

## Issue No 1 - 8 January 1993

It seems to be a characteristic of this sort of meeting that we are just getting to the nitty gritty when everyone has to leave. Last time we were on the verge of a serious wrestle with the issue of whether or not there could be any meaning in the NOW. As a matter for debate, I would have thought it a non starter but there are clearly views which differ from mine and, therefore, challenge my assumptions. It seems to offer scope for "dialoguing as one of the aims of dialogue is to create the circumstances in which a free flow of meaning can take place. Should we try next meeting? Maybe the differences lie in the meaning of the word itself.

*That which is intended to be or actually is expressed or indicated. The signification, sense, import. Also the intent, spirit as apart from the letter of a statement. OED*

*Mean - Probably before 1200 'mene' shared by all, common; later inferior poor. Barnhart.*

**Be ye perfecte in one mynde and one meanyng 1 Cor 1**

Coincidentally, Donald has been taking words to pieces and putting them together and sent in the following note.

### **Words and their Meaning.**

*There* is away, both in time and space - out there.

*Here* is right here (where I AM?) and when you get to *there*, the 't' is dropped and you are *here*. Or take:- *nowhere*, meaning non-existent place. Once again, *here* is the basic word *here* and *now* becomes (becoming?) **now here**.

### **BOOKS**

John Wren-Lewis rang on his return to Sydney and suggested we send Darryl Reanney, who John recently met, a copy of Newsletter No 7 in which we discussed 'The Death of Forever'. John also drew my attention to a book called "Country of the Spirit" which opens with a chapter he thinks is relevant to our group endeavour. I will investigate and report.

### **COINCIDENCE**

During the last meeting Margaret and I had a side discussion on the question of why the churches seem to avoid what Traherne describes as "Heaven Now". In his latest book, Douglas has John Noakes say that "The churches have become custodians of a mystery which they no longer understand" or words to that effect. However, I have always felt that there must be cells of awareness scattered through the denominations which are clear about the fundamentals; the need for direct experiencing rather than the mediated word. After our meeting I switched on the radio whilst finishing off a presentation on the computer. It was Caroline Jones pursuing her affair with meaning and the speaker was a Father Hewitt. Well, Fr. Hewitt is the first example of the missing species I have come across. He was describing a five day water fast on the West coast of Ireland. The presentation is a bit theatrical but there is no doubt Fr Hewitt is on our wavelength whilst apparently remaining well embedded in the church. I have sent for the tape which should be available for our next meeting. There was an Irish nun at the Harding seminar in 91 so perhaps its not so unusual and the explanation is that I haven't been looking hard enough.

*Donald, I am hoping to get out a one-pager before the next meeting. I see these notes as part of the process and will say so. It is important that others feel free to contribute. I have thoughts arising from last meeting. I think that if silence is to come about it should arise naturally out of the movement of the dialogue. It seemed to me that we were trying to impose it on ourselves last time. Also, I do not share your generosity, to the non-speakers. We gather to share our understandings and misunderstandings, and are we not engaging in "dialogue"?*

***This page is the NOW component of this month's circular which, as you see, is devoted primarily to the latest USA Newsletter.***

The November meeting looked at the possibility, raised at the October meet, that the suspension of deeply held opinions might just be another good idea and impossible in practice.

Some of the group think that ideas can be put on or taken off at will, like hats. I think this is only partially true. When we get down to what we consider to be really important, the fundamental "truths", we can no longer take them off, they are what we are. I could as easily take my off my head. The opinion or viewpoint has become what I think I am. The examples that spring to mind are the various religious belief systems. Can the devout Buddhist, Christian, Theosophist or whatever really suspend the religious point of view? The challenge was presented to us by a dedicated environmentalist who was not going to abandon the planet in the interests of DIALOGUE.

My newly developed assumption, following this line of enquiry, is that opinions remain active, whatever we might claim about putting them aside, until the insightful revelation of their falseness causes them to fall away. I expect to receive your counter attack at the next meeting. I don't think this represents a threat to Dialogue. It would be a matter of "admitting" all views" rather than "suspending one's own views". This is what I think we do anyway.

Another question arising from the October meeting was how to handle the disruptive situations. How do we cope with people who seem to have unshakeable agendas? It helps if we can see them as carriers of assumptions. If the DIALOGUE is working it will reveal the nature of the assumptions and the necessary adjustments will come about on both or 'all' sides. This leads us to the question of seriousness again. Seriousness in this context seems to involve a loyalty to the process, insistence on exploring the assumptions, sticking to DIALOGUE and avoiding the fall into debate. (Concludes on page 9)

*(Read page 10 before this)*

Another interesting letter from Wm. Van den Heuvel appears in the USA Newsletter. I thought we might submit an Australian contribution to this DIALOGUE and propose to draft a letter as the basis for a joint contribution. However, it might be better to handle it as a series of separate submissions. What do you think? I have a few expanded A3 size copies for anyone who wants to participate. In any case, your contribution and comment will be welcome when we come together in December (Alan)

DQN included an extract from our July NOWletter on the Van den H - S Singh DIALOGUE which I have removed to save space.

Travel - There will be gaps in future meetings. Enid has gone to France for some months and John and Mishka are off to Poland.

**Meetings - 1. A new DIALOGUE group has formed and meets on the first Saturday of every month.**

**12.30pm Swedenborg Centre, 1 Avon Road, North Ryde. For details ring Barry Hora (043) 622843.**

**2. NOW Group continues to meet on the third Sunday.**

### **Issue No 2 - 1 May 93**

**Meetings are now held at 10 am on the second Sunday of every month at 81 Greville Street, Chatswood and are open to anyone interested in the possibility of working out for themselves, rather than relying on others, whether transformation of consciousness, enlightenment or whatever you want to call it, can come about.**

#### **THERE WILL NOT BE A MEETING THIS MONTH BECAUSE OF THE EASTER HOLIDAY. OUR NEXT**

**MEETING WILL BE SUNDAY 9TH OF MAY** On Sunday 28th March a group of us gathered at Newport. We intended to spend a day together in an attempt to carry on the enquiry in the spirit of "dialogue" and with the possibility of creating a practical environment favourable to the process of communicating at depth through dialogue. About twenty two took part in the experiment which was generally agreed to have fallen short of our aims.

This is not surprising in view of the difference between dialogue and our usual way of conducting meetings, seminars, etc. As a reminder of what we are attempting I have printed an extract from the USA quarterly Newsletter on the reverse of this sheet. In order to make sure we learn from the experiment I spoke to a number of the the group. Some of the suggestions:

\* We were a very mixed group with too wide a range of interests and expectations. Better to have smaller groups with interest more focused.

\* The dialogue process requires a free flow between all participants. As usual, although a flow began to develop, on occasions the interaction was dominated by a few speakers.

\* The interrogative approach with a facilitator "interviewing a "volunteer" creates a strong resistance to dialogue. This results from the interviewee and the listeners trying to get into the mind of the interviewer, "what is he/she getting at, where is this leading, where am I being led". The outcome was that statements were challenged rather than welcomed as contributions to the process.

\* One result is that the interviewer and the interviewee start to sing a duet and thereby cut out the rest of the group.

\* The talkers need to listen more - the listeners to speak more (participate).

\* There was a lot of knowledge in the air. The essence of dialogue is "finding out" which requires the suspension of

knowledge for the process to work.

\* To overcome the conflicting needs of social interaction and enquiry, we should make distinct provision, on the day, for both. Arrange separate times.

Having said all that, I found it both an interesting and illuminating day.

Thanks to those of you who came and risked all. If you decide to come again, come in the knowledge that we may be through the preliminary "awkward" stage.

### CHANGE OF MEETINGS

The Wayside Chapel meetings have faded away. I realised they weren't working when I found that I was the only person at the March "meeting". Saturday mornings are not a popular time and for many of us the location is not convenient. Future meetings will be held on the **second SUNDAY** of every month at 81, Greville St., Chatswood at 10.30am. If you want be picked up from Chatswood station ring me on 4197394 (Home) 9545433 (Work) Its not a bad idea to ring anyway to confirm.

