

Issue 95 –December 2003

Meetings (10.30am - 3rd Sunday of every month)

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The theme of this month's issue is transformation. This partly because that was the subject chosen for this year's gathering at Springbrook but also because, whilst we were up there, Barry Hora introduced me to a paper by Dara Tatray which she had presented to an earlier gathering at the same venue some weeks previously and throws light on the ground we were to cover ourselves during the Krishnamurti get-together.

There has been some response to Gary Hipworth's article in the last issue. This month we have Warwick Wakefield's comment and I'm hoping for additional samples of the ongoing exchanges in later issues. Warwick has also been in the USA meeting Francis Lucille and I asked him for the note on his visit which appears on page 9.

Speaking of the New Year, this issue goes out with our best wishes to you all and a reminder that we are hoping that one of the highlights of 2004 will be the appearance of The 9.15 to Nirvana.

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.

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Transforming Knowledge Into Wisdom from Dara Tatray

A presentation to the Theosophical Society' s spring retreat on "Body,Mind and Spirit" at Springbrook 2003.

I should point out that this is not a talk designed to impart a great deal of information about the subject: rather it is an attempt to enquire into the nature of thought, a subject which concerns us all. This is not a peculiar choice of mine, or a lame attempt to imitate J. Krishnamurti, but the result of the fact that any serious discussion of knowledge and wisdom leads inexorably to a consideration of the nature of thought, and of awareness. It cannot be helped.

In an enquiry such as this it is very important that everyone involved, that is the listener and the speaker, locates within themselves the objects under discussion. If the speaker is talking about knowledge and the listener pays attention to the words only, then what we will be talking about is empty words. In any metaphysical discussion, it is vital to locate within ourselves the objects under discussion; after all, within ourselves is the only place where thought, knowledge, wisdom, and all other metaphysical objects are to be found. It is particularly important that we participate in the act of listening in today's talk, because the answers are not going to be given by the speaker. The answers reside in the problems themselves, in the objects themselves. This fact both Krishnaji and the south Indian sage Ramana Maharshi made abundantly clear, or at least tried to.

One example might help to make clear the need to locate within ourselves metaphysical objects and problems such as fear, anger, longing, thought, and so on. A visitor once asked Ramana whether he should give up his business and take to reading books on Vedānta. Ramana's reply was typically to the point:

If the objects have an independent existence, i.e., if they exist anywhere apart from you, then it may be possible for you to go away from them. But they don't exist apart from you; they owe their existence to you, your thought. So, where can you go, to escape them? As for reading books on Vedānta, you may go on reading any number of them. They can only tell you , "Realise the Self within you". The Self cannot be found in books. You have to find it out for yourself, in yourself (Ramana Maharshi 1968/77, p1).

Now our places of work and business obviously do have an independent existence. When Linda leaves the office, it remains behind at 484 Kent St. But she takes her experience of that office with her. Her delight in the work, her problems (assuming that she has any), the relationships she has with colleagues and computers, all of that she takes with her wherever she goes: unless she has renounced all attachment to experiences thoughts and feelings. Likewise, assuming that I fight with my husband, I can leave the marriage and perhaps even leave those fights behind. But a large part of the problem will remain with me, waiting to find another environment in which it can express itself. None of these things have an independent existence. So inside the body/mind complex is where we must look if we are to see them for what they are.

Therefore, it is no good talking about knowledge or thought if we do not locate the entity indicated by the word inside the body/mind. If we do look at knowledge, I think we will agree that it generally consists in "knowledge about things". This includes not only science and technology, knowledge about other cultures, about other planets, about language and so on; but also how to get from Coolangatta to Springbrook, how to pass an exam, what it is good to eat and how to cook it, and so on. It seems that we can have knowledge about everything in the Cosmos. The word "science" in fact derives from scientia which means "to know": and the aim of science is to reduce the unknown to negligible proportions. The question arises however whether we can in fact have knowledge about everything; or only about every thing. Can we have knowledge about everything: or only about every thing ? Some would question whether we can have knowledge of the more subtle aspects of life: and suggest that in the deepest sense, life and the meaning of life will always remain beyond the grasp of knowledge. J. Krishnamurti and others have suggested that knowledge, which is synonymous with thought, is always dead, always mechanical; a product of the past: In which case, life which is ever new, can only really be known in some other sense.

The same word is also used to refer to an entirely different mode of perception, or way of knowing, which is not "about things". That is what is generally referred to in the word gnosis, or in Sanskrit "jñāna", both of which seem to refer to direct intuitive perception, which does not yield information about the world, but sees directly. In the perennial philosophy this is what is regarded as true knowledge or knowledge proper: even though it is largely non-verbal, non-linguistic. It is a non-physical form of seeing which Ramana called seeing with the eyes of realisation. When we see with the physical eye, he said, we see the world. When we see with the eye of realisation, 'everything appears' (Ramana Maharshi 1968/77, p38). This 'everything', the totality, is always present, but generally we are not aware of it. Very many sages and mystics have taught that in order to see life in its totality, in order to see the wholeness side of life, we must look within.

