direction, *by making conscious the very Spirit of science itself* (which turns out to be none other than the very Spirit of religion), laying down a new bridge between It and humanity, as well as between It and the post-human world which we may be glimpsing on the horizon. Since there is no turning back, we would do well to become fully conscious of the real Source of this brave new creature, lest, denying ultimate responsibility for what we create, we imagine it controls us rather than we it.

How beautifully ironic that simply by deploying the objective Spirit of science simultaneously both inwards and outwards (which is what the experiments do) the *spiritual* nature of the physical world becomes plain for all to see – incidentally dissolving the fear, which at least some of us have harboured, that scientific knowledge represents an alien and threatening power.

The route by which we arrived at this point is the fabulous story told by George, which the future will surely match in terms of terror, fascination and challenge. Our saving grace will be What it has always been, the Gracious, Self-Originating Present, more wonder-filled, because more real than anything we could imagine happening within It.

The experiments, equipped as they are to address the two sides of the historical divide which George's analysis suggests, invite you to check *by literally looking to see* if this Glorious Presence, the Source of all phenomena and of all formulations, is not pre-eminently the Source of you.

Anne Seward

With thanks to Bill Garside for unwittingly inspiring this article.

Heckler' s Corner– from Marian Nisbett

As a fairly regular attendee of Dialogue and a reader of the newsletter, I' ve been feeling some irritation lately. The old question of why keep on keeping on came up again.

Okay, so I did attend the January meeting still with mud on my boots from wading, on two separate occasions, through the twenty pages of the George Schloss article (Dec 2001). You might think, in a fair and just Universe, such dogged persistence would surely be rewarded with some insight into the ' simple' and ' obvious' ~~wading~~ concepts presented. Not, alas, for this outsider.

Dare I confess here, in whispers, that I' m not one of the ' in group' . I' m not au fait with Krishnamurti, Harding, Traherne, (should we now add Schloss and Lang?). These learned gents are not even on my must-read list. So I' m a failure, I still haven' t a clue what The Truth is, whether I can ' see' what' s ' really, really going on' or not.

For a group which is not purported to be a topic/agenda discussion group, but dedicated to the ' here and now' , there seems to be a lot of ' aboutism' about.

Somebody out there will surely be able to straighten me out and point me towards the light.

Hopefully Yours

Marian Nisbett

Alan Mann

I thought I'd make my response in the form of a summary. I later thought I should have asked the author to write one, in the first place, as an introductory paragraph to his essay. So here is an attempt to summarize George's thesis which is another way of trying to say what I got out of it.

My interpretation of the essay is that the arrival of the experiments constitutes not simply another addition to understanding; a change in degree but a change in kind; an epochal shift. For the first time, a revelation, formerly

achieved only by few and often only as the result of intensive searching, spiritual discipline, crisis and/or grace, etc., is now available for the looking to anyone with 'eyes to see'.

The apprehension of 'essence', or awareness of awareness, which is the aim and outcome of the experiments involves a turning inside-out in which history, which is normally understood as the context in which this moment of experiencing occurs, is seen as coming to an 'end' in and as an expression of THIS, the one and only context in which all arises and falls away. And, paradoxically, George manages to contextualise the inversion in terms of its historic relevance as well.

The essay describes the progression of what we normally understand as history as a necessary precondition for this transformation in the same way as the individual moves from unity of early childhood, through personal development to a point where there is the possibility of integration, a 'wholing'.

The transformation is not primarily an addition to knowledge but an intensification of Being. And as a result of wrestling with the essay and other exchanges with George, I saw in my personal story a battleground for the opposing 'forces' of the sudden versus gradual debate—but more of that another time. End of summary.

And whilst we are informed on a daily basis that we are in the middle of, or on the verge of 'great change' where else do we find a messenger informing us the change has taken place, is taking place and it is not a matter of believing any longer but of seeing and the seeing is here for the mere looking.

How closely my interpretation fits the facts as George sees them is important to me as shown by my questions to him. However, I'm not really sure how much is what I'm reading into what he is saying based on my own perspective. I cannot understand readers' claims of 'unread ability' as I have read it many times and every time I trip over something remarkably fresh which I completely missed on previous visits.