If anyone has other suggestions about venues for meetings please give me a call.

We will also be running more meetings at Newport. If you need information on the dates ring me and I'll put you on the LET KNOW list.

*Suspension of thoughts, impulses, judgements, etc., lies at the very heart of Dialogue. It is one of its most important new aspects. It is not easily grasped because the activity is both unfamiliar and subtle. Suspension involves attention, listening and looking and is essential to exploration. Speaking is necessary of course, for without it there would be little in the Dialogue to explore. But the actual process of exploration takes place during listening - not only to others but to oneself. Suspension involves exposing your reactions, impulses, feelings and opinions in such a way that they can be seen and felt within your own psyche and also be reflected back by others in the group. It does not mean repressing or suppressing or, even postponing them. It means, simply, giving them your serious attention so that their structures can be noticed while they are actually taking place. ("Dialogue" June 1992)*

**THERE IS ONLY ONE THING WORSE THAN RECEIVING UNWANTED MAIL AND THAT IS HAVING TO SEND IT TO PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT IT. UNDER THE LOGO, ON THE FRONT OF THIS LEAFLET, YOU WILL SEE EITHER THE LETTER "F" OR "R". F MEANS "FINAL" AND THIS IS THE LAST LETTER I WILL BE SENDING YOU UNLESS YOU RING AND TELL ME TO CARRY ON. R MEANS "REPEAT" AND THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE UNTIL YOU TELL ME TO STOP.**

### Issue Number 3 - 1st June 93

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Meetings are now held at 10 am on the third Sunday of every month at 81 Greville Street, Chatswood and are open to anyone interested in the possibility of working out for themselves, rather than relying on others, whether transformation of consciousness, enlightenment or whatever you want to call it, can come about.

### MEETINGS

We had our first Greville Street meeting on Sunday 9th May. We are gradually establishing an acceptable way of working together. The plan is to start at 10am and focus loosely on some agreed aspect of interest, break at 1pm for lunch and then, for those who want to stay on, a free-for-all in the afternoon

I am now looking to you all for contributions to this Newsletter. In the meantime, some comments on a couple of the books which were mentioned at our last meeting. The significance being that they both unearth matters of relevance to our enquiry.

Would those planning to come to the next meeting think about whether this approach suits you, what we might do differently and what you would like to talk about or "share" with the group.

### READING

### **"Lila" by Robert Pirsig**

This book attempts to refine the metaphysics of his earlier book. (Zen and the Art of Motor Cycle Maintenance)

Prompted by an experience of the wider consciousness, at an Indian tepee night the hero is awakened to the possibility that the American dream owes much more to the native peoples than is generally acknowledged. Particularly, the idea of freedom of the individual. He discovers that anthropology is locked into a rigid objectivity which excludes all consideration of values and attempts to resolve what are essentially cultural issues according to the laws of physics. He identifies his two main opponents as the philosophers of science who claim that only the natural sciences can investigate the nature of reality, and the mystics. The mystics say that reality is undivided and beyond the reach of language which is a fragmentary process. Metaphysics is only names about reality.

The main theme is that the subject v object world view should be replaced by one in which patterns of value are seen as the operating mechanism. Value replaces cause in the cause effect formula. What lies between subject and object is "value". Value is not a property of either but another category altogether. The **QUALITY** of the value is variable.

"What the Metaphysics of Quality" does is to take this category and show that it includes both subjects and objects. Pirsig identifies four fundamental levels which he says are not rigid categories but patterns of value: inorganic, biological, social and intellectual. An evolutionary process which he calls *dynamic quality* provides the means whereby each level is transcended. The process requires that gains at lower levels are not forfeited and this comes in to being through the adoption of established 'static' patterns as the platform from which dynamic quality can reach out to the new.

(Chapter 12 is the key, "solving" both the mind/matter and free will/determinism issues in 10 pages!)

Language is part of the static structure providing a sort of cement to maintain the fixedness of the established patterns. This is similar to Bohm's ideas about the need to break the stranglehold of language before we can open up to 'what is'. Pirsig describes our resistance to the manifestations of *dynamic quality* as a cultural immune system.

The static patterns are retained because they work and are reinforced by "static filters" which remember what confirms the desired and discards whatever increases the threat of the unknown. Likes and dislikes form patterns which define individuals, groups, nations, culture, etc.

The job of dynamic quality is to provide the heretical drive necessary to break through established patterns to the new. When we talk of freedom we mean dynamic quality i.e., that which is free of the established pattern, the known.

"Creation" is the movement of *dynamic quality*, seeking always to improve, extend 'what is' and what has become entrenched as static quality.

Pirsig's system offers a very creative methodology for dealing with some of the big issues. For example the daddy of all static patterns, the ego and why, if the passage of enlightenment into pure *dynamic quality* is such a universal reality, does it occur so infrequently. For some reason he raises these questions but doesn't follow them through.

Maybe we can do it for him at forthcoming meetings!

### **Foucault's Pendulum, Umberto Eco**

Here are some quotations from this book which are included in the Newsletter on the grounds that anything which supports the editor's heretical views on time is fair game.

*"Whoever reflects on four things, it were better he had never been born: that which is above, that which is below, that which is before, and that which is after".*

*Talmud, Hagigah 2.1*

*"You must not think linearly. The water in the fountains doesn't. Nature doesn't; nature knows nothing of time. Time is*

*an invention of the West".....*

*"You spend a life seeking the Opportunity without realising that the decisive moment, the moment that justifies birth and death, has already passed.".....*

*....."It hurts me to think I won't see Lia again, and the baby, the Thing, Giulio, my philosopher's stone. But stones survive on their own. Maybe even now he is experiencing his Opportunity. He's found a ball, an ant, a blade of grass, and in it he sees paradise and the abyss.".....*

The following are taken from the funeral scene at the end of the book when Jacopo is acting as replacement trumpeter.

*.....A sudden order unleashed a (rifle) volley towards the sky, rat-tat-tat-a-boom, and the birds rose up, squawking, from the trees in blossom. But all that, too, was not really motion. It was as if the same instant kept presenting itself from different perspectives. Looking at one instant forever doesn't mean that, as you look at it, time passes.....*

*.....He continued holding that virtual (trumpet) note, because he felt he was playing out a string that kept the sun in place. The planet had been arrested in its course, had become fixed in a noon that could last an eternity. And it all depended on Jacopo, because if he broke that contact, dropped that string, the sun would fly off like a balloon, and with it this day and the event of this day, this action without transition, this sequence without before and after, which was unfolding, motionless, only because it was in his power to will it thus.*

### **Back to Dialogue**

Here are a few paraphrased extracts from a David Bohm explanation of what he meant by "dialogue". I made the notes without recording the source. Consequently they are a bit incoherent.

*"The aim of dialogue is to establish coherent thought at the tacit level. (Tacit = that which is unspoken, that which cannot be described) Ordinary light is incoherent going in all directions and the waves are not in phase whereas the laser is coherent.*

*The concrete process of thinking is basically tacit, thought emerges from the tacit ground, any fundamental change comes from the tacit ground  
The tacit is common.*

*Society is based on shared meanings which constitute culture. At present, society has an incoherent set of meanings. The shared meaning is what holds a society together, the cement. Therefore, it has to be the right type. The sharing of mind in dialogue is more important than the content of the opinions. Truth does not emerge from opinion but from elsewhere - maybe from a more free movement of the tacit mind. A free flow of meaning can arise in dialogue.*

*An important aspect of dialogue is the revelation of assumptions. The major assumption of science is that thought will lead to truth - will know everything. Our assumptions are making us ill so dialogue can be regarded as socio as opposed to psycho-therapy.*

*Dialogue is the collective way of opening assumptions. It offers a method to solve problems and address the ills of society at various levels and, maybe, the transformation of the nature of human consciousness."*

### **(TWO METHODS IN ONE NEWSLETTER? AM I OVERDOING IT?)**

### **POSSIBLE TOPIC FOR JUNE MEET**

Those of us who have had the obviousness and immediacy of it all revealed as a result of our own enquiries or because we were awake when 'pointers' like Douglas passed by are often interested in the question of "why the inevitable relapse into non-seeing ?"