When Thoth or Hermes first revealed the art of writing, the King of Egypt is reported to have complained. In response, Thoth tells King Thamus not to worry. Reading, he says, 'will render the Egyptians wiser, and even increase their powers of memory'. To this the thoughtful King replied:

you who are the father of letters ... have affirmed just the contrary of what letters are able to effect. For these, through the negligence of recollection, will produce oblivion in the soul of the learner; because through trusting to the external and foreign marks of writing, they will not exercise the internal powers of recollection

You will ... deliver to your disciples an opinion of wisdom, and not truth. For in consequence of having many readers without the instruction of a master, the multitude will appear to be knowing in many things of which they are at the same time ignorant, and will become troublesome associates in consequence of possessing an opinion of wisdom instead of wisdom itself (*The Works of Plato* Marsilio Ficino, Thomas Taylor translation, quoted in Silvestre and Champollion-Figeac 1849, pxxvi).

In this passage we are introduced to the Platonic notion of recollection, which far from being an act of memory or a movement of thought, is an act of direct perception which can only take place when the movement of thought comes to an end, even if just for a moment. Plato and others have said that in special states of awareness, the Soul recollects what it once knew. That is to say, the Soul recollects what it knew before it was embodied, before the mind was conditioned. This unconditioned state, known as recollection in the Platonic system, is recapturable whilst we are still incarnate. And it is the source of all true knowledge. Anyone who read to the end of Barry's sheet on dialogue would have seen a statement which describes recollection rather well. It goes something like this: 'In each person there is a state of consciousness that already knows, comprehends, reality. Through the process of recollection, the original pattern, which is reality, is revealed'.

The King of Egypt was concerned that reading would lead to a negligence of recollection, of realisation; and to an opinion of wisdom rather than wisdom itself. In reading the words of the wise without being wise ourselves, we will appear to know many things of which we are in truth ignorant. Like the speaker.

The fact that the opinion of wisdom is not wisdom, or that knowledge is not direct perception, would not in itself be a problem were it not for the tendency of knowledge to be blind to its own limitations. Thought feels itself to be sufficient, just as the opinion of wisdom feels that wisdom has been gained. It might even be said that the beginning of real knowledge, or insight, is knowing that you do not really know. I once heard an "expert" described as someone who knows the worst mistakes that can be made in his or her field of expertise. We can say therefore that to the extent knowledge is *unaware* of what it does not know, and *unaware* of the worst mistakes it can make - it cannot be considered to be true knowledge.

The worst mistake that knowledge makes is surely to substitute itself for awareness. This is the main pitfall or trap of knowledge: that it *replaces* insight into the nature of reality, or direct perception. The problem with knowledge or thought then, is not that it exists, the problem is that it is self-satisfied: that being content with knowledge, which is always second-hand, we seek no further.

"Transcending" thought or 'Dying" to the known

The Vedāntin teacher Sankarācārya taught that: 'Karma is never the cause of emancipation' (Chatterji 1973, p10). No action can bring about emancipation or liberation. No action can uncondition the mind. 'Actions', he said, 'are for the purification of the heart, not for the attainment of the real substance. The substance can be attained by right discrimination, but not by any amount of Karma' (Chatterji 1973, p11). All we can do, Krishnaji used to say, is put our houses in order and open the window. If the breeze wishes to enter it will. Our houses of course are our minds, and the breeze is Truth. What cleans the house, or sets the mind in order, is right discrimination *viveka*. This is the discrimination between the Real and the unreal, the permanent and the fleeting, the conditioned and the unconditioned, the partial and the whole, what is of ultimate significance and what is not. This discrimination is what cleans the body/mind complex and purifies the heart, but as both Sankarācārya and Krishnaji pointed out, it does not cause or bring about Liberation. It may seem as if the two halves of this sentence do not go together. If *viveka* or watchfulness purifies the heart and sets the mind in order, then why say that it does not bring about liberation? That is because the sort of watchfulness, attention, and awareness implied in the practice of *viveka* is not an action in the normal sense of the word. It is not something we do, but an act of observation, of pure seeing. If there is any volition in it, any desire in it, then this again becomes a material process, an act: and no actions, no karma, can lead to liberation. This is a very subtle distinction which can only be understood when experienced.