Whilst I am still uncertain about the need for 'Certainty', I consider his whole approach a great shaking of the foundations. I have an emailable edition of the sixty-four page version, which I indexed for ease of access, if anyone else wants to dig deeper.

Alan

Jim Clatfelter

Here' s another verse from a phrase that George reminded me that St Paul uses. Freedom and surrender and unknown futures! Could it be any better?

Sweet Surrender

I do not long for liberty
When Seeing from the absent face
But find abiding freedom as
A prisoner of the flow of grace.

I had never heard "prisoner of grace" until I read it George' s article in the last Newsletter. It' s perfect! Not a prisoner of fate or destiny. More open than that. Open for whatever comes.

Jim

See page 12 for details of the forthcoming 'Seeing Who You Really Are' - Workshops with Richard Lang

Academy of the Word Seminar Programme – Under St Peter's Church, Devonshire St., Surry Hills. Dr Alex Reichel (02) 9310 4504 – 2nd & 4th Tuesdays - **Second** Tuesdays 6.15pm - Healing & Well-being - **Fourth** Tuesdays 6pm - State of the World

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

Krishnamurti Gathering – Katoomba 22/23/24 February 2002

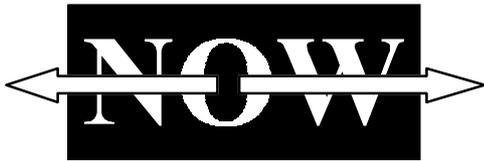
KRISHNAMURTI GATHERING - February 22/23/24 - 2002 - Information Checklist

Location: ' Karuna' is situated in the Blue mountains in lovely bushland accessed from Explorers Rd. which is 3 km . West of Katoomba (set your odometer parallel to rail station if approaching from Sydney). The turn off to the left conies up quite suddenly. but don' t panic if you miss it as the road is a crescent and the next turn off down the highway is also Explorers Rd. From the first turn off - ' Kuruna* is approximately half way along Explorers Rd. on the left side - look for the sign.

Cost - Whole weekend ~ \$160 - flat rate from Fri. evening to Sunday afternoon (includes all meals & accommodation) Deposit - \$50 - non-refundable. Day visit - \$30 - includes morning & afternoon teas, and vegetarian lunch. Day & evening - \$55 - includes veg. dinner as well

Pre- payment: Arrangements to be handled by Geoffrey & Shirley Miller freecall 1800633727 between 8 & 10pm (NSW time) and Registration forms to be sent back to - The Treasurer. Krishnamurti Australia, C/- P.O. box 458. Burleigh Heads Qd.

Last minute arrangements: - To be directed to Terry O'Brien prior to or upon arrival - ph: 99498379 fax: 99498470 or from early Friday morning only - mob. 0407038215 49 Peronne Ave. Clontarf - Sydney 2093 All cheques/money orders to be made out to **Krishnamurti Australia** and will be duly receipted.



If unable to deliver please return to:
81 Greville Street, Chatswood 2067
amann@bigpond.net.au

Seeing Who You Really Are - Workshops with Richard Lang

Wednesday 27 Feb 2002 – 7pm Evening Workshop at The Theosophical Society – Level 2, 484 Kent St., Sydney

This talk has been included as part of the Theosophical Society's programme of talks and seminars and will provide an introduction to the method described below and an opportunity, for those unable to attend the full workshop, to meet and hear Richard.

Saturday 2 March 2002 – 9am to 5pm - North Sydney Community Centre, 2 Ernest Place, Crows Nest

The all-day workshop is an opportunity for you to experience a contemporary method of spiritual awakening that is refreshingly direct, accessible, and down-to-earth. Richard Lang, long-time friend of the English philosopher Douglas Harding, author of this method, has been conducting workshops for nearly thirty years. Often people who attend come away astonished for the simple reason that they actually do discover who they really are. This workshop will point you home to who you really are – an awakening that is at the same time profound, simple, and applicable in everyday situations.

You are warmly invited to attend. Since Richard is only here for a few days, it is a unique opportunity to experience this method of Awakening.

One day only, limited attendance. Cost \$30 - To reserve a place ring Alan Mann (02) 9419 7394 and for more info about Headlessness check www.headless.org or get hold of a book or two by Douglas Harding