There is a famous story about Zen master Fa-ch'ang. When Fa-ch'ang was dying, a squirrel screeched on the roof. "It's just this," he said, "and nothing more."

If we are not satisfied with 'just this and nothing more', then that might be the problem. Why is it not enough? A re-awakening to the miraculousness of being is all that is necessary for felicity to flower. Every moment or always or as often as the I can be persuaded to abandon its dream.

The development of imagination which allows us to "create" time and space and then move about in this creation, as though it were real, is the problem; our virtual reality. As a consequence of our infatuation with this skill we are almost completely separated psychologically from our bodies; our bodies being and our minds becoming. All that is required is for the the psycholgical to rejoin the physical.

The Buddhists, as always, seem have the words for it:

*"Where trusting heart and mind are not estranged, words fail, and cannot tell of THAT which has no yesterday, tomorrow or today."*

*(Seng-t'San 4th Pat. Hsin Hsin Ming)*

I was looking for the 'Fa-chang squirrel' quotation when I came on the following note in my journal dated 27 August 1980. "For four years I have realised that the secondary I, the me, is non existent, so why the continuing confusion? Then I saw that when the I, the identification with memory, thought etc., is dropped there remains an expectation THAT SOMETHING WILL REPLACE IT WHICH IS CONTINUOUS IN TIME.

There is an attempt to drop the I whilst retaining the context in which it operates. Until I looked this up I thought I had only recently come upon this. Which reminds me that there is no continuity to understanding.

And was Fa-chang actually on his deathbed or was he merely dying again?

**NEXT MEETING - 10 AM FOR 10.30 20th JUNE AT, 81, GREVILLE STREET, CHATSWOOD Ph 4197394 -**  
I would appreciate a phone call if you are coming, especially if you would like to be picked up from Chatswood station.

### **Issue Number 4 – 12 July 93**

**Meetings are now held at 10 am on the third Sunday of every month at 81 Greville Street, Chatswood and are open to anyone interested in the possibility of working out for themselves, rather than relying on others, whether transformation of consciousness, enlightenment or whatever you want to call it, can come about.**

#### **MEETINGS**

Our second Greville Street meeting on Sunday 20th June continued the agreed plan of attack set at the first. That is, to gather about 10am and start at 10.30 by focusing vaguely on some agreed aspect of interest, break at 1pm for lunch and then, for those who want to stay on, a free-for -all in the afternoon. We had apologies from Frank who had to take a swerve at the last minute and was sadly missed.

In our usual relaxed way we got around to the subject of the day just as the meeting was about to end. Maybe we should consider it as a starting point for next time. Penny raised it and it was also mentioned in Newsletter No 3. So, what about leading off with this issue next time?

There is a serious risk of these events degenerating into a gourmet club unless you ease off on the luncheon contributions or are you tactfully pointing to what is likely to prove a more promising route?

**Next meeting is this Sunday, July 20th**

#### **NOW**

Enid found the following quotation in a book by Martin Lings on Shaikh Ahmad Al-Alawi and made the point that it is very relevant to what we are on about if the name we have chosen for the group means anything at all.

*Creation which is subject to time and space and non-terrestrial modes of duration and extent which the human imagination cannot grasp, is 'then' (with reference to both past and future) and 'there', but it is never really truly 'now'*

and 'here'. The True Present is the prerogative of God alone, for It is no less than the Eternity and Infinity which transcends, penetrates and embraces all durations and extents, being not only 'before' all beginnings but also 'after' all ends. In It, that is, in the Eternal Now and Infinite Here, all that is perishable has 'already' perished, all that is liable to extinction has 'already' been extinguished leaving only God, and it is to this Divine Residue, the Sole Lord of the Present, that the word "remaineth" refers in the following Qoranic verse.

*Wheresoe'er ye turn, there is the face of God. Everythin perisheth but His Face.  
All that is therein suffereth extinction, and there remaineth the Face of thy Lord in Its Majesty and Bounty.*

No commentary was provided with this material which Enid is leaving to speak for itself. However, you might decide to question her about it when we meet.

## DIALOGUE

I attach to this Newsletter a shrunken version of the USA publication "Dialogue". If you want to subscribe I suggest you write to the UK rather than the USA as I see my latest issue arrived via England which indicates they are still playing to "Empire" rules.

## DOUGLAS HARDING TAPE

A reminder that I have copies of the video of the Melbourne lecture from April 91. They are available for loan on a no charge basis to regulars and on a \$25 refundable deposit basis to anyone.

## DR DEEPAK CHOPRA

Donald Ingram Smith who hosted the February meeting at Newport and has been tidying up my previous Newsletters told me about an audio tape he recently heard on awareness and related matters by Dr Deepka Chopra an Indian medical practitioner and philosopher who is working in the States. He is lending his copy for the meeting on Sunday.

Donald has been very sick since we met at Newport but is now making a good recovery.

## EPILOGUE

I find myself with a postage deadline to meet and space on my hands so I will slip in a small commercial for my old friend Thomas Traherne. The following is verse three of the poem "The Anticipation" and the source of our group name:

3

*From Everlasting he these Joys did Need,  
And all these joys proceed  
From him Eternaly.  
From Everlasting his Felicite  
Compleat and Perfect was:  
Whose Bosom is the Glass,  
Wherin we all Things Everlasting see.  
His Name is NOW his nature is forever.  
None Can his Creatures from their Maker Sever.*

Although Douglas is fed up with people comparing him with Traherne the glass bosom is pure Harding and an interesting comparison with the quote from 'Measure for Measure' which Douglas himself uses in the Melbourne talk.

*.....but man, proud man,  
Drest in a little brief authority, Most ignorant of what he's most assured His glassy essence, like an angry ape,etc... M  
for M 2/2*

**NEXT MEETING - 10 AM FOR 10.30 18th JULY AT, 81, GREVILLE STREET, CHATSWOOD Ph 4197394 -**  
I would appreciate a phone call if you are coming, especially if you would like to be picked up from Chatswood station.

## Issue Number 5 - 13 September 93

**Meetings are held at 10 am on the third Sunday of every month at 81 Greville Street, Chatswood and are open to anyone interested in the possibility of working out for themselves, rather than relying on others, whether transformation of consciousness, enlightenment or whatever you want to call it, can come about.**

### MEETINGS

Two meetings since the last Newsletter which , from now will appear as the spirit moves which may not be every month. However meetings will continue on a monthly basis and we seem to have settled comfortably on the third Sunday for our regular gathering. Perhaps we can aim for a slightly more structured approach now we know one another better. On the 19th September we might try a dialogue into the qualities of awareness. Donald has sent in a few reflections. (see below)

### Awareness

Awareness is immediate and whole - yet traditionally everything has been divided into:-

Subject - Object

Mind - Matter

This traditional and conscious division has become habitual in human thought. We have accepted duality as reality, so that the two distinctively different modes of perception are now taken to be the way of comprehending the whole of life. So there is:-

Spirit-Substance

Idea (Subj)- Form(Obj)

One consequence of this split is the assumption of a primal separation:-

a self - a body

eternal soul-transient body

The supposition is that the self has a body (yet is not a body) and that the individual has a mind and thinks (yet is not that mind and its thinking).

And the inevitable question : Is there a separate entity that is not body and mind but:

Something independent of both

Something other, using

both?