When we think of transformation we are apt to think in terms of something becoming something that it is not: or at least we tend to think in terms of becoming. But I would like to offer the suggestion that transformation and Wisdom are

matters of Being, not becoming. In the spiritual realm there is no road or path from A to B. We cannot become something that we are not; but we can become aware of what we are, and that awareness is transformative. However, the thoughts ‘I am greedy’, ‘I am lazy’, ‘I am self -concerned’, ‘I am unaware’, are not it. Rather, awareness begins with a direct perception of these and other thoughts. It was said at the beginning, that in order not to be just talking empty words we need to actually locate thought, knowledge, direct perception and so on in ourselves, and then look at these objects with the eyes of realisation. Likewise, repeating the statement ‘I am unaware’ and perhaps even castigating ourselves for being so, is not the same thing as seeing that we are unaware. I would suggest that even saying that we are unaware in the first place is an assumption not based upon direct observation.

What needs to be observed long and steadily is the content of consciousness. Value judgements and opinions about it based upon what others have said and experienced will get us nowhere. What we need to enquire into and observe is what is actually there, present within ourselves. Only then can we free ourselves from the content of consciousness, which contains not only a great deal of pleasure, but also every imaginable suffering.

Understanding that thought is not the source of wisdom brings about a profound scepticism of thought. C.W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant taught a generation of theosophists and others that thoughts are things. It is surprising therefore that a number of theosophists who have no problem with Leadbeater’s assertion, do have a problem with the self-same assertion made by J. Krishnamurti and David Bohm that thought is a material process. We have already heard Sankarâcârya’s view that actions or karmas do not lead to emancipation. Emancipation is a spiritual state: actions are ‘things’ or material processes.

Our thoughts can do a great deal. They build who we are by producing certain tendencies, and setting up certain vibrations within and around us. Thought is highly creative in a clever, linear sort of way. But thought cannot create anything new. Thought can create black instead of red roses, thought can create rats with human ears, thought can mix the colours of the palette in infinite or at least innumerable ways: but could thought have created colour itself? Could thought have created what it is to be a colour? Thought can put a room in some sort of order, but could thought have created order itself? Or any of the other categories in existence? I believe that no is the only true answer, and that thought can only work with what is there. It cannot in fact create anything.

Advaita Vedânta goes so far as to equate thought with ignorance. In the *Viveka-Cudâmani*, Sankarâcârya equates *avidyâ* or existential ignorance directly with *manas* or mind. He says: ‘There is no *avidyâ* besides the *manas*. *Manas* itself is the *avidyâ*, the instrument for the production of the bondage of conditioned existence’ (Chatterji 1973, p69). Likewise, Râja Yoga regards thought as a modification or condition of the mind which disrupts awareness. We have probably all heard the second sutra in the Patañjali Yoga Sûtras - *yoga citta vritti nirodha* yoga is the cessation of the modifications of the mind.

Looking at thought does not come naturally: and it is not self-evident that thought is a problem. We have to have a good reason to begin this sort of exploration or inquiry. It often takes someone who has freed himself from all of this to come along and say look at what is happening, look at what you are doing. If we are open to that message for whatever reason, we will be inspired to begin looking in that direction, which, to put it mildly, is the one direction that thought does not wish us to look. Thought is happy to explore outer space, and even the world within the atom to a point: it is happy to explore anything at all which it has projected. But to have the glare of attention put upon the thinker itself is a profoundly disquieting proposition. This is of course a metaphor: thought is not really disquieted, thought is not thinking ‘don’t look at me’, ‘don’t look at me’. It simply does not go there, unless purposefully directed.

Owing to statements such as ‘no karmas will lead to emancipation’; and, Ramana’s assertion that the Self is always Realised - some modern pseudo-gurus have been able to peddle the idea that no effort is required on the path. Sometimes lineage is claimed with Ramana Maharshi, or the claim made that Krishnaji taught a ‘no effort’ approach. But both Ramana and Krishnaji pointed out on hundreds of occasions that the life of Self-Enquiry is utterly demanding. A visitor once asked Ramana a question about what he called Krishnamurti’s ‘method of effortless and choiceless awareness’. Krishnaji never treated choiceless awareness as a *method*, it was a fact, but the question evoked an interesting response. Ramana’s reply was this:

Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature. If we can attain it or be in that state, it is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. All the age-long *vasanas* carry the mind outward and turn it to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inward. For that, effort is necessary for most people (Ramana Maharshi 1968/77, p89).

Note that he says all such thoughts should be given up: not that all such thoughts should not exist. That is what true renunciation is: and in Krishnaji’s vocabulary, dying to the known. It does not mean that the known ceases to exist. The known will always exist. Thoughts will always exist. The sanyâsin is no longer attached to the content of consciousness,

to the appearances, because he or she has become aware of consciousness or pure awareness itself. Thoughts will always be there, but our attachment to them must end if we are to become truly aware.

Though there is much talk in spiritual traditions of quietening or stilling the mind, the way of contemplation is not passive. As the gifted metaphysician Ananda Coomaraswamy once said: 'contemplative practice involves an activity that is commonly compared to the blazing of a fire at a temperature so high as to show neither flickering nor smoke' (Coomaraswamy 1977, p10). Clearly then, Right Effort is involved, both for the purification of the heart and the practice of Self-enquiry. Based on the testimony of numerous mystics and sages however, it can be said that once the desire for liberation arises, everything that is not the Self, that is not liberation, is effortlessly discarded as unnecessary and useless. For this sort of enquiry, analysis is not necessary. In his small but potent book *Who Am I?* Ramana pointed out that someone who wants to take out the garbage does not need to analyse it and see what it is: the garbage simply needs to be dispensed with. Similarly, one who wants to know the Self need only reject everything that hides the Self (Ramana Maharshi 2002, p13). *Viveka* or watchfulness then comes naturally.

Conclusion

Knowledge in the spiritual field is a tremendous gift. It is like a signpost pointing in the direction of a place which you never knew existed, but which is more beautiful, more desirable than any you have known. It is said that this highly mysterious place is the source of order, of beauty, of truth, and of goodness. However, it seems that knowledge is not the way to that place. When we wish to go there we must renounce knowledge, thought, and the content of consciousness and diligently discard everything which is not the Self which we seek. That requires tremendous attention, awareness, and love.

Ultimately, as we have seen, knowledge is not transformed into Wisdom. Wisdom it seems is the perfume of awareness. The wise, whose minds are '*en rapport* with the Universal Mind', to borrow from the Mahâtma Letters, know what it is good to do (Barker (comp.) 1993, p508). All their actions are insightful, or truth-bearing.

This is one of the several things which are said to be the Buddha's last words: Cease to do evil and learn to do good. It is not possible to learn to do good by normal methods of learning: either by memorising, by imitation, or by analysis. This sort of learning is not the product of thought, nor of thoughtlessness. It is the perfume of awareness. ☐

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Dara is presently in the last stages of researching a PhD thesis at the University of New South Wales on 'Representations of the Perennial Philosophy in the Literature of the Deep Ecology Movement'. I am a long-standing member of the Theosophical Society and currently one of the national lecturers in Australia. I was introduced to Theosophy, Krishnaji, and Ramana at the same time, and they have always remained inextricably entwined in my mind. It was Doris Williamson who first spoke to me of these things with intelligence and sensitivity and I would like to dedicate this talk to her with profound gratitude.

Transformation at Springbrook from Alan Mann

I start this note on the 2003 Springbrook gathering with a comment on some recent Krishnamurti scholarship – Life and Individuality - Selected writing of J Krishnamurti from the period 1929 – 1932. This was the period immediately after Krishnamurti's own final realization and the selection has been made to present, as far as it possible to do so in words, the nature of transformation, and the action required to bring it about. I am indebted to the compiler of this work and would normally acknowledge his contribution here except that I understand he wishes to remain anonymous.

I have been involved with the Krishnamurti teachings for over 35 years. I don't think any other slice of them has had such a profound impact as this small document. I have attempted to summarize my understanding of what is contained in these 70 odd pages in the following paragraphs. I then go on to say something about this year's gathering.

The connecting thread is *individuality*, and the transformation in the way Krishnamurti uses the word *individuality* is paralleled by the proposed transformation in the listener or reader or maybe, as I suggest below, the world.

In the first instance he uses *individuality* in the commonly accepted sense to describe the separate entity of body-mind and personality, in short, the personal or ego-centric perspective which he describes as a fact but illusory. He then explains why it is necessary to come to an understanding where *individuality* is experienced as undivided, or as non-separated, this involves a transformation of the personal into the impersonal.

He stresses that such a transformation requires great effort, intense desire and careful choice, all of which are sometimes considered to be 'no-go' areas as far as the Krishnamurti teachings are concerned. The method (another controversial word in Krishnamurti circles) he proposes is not an attempt to arrive at the impersonal by evading, transcending, eliminating or modifying the personal but in becoming so intensely aware of the movement of the personal at all times that the unessential is clearly discerned and the essential, the field of the impersonal, is revealed and thereby liberated and free to function.

Krishnamurti refers to the awake state in a number of ways, one of which is *Pure Being*: another is fulfillment. Here, individuality has become transformed into undividedness where mind is integrated with heart and, consequently, where thought and action, stripped of thinker and actor, become a movement of love. To achieve this integration is our purpose; it is purposeful in the sense of goal and in the sense of arrival at the point where purpose is no longer relevant. Purpose is only meaningful at the personal level of individuality. It involves striving to transform and become that completeness which is purpose-free and beyond separation or unity.

In spite of all the words, Krishnamurti stresses this is not an intellectual exercise, that it is simple and not far away.