In other words - has the notion of disembodied ego any actual reality? Is the idea of a separate self anything other than an elaborate mock-up? And so to awareness. Is awareness the primal essence of all and every thing. Awareness precedes thought. It lives only in the present moment. It is impossible to be fully aware of what will be one minute ahead or of the moment just gone. Awareness is NOW - and so is inevitably timeless.

### DIS

The gourmet route to transformation faltered when pumpkin soup reappeared on the menu after having been banned two meetings previously. It is now definitely off the agenda.

We concluded with side two of Deepak Chopra. The playing of a tape to conclude proceedings is becoming a regular feature as it allows us to taper off with a gentle snooze as the pumpkin soup etc., works its magic. Has anyone really cracked the thumb and forefinger trick? If you have a favourite tape, audio or video don't hold back.

### Books

Graeme introduced us to an extraordinary book called the "Death of Forever" by Darryl Reanney. It is a goldmine of insights and information about many issues of interest to us: time, self and death. The concluding sentences read "*We should learn to approach death with gratitude, seeing it for what it is, the final elimination of ego, the end of the fallacies of time and self.*

*In the end it can all be said so simply.*

*Time and self are outgrown husks which consciousness will one day discard, just as a butterfly abandons its chrysalis to fly towards the sun".*

In view of our group name his views on time are of particular interest and I was delighted to find solid foundations for some of my firmly held but largely unsubstantiated opinions about

the nature of time. There were also interesting parallels with Pirsig who featured in an earlier edition of the newsletter.

This is a much denser work than "Lila" so I won't attempt a precis. Instead, a few extracts to whet the appetite. The aim

of the book is to show how the sense of separation comes about, how it is anchored in self and how self is anchored in time. This anchoring is what Pirsig would describe as the consolidation phase which allows systems which work, to survive as "Static Patterns of Value". The problem is that we become hostage to the effectiveness of these patterns and unless we awaken to the danger of becoming habituated to them they possess us and deny the dynamic which then can not use them as a basis for opening us to the new. Reaney points out that the self-survival instincts, designed to ensure continuity of the genes and continuity for the more successful organisms, were harnessed to maintain the sense of self as soon as it came upon the scene.

On the other hand, he recognises the value of this phase as a stepping stone to a wider awareness, what he calls an "ordering principle";

*"Thus it is in the non equilibrium situation, the unstable state, the misfit condition, that creates time. this is why the birth of the ego-self, the Fall, was, in the longest perspective , an upward step in humanity's journey towards a higher consciousness.*

*By creating the time sense, the ego-self put mind in an unstable , misfit situation, where it cannot remain, where it has no choice but to go on. Only by transcending the fallacy of the time sense can mind climb into a state of true timelessness, not the non time of equilibrium (where neither past nor future exist) but the universal time of consciousness (where both past and future co-exist together)." P234*

*"The essence of the human quest is to break free of time.....we are all lost children seeking home. We have a dim memory of home; it is a place we have been before. In the remote future." P249*

I find the description of time and self as 'ordering principles' very helpful and the idea of death as the ending of the idea that they are anything more than that. I now see self as a filing cabinet in a large library called time. And in the library galleries containing the the memories and residues

of past and future. It is much easier to see that I am not a

filling cabinet than not a self. "The Death Of Forever- A New Future for Human Consciousness-Longman

Cheshire. I got my copy off the shelf at Angus & R. \$16.95. It contains heaps of good Dialogue stimulating material for discussion.

### **Problem**

At the last meeting we asked what is the meaning of the second half of the benediction which peppers The Book of Common Prayer:

*"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;*

*As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be: world without end. Amen".*

Perhaps one of our distant readers can enlighten us. What is the subject of the statement: 'world without end' or 'NOW'? If the latter, does it mean that the vast congregation of Anglicans represents a potential source of enthusiastic recruits to the cause?

### **Comment**

A NSW reader who has yet to attend a meeting offers a comment on our introductory blurb. His reading of the stuff about the possibility of transformation etc. prompted him to ask whether we had heard the sufi story of Abdul Malik: Abdul Malik, it is said, had a precious gold statue which he protected from harm, and which somehow brought him luck. He was surprised to hear a visiting wanderer tell him his fortune would be enhanced if he broke his precious statue and gave it away. Having resisted this suggestion for a time as incomprehensible, he eventually decoded its cryptic inner message:

That with certain precious thoughts it was better to reconstruct them freshly every day (he would later learn every minute) rather than rely on a structure, form, formula, pattern from yesterday. So he gave away his statue to the poor, and nothing happened. His fortunes did not improve. He was encouraged, for he could now turn to experimenting with the inner meaning. Which he did. And his fortunes improved. **GO**

We hope our correspondent will abandon the bush for one of our meetings and enlarge the theme. In the meantime, the implications for dialogue are clear and it reminded me of our reference to Fa Chang at the last meeting:

*Fa Chang refused to commit his thoughts to writing because, by doing so the exquisite colouring of his lively experience vanished.*

I wonder if this is the same Fa'Chang who gave us the squirrel?

**'Lila' Again**

You will remember that I devoted a lot of space to Pirsig's ideas in the third newsletter and I know some of you have been persevering with the book. As I have nearly a whole page going to waste I thought it an opportunity to take another step. I was wondering how to prove the system.

The most effective test of Pirsig's model would be to find out whether exposure of the mind to his concepts, in a disciplined way, might result in a sudden or progressive conversion or transformation from the idea of it to the actuality. It should help resolve, for example, questions such as whether I am something that is in the world or whether the world is arising in me.

Living as the 'me in the world' is an interpretation of events which can only arise after separation into 'me' and 'not me'. There are a number of patterns implied in this interpretation:

- The strong sense of a separate self.
- Understanding of time as actual rather than as description.
- That I arise and exist as a discrete entity in the world.
- The social pattern of relationship which gives almost continuous feedback from others as to what they think I am. The extent to which I adopt their idea of me as real is the extent to which this social pattern has taken hold.
- The intellectual patterns of religion. If I am a Buddhist, Christian Krishnamurtiite, Theosophist, Muslim, Hardingite or whatever, the religious pattern will ensure that I do not hear what Pirsig is saying let alone try to find out if it is true.

THE STATIC PATTERNS ARE THEIR OWN IMMUNE SYSTEM. THEY ARE THERE FOR "GOOD" REASON, ANYTHING THAT THREATENS THEM MUST BE BAD. THEREFORE, REJECT ALL THAT DOES NOT FIT THE PATTERNS. IMMUNITY TO THE DYNAMIC QUALITY, WHICH BUILT THE PATTERNS, IS ENTRENCHED IN THE PATTERNS THEMSELVES. IT IS THAT WHICH MAKES THEM "STATIC".

This is the answer to the question of why the truth will not out. It has first to overcome the enormous resistance it has built into its own system.

So the first act is to identify the patterns, then recognise the way they operate and then see how the I accepts these patterns and identifies with them. That is, I must cease to define what I am in the language of the patterns. Then maybe, the dynamic is free to flow. This, of course, is the purpose of Dialogue.

#### **Dialogue**

Enclosed you will find a shrunken June edition of ***USA Dialogue*** which I enclose at risk of litigation for infringement of copyright. This in the interest of spreading the word. You can get it, in readable size typeface, by subscribing to the UK branch office address I gave in the last Newsletter.

**NEXT MEETING - 10 AM FOR 10.30 19th SEPTEMBER AT, 81, GREVILLE STREET, CHATSWOOD  
Ph 4197394**

#### **Issue Number 6**

***There is a mix up of the record here as the content of this issue seems to be the same as Issue No. 1 - this is probably its correct position.***

#### **October or November 93**

It seems to be a characteristic of this sort of meeting that we are just getting to the nitty-gritty when everyone has to leave. Last time we were on the verge of a serious wrestle with the issue of whether or not there could be any meaning in the NOW. As a matter for debate, I would have thought it a non starter but there are clearly views which differ from mine and, therefore, challenge my assumptions. It seems to offer scope for "dialoguing" as one of the aims of dialogue is to create the circumstances in which a free flow of meaning can take place. Should we try next meeting? Maybe the differences lie in the meaning of the word itself.