In preparing these notes and an index for the selection, I found a surprising correspondence between what Krishnamurti was saying at that time of his life and Traherne's views on 'enjoying the world aright'.

Out of that flame of self-consciousness is realized the tranquility of mind through which alone can you realize felicity, the happiness that comes through harmony. I have realized what to me is the supreme happiness— not of pleasure, but of that inward quietude which is the assurance of tranquility, the realization of completeness. In this state there is no progress, but a continual realization in which all problems, all complexities, all troubles vanish.

Krishnamurti – p.292 (1931 Summer, Ommen, III)

Now follows my attempt to describe what happened at Springbrook. Did I come upon this simplicity? The following is not a summary of proceedings but a personal reaction to the six days devoted to an enquiry into the possibility of transformation. A seven-tape series of video dialogue talks between Krishnamurti, David Bohm and David Shainberg, (a New York psychiatrist) on the question of Transformation provided a daily introduction to the theme. The video sessions were interspersed with our own dialogues which dealt mainly with the content of the tape of the day.

First a quick look at the video-tape content. Tape 1 deals mainly with the question of whether I can see that I am fragmented. Followed by the question 'what makes me fragmented'. A good question but I think a much more relevant question is 'what makes ME?' The first sustains the assumption that I am a thing to be fragmented or unfragmented. Somewhere, in the middle of all the cross-talk Bohm slipped in '*the Whole is the absence of the me*'. That resonated and echoed in me throughout the gathering as I listened to the tapes and participated in the dialogues..

Much of Tape 2 is spent trying to get Shainberg to move out of idea into perception and in tackling the question of personal security. Nothing seems to offer security because the self is entrenched in the notion of 'me'. The brain is happy to be occupied because occupation seems to provide a sort of order. The brain feels secure in the mechanical process. Am I constantly doing things because I am running away from the instability of the unoccupied brain?

The headless experiments reveal what is sometimes referred to as the 'gap'. This is best seen in the circle experiment with participants standing shoulder to shoulder in a circle. When looking to left and then round to the right one notes all those forming the circle until attention returns to the emptiness here in which all appears.

So to put the enquiry another way – why am I constantly filling this gap, why occupying it with the past: explanations, interpretations, descriptions, etc., instead of allowing it to be informed simply by what is happening free from all that, usually unnecessary, add-on.

The Krishnamurti explanation is that this mechanical process of explanatory infilling or project-driven distraction is what sustains the me and thereby provides what the brain has come to regard as order and security. Change, he suggests, depends on seeing this mechanical process in action.

Tape 3 raises the question, 'in view of endless strife- why no change?' Because all the changes I adopt retain the same old me, what I regard as change is not fundamental, it is really more of the same in new clothes. But how not to be me? Can consciousness empty itself of its content? Can thought become aware of itself (and what it is doing)?

Tape 4 goes on to deal with whether or not image making can stop. Of course it can and it is a very simple business says Krishnamurti. Krishnamurti urges me to see the image-making process as a fact and remain with the fact. (This in my view is the key, staying with the situation as it is newly revealed. If image-making ceases what then is consciousness.) Krishnamurti goes on to talk about aloneness as supreme intelligence. (Another interesting connection with Traherne). There is no radical transformation because we are conditioned to accept things as they appear to us, screened through a lifetime of conditioning.

In Tape 6 Bohm asks Krishnamurti whether he is saying that the major image is the self-image and this is confirmed in the ensuing comments. Relationship, according to Krishnamurti, is the most important aspect of our lives yet the whole drive of these exchanges is to deconstruct the apparent entity which relates. For example he goes on to say, "learn the art of observing in which the observer is the observed". He even concludes one of the tapes, I think number 7, by rejecting a contribution from Shainberg on the need to share this understanding by saying very forcefully "*there is no sharing, there is only THAT!*"

The final tape, Tape 7, deals with death. Is death the ending of the image or something much deeper? Well, something much deeper is the suggested answer but the dialogue fails to come to grips with whatever that might be.

I had an insight into K's disappointment that 'nobody got it' – assuming that I am typical of the problem, it seems to me he never found a way of communicating what he is trying to show me in a way that overcomes the trap of explanation. This unfortunate shortcoming is offset to some degree in the video tapes by Bohm's ability to crystallize a wordy and convoluted exchange in a sentence or two and by the listener's involvement, by way of utilizing the time and the observation of the content of the dialogue and his (the listener's) own reactions as a meditation on and contemplation of the issue under review. In this regard, a comment by Bohm, Shainberg or Krishnamurti, I don't remember which one, "*Are you speaking to the viewer or to that in which the viewer and everything is*", seemed to be getting close to the perspective of transformation.

At several points during the tapes Krishnamurti asks "is it possible for the past to meet the present and END?" That for me proved to be the critical question and I've been pondering upon it at length.