*That which is intended to be or actually is expressed or indicated. The signification, sense, import. Also the*

*intent, spirit as apart from the letter of a statement. OED*

*Mean - Probably before 1200 'mene' shared by all, common; later inferior poor. Barnhart.*

**Be ye perfecte in one mynde and one meanyng 1 Cor 1**

Coincidentally, Donald has been taking words to pieces and putting them together and sent in the following note.

### **Words and their Meaning.**

*There* is away, both in time and space - out there.

*Here* is right here (where I AM?) and when you get to *there*, the 't' is dropped and you are *here*. Or take:- *nowhere*, meaning non-existent place. Once again, *here* is the basic word *here* and *now* becomes (becoming?) **now here.**

### **BOOKS**

John Wren-Lewis rang on his return to Sydney and suggested we send Darryl Reaney, who John recently met, a copy of Newsletter No 7 in which we discussed 'The Death of Forever'. John also drew my attention to a book called "Country of the Spirit" which opens with a chapter he thinks is relevant to our group endeavour. I will investigate and report.

### **COINCIDENCE**

During the last meeting Margaret and I had a side discussion on the question of why the churches seem to avoid what Traherne describes as "Heaven Now". In his latest book, Douglas has John Noakes say that "The churches have become custodians of a mystery which they no longer understand" or words to that effect. However, I have always felt that there must be cells of awareness scattered through the denominations which are clear about the fundamentals; the need for direct experiencing rather than the mediated word. After our meeting I switched on the radio whilst finishing off a presentation on the computer. It was Caroline Jones pursuing her affair with meaning and the speaker was a Father Hewitt. Well, Fr. Hewitt is the first example of the missing species I have come across. He was describing a five day water fast on the West coast of Ireland. The presentation is a bit theatrical but there is no doubt Fr Hewitt is on our wavelength whilst apparently remaining well embedded in the church. I have sent for the tape which should be available for our next meeting. There was an Irish nun at the Harding seminar in 91 so perhaps its not so unusual and the explanation is that I haven't been looking hard enough.

*Donald, I am hoping to get out a one-pager before the next meeting. I see these notes as part of the process and will say so. It is important that others feel free to contribute. I have thoughts arising from last meeting. I think that if silence is to come about it should arise naturally out of the movement of the dialogue. It seemed to me that we were trying to impose it on ourselves last time. Also, I do not share your generosity, to the non-speakers. We gather to share our understandings and misunderstandings, and are we not engaging in "dialogue"?*

### **Issue Number 7 - 1st December 93**

**Meetings are held at 10 am on the third Sunday of every month at 81 Greville Street, Chatswood and are open to anyone interested in the possibility of working out for themselves, rather than relying on others,**

**whether transformation of consciousness, enlightenment or whatever you want to call it, can come about.**

### **Meetings**

There have been two meetings since the last Newsletter. On 17th October we discussed a number of issues arising from Donald's book "Truth is a Pathless Land". At the second meeting on 21st November a new arrival questioned whether truth could really be described as pathless. This was a challenge to a few well protected assumptions, particularly those of your editor who has been subjected to fairly heavy Krishnamurti conditioning on the way. It became clear how easily the idea of pathlessness can become a heavily rutted track. This, for me, was an excellent example of "Dialogue" at work.

### **Dialogue**

We decided to use the next meeting on 19th December to pull together an Australian response to the request in the USA DIALOGUE Newsletter for feedback. I attach a copy of the article.

A reminder of what DIALOGUE is supposed to be about.

*A process of enquiry which is designed to expose our assumptions and thereafter progress without their interference. It involves a high quality of listening, not only to what the other is saying but also to the reaction arising in me.*

*It involves a sensitivity which is prepared to allow the other's point of view to stand as it is.*

#### *Summary*

*\* Challenge assumptions*

*\* Listen to:*

*The external input*

*The internal reaction*

*\* Suspend one's own point of view*

*Not with the aim of finding answers but rather transcending the dimensions of difference and allowing a fall into meaning.*

Reading the overseas newsletter reveals that others are going through the same process of adjusting to this apparently unusual way of doing things. Until recently I felt most comfortable if some form of structure or direction is established through agreeing on a topic for discussion. Nevertheless, I was frequently surprised by how relatively unimportant this really is. On reflection, I suppose that a general direction is implicit in our coming together in the first place. The answer to the question "why are we here", raised by the USA group article is probably answered by the banner headline to our newsletter. And, second question, does this provide us with a group identity?

In an attempt to prepare the ground I have summarised the issues arising from the article and our own discussions in a series of questions:

\* What is our feeling about the process of dialogue?

\* What are our expectations?

\* Is it working and, if so, in what way?

\* If it is not working, why not?

\* The question of discussing an agreed topic.

You may have other questions we can add on the day. There is another interesting query in the UK article "is DIALOGUE of value other than friendly get-togethers"?

### **Dreaming**

I asked Donald to write about an experience he had some years ago.

I was travelling in the Northern Territory, recording material for ABC documentary programmes and was talking to Ah Toy, a fifth generation Chinese Australian when one of his aboriginal acquaintances called in. After we had shared some of Ah Toy's watermelon I asked the visitor if I could interview him about tribal life. He was agreeable but said it would be better if I returned with him the next day to his area and talk with his father who was a tribal elder. I spent three days with him in Arnhem Land. A natural trust gradually developed between me and the father

and, on the afternoon of the third day, I asked the inevitable question, "what really is the dreamtime?" I was wanting his version of the ancient, ten thousand times repeated mythological legend of creation. I expected some saga about a great serpent coming down out of the sky and transforming into the river now winding its way through the rocky ranges surrounding us.

The tribal elder sat contemplating my question for a long time, perhaps two minutes while I held the microphone close to his mouth for he spoke very softly. His answer was totally unexpected - revolutionary in its starkness. "Any time not now!" Its simplicity stunned me. Then, to make sure I had understood his meaning he grinned and said: "Your coming here - now dreamtime". Then after another watchful pause, "Your going tomorrow - now dreamtime". A summation of reality, an insight into the illusion of time and sequence - with the sole reality the present. It was a thrilling, blessed moment - all else is illusion, non-sense, "Any time not now!" **DIS**

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**NEXT MEETING - 10 AM FOR 10.30 SUNDAY 19TH DECEMBER AT 81, GREVILLE STREET,  
CHATSWOOD Ph 4197394**

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I would appreciate a phone call if you are coming, especially if you would like to be picked up from Chatswood station.

### **Issue No.8 1st March 94**

**Meetings are held at 10 am on the third Sunday of every month at 81 Greville Street, Chatswood and are open to anyone interested in the possibility of working out for themselves, rather than relying on others, whether transformation of consciousness, enlightenment or whatever you want to call it, can come about.**

Our meeting on the 20th Feb was a lightly attended but spirited affair at which we knocked out the final draft of our letter to America. Thanks to those of you who contributed at the last two meetings and in print. The 'letter', is our reply to the USA "Dialogue Quarterly Newsletter" request for input into the DIALOGUE within their columns. The reply forms the bulk of this edition and is included because most of you missed the final workings at the last meeting.

This is what we sent.