I think, as Krishnamurti himself points out, and in spite of his endless explanations, intimations of the overwhelming awesomeness of OTHER and so on, what this is about is extremely simple. So taking him at his word about simplicity and putting aside all that inaccessible non-sense about OTHER, how do I address his question?

Is it possible for my past, all my memories, interpretations, explanations and so on to cease for a moment and, instead of using the present as a drama theatre for my past antics to re-present themselves, or a springboard for my imagined and projected future, can all that stop?

What happens if this moment is carefully observed? I find that movement of memory, the past arriving at the present, is simply what I imagine myself to be, my self-image and with it comes my world-view, the conceptual context in which Alan as imagined entity dwells. All this is unfolding in the present, always unchallenged – and this bag of concepts, assumed to be fact, is always charging off into the imagined future. If there is a stopping and a seeing of this as habitual movement, what happens? The seeing of it is, as, Krishnamurti perceives and tries to explain it to his perplexed listeners, and as D. Harding shows to his grateful viewers, is very clear and simple. But what happens next.

Nothing happens.

At that point the ego usually reasserts itself and with a 'told-you-so' dismissal of all this as a lot of codswallop Alan, back in the saddle, continues on his not so merry way.

However, if there is persistence in seeing, the inversion comes about – nothing happening can be quite ' something' .

What are the consequences of awakening to this as fact rather than possibility? The usual way of describing what happens is to explain it as a change in consciousness. This can be misleading, as there is an implication that there is a change in 'my' consciousness. It might be more accurate to describe what happens as ' the world changes' . The world is no longer experienced as a context of time and space in which an entity described as Alan does its thing; in which Alan happens. The world, life, what is – is now apprehended as what happens and if there is to be any identification at all it is with that flowing movement. Nishitani, I recently discovered, calls it ' the world worlding and 'Nowletter readers are familiar with the universe John Wren-Lewisings', which I assume to be the same story.

Bohm' s contribution comes to mind again!"*The whole is the ending of the me*" (as entity). I think it helps to see transformation as an ever-present possibility rather than a personal achievement and its realization a shift out of becoming into being, as Dara explains in her paper (above).

I think this is also relevant to Gary's comments in the last issue. The realization of emptiness can be experienced as a void of despair or a cornucopia of delight and as everything in between. Why one person's experience slots them at one end or the other of this spectrum is an interesting question. It seems to me that I slide up and down it but it tends towards the delight rather than despair end in my case. One of my guides suggested at the last Greville-Street dialogue, my problem is that I' m too contented!

Alan Mann

(Barry Hora lifted the following from the LookforYourselfconference. It was posted whilst we were at the Springbrook Krishnamurti gathering and is highly relevant to what we were looking at. Ed)

In the moment of looking we immediately see that it is empty,
That there is nothing to see.
That there is no center and no circumference.
It is wide open,
A moment of being totally wide open.
It is totally clear,
Without even a single speck of dust.
There is nothing to fix the attention on.
This is called empty essence.
But we have not become vacant;
Neither absent-minded nor spaced-out--
Experience or Perception is not blocked.
This is the cognizant nature.
Don' t get caught up in perceiving.
Yet experience is present.
While still being empty, we perceive;
While perceiving, this perceiving is empty in essence.
It is not confined to one or the other;
totally unimpeded, totally open.
This is the unconfined capacity.
This is how it really is, already.

Lama Tsoknyi

Springbrook from Gerald Reardon

Wow!!

What an experience we went through over a period of one week at Springbrook.

Violence, hatred, fear, hurt, pride, sloth, greed, ambition and despair it was all there to be seen.

A great learning was taking place.

Humility crept in.

Transforming became evident.

Learning can continue, transforming can continue.

Gerald Reardon.

Response to Gary from Warwick Wakefield

I would like to reply to Gary Hipworth's piece in the previous Nowletter.

Firstly, the tone of the article is a mixture of desperation and pontification. Here is some of the pontification:

Humans are half animal and half symbolic entity.

However, there is only one certainty.

No one can change the truth of physical reality!

Every animal has awareness - nothing special.

And here is some of the desperation:

We avoid pain (or imagined pain) better than any other animal. This is massive agony and ecstasy beyond belief. And all without drugs! I should add that I am also a product of something absolutely incomprehensible to the human mind. If I am able to take a leap of faith in the incomprehensible mystery of existence and beyond without turning it into another illusion called religion or spirituality I might just avoid the loony bin.

You will notice that when Gary talks about his desperation he tends to talk about *our* desperation, or the pain of being *human*. I think he would be more honest to talk about *Gary's* desperation, or the pain of being *Gary*.