#### **THE GROUP**

*One thing we all agreed on was that the group had to be itself. To be what it is; no barriers to growth or reduction through the imposition of rules, structure or subject matter.*

*Our group size varies between 8 and 20, averaging out about 10. I am fascinated by the suggestion that 40 is a good group number for effective DIALOGUE, this seems absurdly high. Apart from the impossibility of balanced participation, how does such a big group ever get to the point of speaking the same "language" let alone allowing silence into the equation? Large groups can create a feeling of security through anonymity. In a group of 40, DIALOGUE would need to extend for many hours to provide adequate time for a contribution by all as well as allow for silence. Does everybody have to contribute verbally? There are various views on this.*

*Some of us think a larger group would provide the diversity necessary to give the widest range of challenge and maybe a required critical mass of assumption. That is, the deeply buried assumptions may be more readily revealed.*

*In a small group we get to know one another so well that we may unconsciously develop a collective protection and projection of group assumptions. This is possible in larger groups through the formation of factions but it seems less likely.*

*Too much harmony could lead to complacency, a sort of group coma, and there is a need for challenge, even conflict, to bring out the deeper assumptions and entrenched attitudes. That's why the disrupters and the 'get up and leave in disgust' types have a real contribution to make. Some of us felt this to be too charitable a view as departure may also signal inability or unwillingness to DIALOGUE or sheer boredom.*

#### **PREDETERMINED SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION**

*I nearly always start a meeting with some discomfort about not having the direction provided by a set topic for*

discussion. Our group will have noticed how I manage this by rustling old Newsletters and making a few "announcements, apologies from the absent, etc. This in spite of the fact that it has never proved to be a problem. Most of us feel there is no need for any structure other than the guidelines adopted in the hope of giving DIALOGUE the best chance to develop. The general view is that content will take care of itself.

#### GROUP IDENTITY

*Do we have a group identity? To the extent that we share a common interest, as expressed in the caption to the Newsletter, yes, we do. Is this an obstacle to DIALOGUE and does it provide a hidden "topic for discussion"? What assumptions does it carry with it? It seems we do have a form, an identity and should be aware that it carries baggage and that adding "topics for discussion" to this existing structure will impose further impediments to free flow.*

#### WHAT ABOUT THE PROCESS ?

*We have to remind ourselves from time to time that we are DIALOGUING otherwise we drift into our usual patterns of random communication. I usually start off a meeting very uncertain about the likelihood of "getting it right" but I'm nearly always pleasantly surprised at the outcome. In spite of a tendency to revert to "debate" I feel comfortable with the process and realize it has value. Some think that longer meetings, over a weekend or several days, would be fruitful or at least, an interesting experiment. Silence is vital to hear the inner response clearly.*

#### DOES IT WORK AND, IF SO, IN WHAT WAY?

*Well it works for me. In the recent Greville Street meetings it has exposed a number of blind spots or blockages thereby generating further enquiry into the area we are covering or, more accurately, uncovering. In earlier meetings, at Narabeen, we tended to run into silence more frequently and this often resulted in an unpeeling of consciousness which stripped off the thought-imagery layer of the daily mind and revealed the underlying spontaneous movement.*

#### WHAT ARE OUR EXPECTATIONS ?

*I admit to high expectations. They are based on previous experiences of group interaction in a DIALOGUE climate although for many years we did not have a name for it. It seemed to come about automatically when we had exhausted the self. I am assured by these experiences that DIALOGUE works but I'm probably conditioned by them to expect it to work in the way it has worked before. Expectations do narrow the opportunity? It is possible to be aware of this danger, to DIALOGUE openly and see what happens, what unfolds.*

#### ELECTRONIC BULLETIN BOARD ?

*The question relevant to this possibility is, can a DIALOGUE take place via 'remote' media, whether on paper or electronically, with all the inherent delays and lack of 'spontaneity'.*

*Is international networking by computer too expensive a form of keeping one another up to date? It would allow an enormous number of people to be involved with the same questions, with no pressure and all the silence we need. Do related or sympathetic Bulletin Boards already exist?*

#### END OF OUR RESPONSE

#### DQN

As an indication of the feedback coming in from North American readers I have lifted comment from the December DQN, a letter from Michael Baker. It is copied directly on to available page 6 of this newsletter.

#### READING

The following quotation from Thomas More (not Sir Thos.) is very relevant to our enquiries.

*"This little exercise (involving discussion of a patient's dream) points out the rich, multi-layered nature of images of all kinds, and the advantage of never stopping in our exploration of them. The images, dreams and experiences that are important to us will always have a multitude of possible readings and interpretations, because they are rich with imagination and soul.*

*I understand that this approach to imagination goes against the part of us that longs for a conclusion and a destination in our search for meaning. This is another reason why care of the soul, in contrast to understanding the soul, amounts to a new paradigm for our modern way of life. It asks us to make a complete turnaround in our usual efforts to figure things out, suggesting a different set of values and new techniques in which we actually appreciate and enjoy the endless unravelling of meaning, the infinitely rich and deep layering of poetics within the shifting, fluid fabric of experience.*

*The desire to squeeze a single meaning out of a dream or work of art or a tale from life is inherently and profoundly Promethean. We want to steal fire from the gods for the sake of humanity. We want to replace divine mystery with human rationality. But this loss of complexity and mystery in our everyday response to life stories entails a loss of soul as well, because soul always manifests itself in mystery and multiplicity."*

Thomas More, "Care of the Soul" Judy Piatkus (Publishers) Ltd.

#### DIALOGUE AT SPRINGWOOD

Donald goes to gatherings at Kuranda fairly frequently. Kuranda is a property on the Queensland - NSW border owned by Geoffrey and Shirley Miller at a place called Springbrook. The Millers have been organising weekend gatherings of people with diverse interests for many years and I persuaded Donald to let us have a report of the February meeting for inclusion in this edition of the newsletter.

Twenty five people came to the live-in weekend at Kuranda, the full complement that can be accommodated in that magnificent mountain wilderness. They already knew the proposed theme "The Future is Now".

To come to such a remote place they needed some notice of the proposed topic. It was pointed out that the title "The Future is Now", had no question mark - that it was a statement to be investigated, its meaning uncovered and its truth or falseness discovered.

The early DIALOGUING concerned traditional understanding of time and sequence. One member asked whether it would be possible to put both the past and the future aside and enter the only domain in which we can actually act, the eternal present. We talked for a while about the vast evolutionary past and the future extending into infinity and the cultural concept of the minuscule fleeting present, how most thoughts and acts had their roots in the past and consequences in the future, the traditional "Tempus fugit" approach to life and living.

This opened the domains of religion, education, social practices and institutions; Organised Religions with their doctrines of rewards and punishments - if not in this life then afterwards or next incarnation; Education - learn the subject, the theory now and practice in the future; Politics, work at policies, make plans to be realized sometime later. All geared towards tomorrow, none directly related to living, being aware here and now; all future oriented.

By the Saturday evening there was an easy interflow and a realization that the physical senses: hearing, seeing, feeling operate only in the present, timeless moment.

Before we went our separate ways late on Sunday we had shared a unanimity of experiencing to answer one of the queries raised during the weekend, "What is the greatest gift I can give to anyone?" (Before reading the next paragraph please put the question to yourself - "What is the greatest gift I can give to anyone?")

There was a realization that the greatest gift I can give is also the greatest I can receive - open, full attention - with all this means: going with the other, allowing the other persons to be themselves. Full open attention is a total action that can only happen in the present.