Now Gary, you can't have it both ways; either you are lost and in the dark, in which case a tone of humility would be appropriate, or you live in light and certainty and you have a basis from which to pontificate. But if you wish to pontificate you will have to give up your posture of misery and desperation. Furthermore, if you are lost in desperation and darkness, why should we Nowletter readers, or anyone else, take any notice of your supposed certainties? Why should we take any notice of your self-assured analysis of "the human condition" as being half physical -emotional and half symbol-delusion? Fat lot of good it's done you; why should we pick it up?

You claim that "awareness", or "consciousness", is just a primitive superstition, because "every animal has it". But just a little while ago you were writing about the huge grief you felt when your dog, your friend of many years, died. You were able to feel the love that your dog had for you, and you treasured that love. You didn't dismiss it, because your dog was "just an animal". In which case it is inconsistent to dismiss consciousness, on the grounds that "every animal has it".

You claim to be seeking dialogue, but the tone of your letter was one of such overwhelming certainty that you have closed off every avenue of dialogue except that which conforms to your own unshakeable convictions.

I happen to think that some of your assertions are true, and furthermore it is probably a very good thing to contemplate the relationship between life and death, and what your own death might mean. But you seem to think that you already have all the answers. What kind of enquiry can you make if you think you already have all the answers?

You remind me of the deceased Krishnamurti, who roundly condemned all spiritual teachers while at the same time delivering sermons on what is true and what is false on spiritual matters. But at least Krishnamurti the elder had some happiness mixed in with his bad temper, unlike Krishnamurti the younger who seems to gain a kind of perverse enjoyment from being absolutely certain that no certainty is possible and that his own state of wretched ignorance is the deepest understanding that it is possible to attain.

Please Gary, don't lose your nerve; don't give way to fits of resentment against a cosmos that won't conform to your ideas about the way things ought to be. There just might be depths of understanding beyond your own, and there could well be ways of perceiving reality that are congruent with love, laughter and happiness. But if you indulge in adolescent resentment and self-pity you will simply cloud your judgment and remain stuck in a view of reality that is congruent with street brawls and incarceration in the loony bin.

Warwick Wakefield

In the Moment II

Sabrina (seven) flicks
her long brown rats tails
and smiles.
Her big half-grown front teeth
have been a long time coming –
like the rats tails,
which she won't let anyone cut.
She's got the thin fine hair gene.
Flicking, smiling and sucking
her thumb (threats of future tooth-straightening
are far too hypothetical) she
settles back to watch The Saddle Club,
her favourite.

Along comes Lewis (four)
his dark curls bobbing
(they'll go next year when
he's a schoolboy.)
He drops a cushion on Sabrina's head.
In the ensuing fight, Lewie hurts his hand,
swears.
'I get my swearness from Daddy,'
he responds to parental chiding.

'I'm not going to school yet,
I'm too young,' Ella (also four) is firm,
Not even the prospect of a uniform
woos her.
'If you cross your legs
it will cut off your circulation,'
she announces.

Lauren (nearly two) barges into the cubby,
knocking it flying.
Her tiara falls off.
Ella protects her sister from their cousin's wrath –
Lewie is fed up with Lauren and wants her
out of the game.
'Leave her alone, she's only a baby,'
says this most forbearing of sisters.
Lauren frowns and gives Lewie a biff.

Margot Mann

A sudden end to suffering – not bloody likely! – from Warwick Wakefield

Many Nowletter readers may not be aware of the nature of what has been regarded, by many baby-boomer types, as the search for enlightenment.

Enlightenment has been, and still is, regarded as something like a sudden opening of the doors of perception. An event which clears away all of the conditioning imposed by a generally malevolent society and reveals the grandeur of creation as the metaphorical Adam would have seen it.

Enlightenment, it was assumed, would also bring about an end to suffering (because suffering has its roots in our distorted view of reality, which in turn is attributable to the conditioning we received at the hands of our parents, teachers, the media, and that perennial villain, society).

Some regarded the phrase "end to suffering" as too anaemic; for them it was expected that enlightenment ushers in intense happiness interrupted only by periods of bliss. And a near-universal expectation is that, once enlightenment is achieved, whether it is the culmination of great effort, as was the case with the Buddha, or suddenly and inexplicably, without any preceding effort, as was the case with Ramana Maharshi, all of the limitations on one's vision will be permanently vanquished, and happiness will be one's permanent condition, (at the very least).

During the retreat with Francis Lucille that I recently attended in California, an entirely different view of the matter was put forward.

Francis makes a distinction between "enlightenment" and "self-realization". The way he uses the term, enlightenment happens the first time that one has a glimpse of who, or what, one really is. Enlightenment happens when one sees that what one really is, that for which the word 'I' was coined, is not any sort of object but that which sees, subjectivity itself, consciousness itself.