#### THE OMEGA ORDER

Most of you are aware of my fondness for Thomas Traherne and my interest in the mystery surrounding the apparent repression of the mystical tradition within contemporary Christianity. I have always felt that it must be manifesting somewhere or other and an article about the Omega Order in the Christmas issue of Consciousness Magazine led to a meeting with Erik and Elsa Harting who handle Australian enquiries for tapes and all other enquiries about the Order. Their phone number is 419-4135 (evenings)

*The Order was founded in 1980 by Peter Spink, an Anglican priest, who has been Warden of the Burswood Healing centre and is a Canon of Coventry Cathedral. It has a Priory in Avon, at Winford, where a group of Companions live in Community. Omega is a teaching Order; at Winford there is an ongoing programme of talks, teaching weekends and retreats.*

The foregoing is an extract from a the full page article in "Consciousness" referred to above and you can either read it in the magazine or when you come round here next. I think the NOW culture inclines towards learning rather than teaching orders but perhaps there is something to "learn" from the "teachers" as this further extract may show:

*Peter Spink uses the terms "dynamic" and "cult" respectively for the experiential and dogmatic aspects of religion: the dynamic is the Spirit, the flow, the energy, whereas the cult is the crystallization of the dynamic in a given culture and time. Dynamic leads inevitably to cult, but always remains independent of it. He recognises that*

*the Christian Church has all too often identified with the cult but maintains that a powerful dynamic can be experienced within the crystallizations of Christian scripture and doctrine. Orthodoxy is an integral part of our culture and heritage and at its heart there are deep spiritual truths to be explored, leading to an inner knowledge which sets us free from the limitations of our conditioned minds: "Truth is that which in a given situation awakens the heart to ultimate reality".*

There is an interesting parallel here with Pirsig's concept of patterns of value (Newsletter No.3). Crystallization into "cult" representing a "static pattern of value" with the Spirit as "dynamic value" in action. The trick is to make sure the static pattern is used as a launch pad for and not a bottleneck to the dynamic. It will be interesting to see how Omega manage the balance and perhaps the Hartings will come and talk to us about it sometime.

Insert Michael Baker's letter from Dec. issue of DQN

**NEXT MEETING - 10 AM FOR 10.30 SUNDAY 20th March, AT 81, GREVILLE STREET, CHATSWOOD Ph 4197394** - I would appreciate a phone call if you are coming, especially if you would like to be picked up from Chatswood station.

#### **Issue No.9 1st May 94**

MEETINGS ARE HELD AT 10 AM ON THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 81 GREVILLE STREET, CHATSWOOD AND ARE OPEN TO ANYONE INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBILITY OF WORKING OUT FOR THEMSELVES, RATHER THAN RELYING ON OTHERS, WHETHER TRANSFORMATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS, ENLIGHTENMENT OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT, CAN COME ABOUT.

#### **MEETINGS**

We opened the April meeting by reading the letter from William van den Heuvel which I think is a wonderfully clear and concise summary of what DIALOGUE is all about. (See USA Newsletter)

The thorny question of whether or not to have a set subject for discussion. The DIALOGUE purists all say NO! We have followed this line at our meetings with mixed results. We thought that lack of direction may be one of the reasons we find ourselves so easily drifting out of DIALOGUE and back into our familiar patterns of discussion. We agreed on a trial compromise which involves a set subject before lunch followed by a free-wheeling session in the afternoon. The issue for May is "What can DIALOGUE bring to Process Theology". Margaret, who is giving a "talk" based on the book by Charles Birch "On Purpose" to another group later in the month, will introduce the subject.

In the afternoon, we viewed the "Before Its Too Late Video"

and in answer to Enid's question "What can we do about it?" I've received a letter explaining that they are busy getting themselves organised in NSW and will let us know. Watch this space!

The May meeting is on Sunday 15th. We already have some apologies including Donald who will be in Saanen. There is also the possibility of new blood.

Margot and I were invited to attend a meeting of the Omega group following Elsa and Erik's talk to us in April. It was a very interesting meeting and we met a group of people who seem to be in accord with what we are doing and very much on our wavelength.

David's ideas on a DIALOGUE bulletin board resulted in an annotation on our entry in the USA Newsletter and Gladney has suggested we find out more about BuddahNet, which is designed to connect the world's Buddhists. We hope to arrange an appointment with Ven Pannyavaro the day after the May meeting.

#### **GROUPS**

After the March meeting, Gladney raised the question of group life cycles. I asked him to summarise for inclusion in this Newsletter.

*You asked me to set down on paper the late night thoughts we shared on the lifespan of "groups". I recall these points:*

*a) that many reached an end to their creative growth in a relatively short period of time, 6 to 9 months, and were often dissolved (by the originator) to enable fresh growth. It was pointless to see such dissolution as implying criticism of anything at all.*

*b) that the best writing I had come across on the subject was Sufi literature, where there was an emphasis on the ability of a group to remain in existence for hundreds of years with virtually no spiritual benefit for the participants who were unable to distinguish welcome social warmth from (genuine, deeper, higher) spiritual processes.*

*c) that such confusion (social : spiritual) accounted for the existence of many organisations with diminished spiritual function though presently doing yeoman service socially, in the eyes of their participants.*

*d) that most ex-group members moved on to new groupings, clusterings, associations, each seeking to further individual social or spiritual development, which could now proceed on a new front.*

*e) that in any case the convenor (creator) always had the sovereign right to deconvene, as (s)he had once convened.*

*f) that any garden provided plenty of metaphors the process, as blossoms lost their perfume and only maintained their colour.*

*g) that I had witnessed, as perhaps most of us have, instances where individuals had attempted to prolong, beyond the natural life, an association, and in such circumstances, change could come as quite a jolt. (GO)*

I found this very reaction-stimulating in view of my interest in the effective operation of our group and would be interested in your views. Gladney concluded by identifying the source of the Sufi references as the work of Idries Shah.

The aim of the monthly get-together is to provide a regular time and place for DIALOGUE and discussion. An event which can be relied upon to occur. There is no intention to change present arrangements but we should be aware of the dangers of trying to keep alive something which has outlived its usefulness and is trying to die. We will continue as long as there is a need. Some of the non-attending readers might now be ready to try the odd meet?

## **NOW NEWSLETTER**

There is also the question of the need for this Newsletter. As most of you know, I have resigned from full time work and don't feel I can continue to subsidise on a 100% basis. Those who think the Newsletter is a useful extension of our DIALOGUE could confirm by making a subscription of \$10 per year. This will cover approx. six issues per annum and include pirated sections of the USA Newsletter. The USA Newsletter was copied in full this month because it contains the "global" replies to the questionnaire. Katie organised the copying which was a great help. The present circulation is 26 and I am sending copies to USA and UK.

Would those of you who want to receive future issues please let me have \$10 at the next meeting or post to me. If there is insufficient interest to continue the Newsletter, subscriptions will be returned. Note that details for direct subscription to the USA DIALOGUE Newsletter are shown on their back cover.

## **DIALOGUE**

Donald asked me to summarise what DIALOGUE means to me. I thought it would be easy but it proved to be quite difficult. Maybe we should all do it. Here is my effort.

*In conversation, unless I know absolutely nothing about the topic, I find I almost invariably have a point of view about the subject under discussion. Even when I don't know anything about the particular issue, it doesn't take long for memory to draw on related areas of my experience and tack together a composite, interim viewpoint or opinion.*

*I find I have an opinion on just about everything. This mass of viewpoints is the basis of my relationship with whoever I meet. It is the foundation of interaction from which I draw when engaged in discussion; a static body of knowledge. It is now so pervasive that I am surprised when reminded that it didn't always work that way. There was a time when consciousness was not dominated by the static accumulation of the known but by dynamic "not knowing". And, if I look really closely, I see there is still a time where the dynamic dominates and that is NOW. The dominance of the static is simply the result of my determination to overlook what is actually going on now and to live out of past experience.*

*DIALOGUE is a simple discipline designed to awaken us to the dynamic in*

*relationship. It achieves this by insisting on a more intense form of listening than we usually bring to our exchanges. Instead of hearing what the speaker is saying and standing by, ready and waiting, with the conditioned response from my library of past experience, I listen to what is coming in from the speaker whilst applying an equivalent level of attention to the internal reaction which forms in response to the speaker's words. As a result, the assumptions which normally lie unquestioned in my static viewbank, are brought out into the open.*

*The result is an alertness of mind which is ready to challenge not only what the other is saying but, more importantly, the reaction arising in me to what is being said. Thus my library of opinion is coming under scrutiny. This is revolutionary, it hasn't happened before. My static mass of knowledge is under attack, it is starting to wobble, it may, under the spotlight of DIALOGUE, actually give way to the dynamic; make room for the NEW. The possibility of change arises and change is the essence of the dynamic.*

All very well but does it work? DIALOGUE is really very simple yet I find it enormously difficult in practice. This is due I think to the stranglehold which habit has established over the past fifty years; entrenched to the point where it seems that the only effective response, in any situation, is the response of the static. Nevertheless, I have used the DIALOGUE approach in some recent conflict and problem areas at work with very positive results. It sometimes works for me at the NOW meetings as well but, in spite of the apparently ideal conditions, I find we fall out of DIALOGUE at the meetings as readily as anywhere else.