But that is not the end of the matter. The idea that one is a person is deeply entrenched. It has a momentum that keeps it going, so that the identification with the body and the mind, the set of characteristics that make up the character, keeps asserting itself. And of course, this identification with changing and unreliable objects that appear, and then disappear, in the realm of time, leads to great unhappiness. What is necessary, according to Francis, is to live according to

whatever glimpse of truth one has had. And at this retreat he was extraordinarily emphatic. He used the metaphor of a yachtsman sailing single-handedly through a great storm. It might be necessary for the sailor to lash himself to the mast in order to avoid being swept away by the great winds. It might be necessary for the truth-lover, when circumstances arise which exert pressure to succumb to the old fears which are based on the idea that one is a physical or mental object, to cling fiercely to what he has seen to be the truth • ~~that one is not any sort of object, that one is formless~~ consciousness that is not susceptible to any of the changes that afflict objects that exist within the realm of time.

When I reflect upon it, I am reminded of the attitude of the masters of the Eastern martial arts. In combat, the first necessity is not to succumb to the base emotions, to fear, anger or triumphalism. It is not that these emotions are morally wrong; it is that they cloud one's judgment, they take one away from the present unfolding of events, where one's responses must be quicker than thought if one is to prevail. Even trained boxers know this, that there is a huge difference between a street-fighter, who allows himself to be overcome by rage and who swings wildly and ineffectually, and a cool-headed professional who never succumbs to fear, or rage, or overconfidence, and who is so undividedly *present* that his actions happen with a speed and accuracy and effectiveness that is faster than anything that could be thought-out in advance.

Francis has, in the past, referred to himself and his friends as warriors for truth, but I never saw the significance of the phrase before. And I never understood, before, that what he is advocating, in order to bring about self-realization, which means the rooting out of ignorance wherever it might be hiding, is a campaign that calls for great courage and intense single-mindedness. It was very sobering.

Warwick Wakefield

Two Quotations

Thanks to Jim Clatfelter for these two quotes which arrived just as I was about to close off and which happened to fit the remaining space on the page and neatly underline the nature of the transformation referred to above. Jim adds: 'you might read ' headless presence' instead ~~Tao~~ in the first quotation. I substitute ' headless presence' anytime the subject is ' nameless Tao.' "

"It is the experience of Lao Tzu that it is natural for men, women, and children to turn to Tao, and that it is separation from Tao which is unnatural. Turning-toward is life; turning-away is death; and the choice is so momentous that the experience of it exceeds all conventional understanding of good and evil, just as Tao itself is so awesome that it goes beyond all customary depictions of divinity and all customary methods of organizing society. Once there is turning-toward, there is holding-onto; and holding onto Tao is radically different from believing in myths that explain the universe and enforce conventional moralities of sin and guilt. Tao is not a subject of belief and observance but of direct and factual experience, both of inward and outward reality, which Tao fuses in much the same manner as it brings together the poles of paradox into a unitary flash of insight." *Herryman Mauer*

"Now, then, I have set forth the meaning of my assertion clearly and it really is true. All who contradict it are hereby contradicted in return, for Truth itself bespeaks the truth of what I have said." *Meister Eckhart*

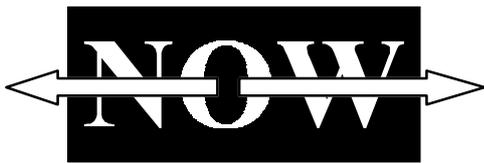
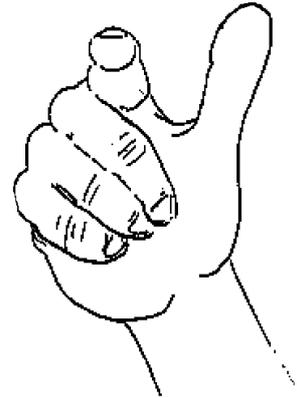
Look for Yourself Workshop

Sunday 1 February 2004

81 Greville Street

Chatswood

Ring Alan Mann (02) 9419 7394



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Regular Dialogue Meetings				
<i>LOCATION</i>	<i>DAY</i>	<i>MEETING PLACE</i>	<i>TIME & CONTACT</i>	Phone Nos.
Dialogue Sydney City	Third Saturday	Theosophical Society Level 2, 484 Kent St., City	2.30pm Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379
Dialogue Chatswood	Third Sunday	81 Greville St. (off Fullers Rd) Chatswood	10.30 am Alan & Margot Mann	02 9419 7394
Dialogue	Fourth Sunday	New venue - To be advised	Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379
Dialogue Nowra	First Saturday	The Tea Club, Berry Street, Opposite Roxy Cinema	4-6pm -Riche Riche du Plessis	4423 4774
Dialogue Nowra	Third Sunday	3/117 Berry Street Nowra	10.30 am Riche du Plessis	4423 4774