Whilst DIALOGUE has obvious practical applications of the type I am finding useful in day to day relationships and work situations there is an even more interesting application.

The careful attention which is given to the assumptions underlying my reaction to a particular issue can be applied to the assumptions which support my "world view". For example my ideas about self, time and so on. The first discovery might be that they are, in fact, not fact but merely inflated ideas and, therefore, a fairly shaky foundation for life. Thus the wobble gains momentum and the static may start to make room, not only for the new in relationship, but also for the free flow of the dynamic as NOW.

The value of DIALOGUE lies in its ability to undermine my dependence on knowledge and, without denying the value of past experience, create an openness in which something new can happen, free of any restraint imposed by what has gone before. (AM)

I look forward to some energetic challenges to the assumptions which underpin the foregoing when we meet.

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**NEXT MEETING - 10 AM FOR 10.30 SUNDAY 15 MAY AT 81, GREVILLE STREET, CHATSWOOD  
Ph 4197394**

I would appreciate a phone call if you are coming, especially if you would like to be picked up from Chatswood station. If you can give us a call a couple of days before the meeting day, so much the better.

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**Issue No. 10 - 1 July 94**

**Meetings are held at 10 am on the third Sunday of every month at 81 Greville Street, Chatswood and are open to anyone interested in the possibility of working out for themselves, through the process of dialogue, whether transformation of consciousness, enlightenment or whatever you want to call it, can come about.**

**June Meeting**

We had a surprisingly well attended meeting on the 21st in spite of travels to distant lands and competition from the Sydney Film Festival. We have decided to change the format and instead of breaking for lunch at 12.30 we will run an extra hour and break at 1.30. This is an attempt to overcome the problem of breaking the DIALOGUE at a point where, at the two hour mark, we are quite often just beginning to get the flow going. I don't know if it worked any better at the first trial but we'll persist with the new approach for a while and see what happens. In the afternoon, we listened to the John Wren Lewis interview with Caroline Jones. This opened up a number of interesting issues and is very pertinent to the question of whether we are partially asleep.(See below) Many of the points John makes offer excellent DIALOGUE material. Apart from the 'why am I content to be half awake most of the time', which is my

hobby horse, the points which struck me were his comments on :\* a state which escapes notice, \* the clear mind is not quiet/empty but highly active, \* available to everyone, \* easy not to notice, \* the spiritual paths are designed to sustain the sleep, \* detachment a result not a cause and finally, some comments which offered gratitude as one way of describing the state. He quoted Blake "gratitude is Heaven itself" and this sent me scurrying off to re-read Traherne's "Thanksgivings" There were other DIALOGUEABLE matters and complaints that it was too much to consider at a single sitting. It was suggested that we invite him to come to one of our meetings when his book is finished.

### **USA Newsletter**

The American Newsletter contains some very interesting material. It is reassuring to find that the difficulties and uncertainties involved in DIALOGUE are not confined to the NOW group.

### **Homework**

About three months ago, at a very small meeting, we thought it would be an interesting exercise to give you all an assignment. This would involve the design of a test to demonstrate once and for all whether what passes for the waking state is a state of full consciousness or a waking dream from which we can awaken into a wider consciousness.

That the latter might be true seems to follow from the teachings of the seers, the various mystical traditions and the occasional "openings" which seem to strike most people at odd moments of their lives.

At the meeting, we thought that if we are only partially awake then it should be possible to devise a means of generating total wakefulness. That is, in the same way that we can arrange to end what we accept as the dreaming state which we enter every night, we should be able to design the equivalent of an alarm clock to end the waking dream of everyday existence. The plan was to send you all away with the job of working out a foolproof trick or method and then ask you to tell us all about it at the next meet. And, if you decided it was impossible, provide an explanation of why it cannot be done. There is no prize, the resolution of the problem would be its own reward. We didn't raise it at the following meeting but maybe some of you would like to give it some attention. Coincidentally, this question is covered on page 9 of the USA Newsletter with Sardar Singh giving the idea a severe pasting. This is a reply to The letter from William van den Heuvel in the previous issue. I think Sardar's assumption that the observer creates the idea that "the instinct of self-preservation wants to preserve the self" is doubtful. I think the instinct is in the business of protecting the organism not ideas. The two letters are getting close to the heart of the issue so perhaps we could have a group look at this correspondence.

### **S. Singh & Wm. v.d.Heuvel**

*(Comment on the DIALOGUE in the USA Newsletter. Refer to p.9 of the attached and p.10 of their March issue)*

I am sympathetic to the concern of Sardar Singh that motive may distort the enquiry by reincarnating the self identity. That is, I see that I am not and will accept that I am nothing providing I am assured of something better, for example cosmic consciousness.

I don't see that there is anything wrong with motive in itself, and if we substitute the motive of interest in what is actually going on for the motive of gaining a break through to cosmic consciousness perhaps that would be more acceptable.

On the other hand, I agree with Wm van den Heuvel that some sort of trick or method would help us to counter the reincarnation of self-identity in its various guises, an issue which Singh himself acknowledges in his letter as a major problem.

The trick might simply be the effective use of DIALOGUE either collectively or individually and I think this is implied in the Singh reply.

What about working out a group response at the next meeting?

### **"Am I the only One Asleep?"**

My interest in DIALOGUE arises mainly from the possibility that it is more likely than my normal way of operating to either engender an awakening or reveal the basis of the false assumptions that make me think I am not fully awake. When I discuss this I am often surprised by the response of a number of DIALOGUERS who seem to be quite satisfied with things the way they are. This makes me wonder whether I am the only one out of step. Why am I so determined to get to the bottom of this riddle? Is it a mystery only to me? Am I surrounded by a crowd of calmly enlightened beings who are too polite to point out that this restlessness of mine is spiritual greed, or can they possibly be half asleep without realising it? The latter explanation seems unlikely after the exposure they've had to extensive discussions at our NOW meetings and ear-bashings by Krishnamurti, Douglas Harding, Eckhart, Huang Po, Hui Neng, Ramana Maharshi, et al.

Or perhaps after all, you are in the same boat as I am but don't think anything can be done about it or, perhaps, needs to be done. If so, why not? Please be ready to put me straight on this question in July!

### **Preparation**

As a counter to the effect of the gap between meetings which may be more or less DIALOGUE free, what about skimming through the last Newsletter, especially the international one, on the morning of the NOW meeting as a warm-up for the day?

**Bulletin Board**

The USA Newsletter reports that the first DIALOGUE Bulletin Board is up and running and is accessible through Internet. We are equipped to link up following the connection of a modem to the Greville Street computer but contact will have to await operator training by Gladney and David. Gladney sent our first message, to the local Buddhanet on the 19th.

**Travel**

Donald is in Ojai and has met a number of active members of American DIALOGUE groups including Joe Zorskie editor of their Newsletter.

**Letters**

Rome Warren replied to the last NOW Newsletter with some interesting comments from which I extracted the following example:

*Everyone seems to stress listening. I regard 'hearing' as much more vital and fundamental. One can listen without hearing yet hearing can occur without listening. Hearing picks up subtleties whereas listening appears to go through the brain and register as knowledge.*

**NEXT MEETING - 10 AM FOR 10.30 SUNDAY 17 JULY AT 81, GREVILLE STREET, CHATSWOOD**  
**Ph 4197394** - We would appreciate a phone call if you are coming, especially if you would like to be picked up from Chatswood station. If you can give us a call a couple of days before the meeting day, so much the better.