

JOURNEY OF EXPLORATION

by Roslyn Langdon

I have recently returned from a round-the-world journey which arose because of a long awaited visit to Esalen Institute. Rather than return the way I went, I said to myself, I would keep going West, until I finally arrived back home. Having given up a house and practice last year, I decided to give myself a six month's break.

Before going to Esalen for a month, I attended the International Transpersonal Conference in Santa Rosa, over a period of seven days, including a pre-conference workshop with Stan and Christine Grof. Over 300 people participated in their workshop. It was difficult to find floor space in which to breathe! There were 1,200 people at the Conference, mostly Americans, with 53 Europeans from Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark and Belgium, and 6 of us from the United Kingdom. The presenters were of high quality. For me it was good to see and hear Sogyal Rinpoche, Jack Cornfield, Joanna Macey, Ram Dass, Chungliang Al Huang, Paul Horn, Dora Kalf, Michael and Dulce Murphy, Arnold Mindell and Anna Halprin. The purely academic lectures left me cold. How can anyone present in any depth, and answer questions in a three quarters of an hour time slot allotted for the morning talks! What I enjoyed most were the meditations, the movement sessions and the musical interludes. I was deeply moved by Dulce Murphy (wife of Michael, co-founder of Esalen), her talk of her experience of Esalen's nine years involvement in Soviet-American relations, and her own times in the Soviet Union. I talked with her and the American A.H.P. representative of the USSR Programme, and expressed my wish to see something on the same lines taking place here. I was moved by Al Huang's energy and sheer joy in movement; by Paul Horn's flute playing, particularly in the accompanying film of his communication with a killer whale that had lost its long term mate; by Jack Kornfield's gentle meditational approach; and by Ram Dass and Joanna Macey's passion. It was also a moving experience to hear Rusty Schweickart, an astronaut, speak at the close of the conference, showing slides from a book of photographs of the earth from space, with statements from other astronauts and cosmonauts. He had come straight from a gathering of colleagues in Budapest.

Esalen was the realisation of a twelve year old dream. I would have fully appreciated what it had to offer then, but as I discovered, I had left it too late. I decided to go as a work scholar, as I wanted to experience the centre as a member of the community rather than as a visitor. It was a difficult month for me. I could not be accepted by the community. They had difficulty in accepting each other! I was not one of the weekly or week-end visitors, and I didn't par-

ticipate in the work scholar Gestalt group as it concentrated on encouraging emotional release, from which I was trying to have a rest. As it turned out rest was a commodity hard to come by. I shared a room with three others. In the next bed was an ex-farmer from Devon who snored loudly! Cooking for 200 people four days a week on eight hour shifts was exhausting, and just as I was beginning to wonder why I was there, I made a discovery: it transpired that the three children of Bill Swartley, who died ten years ago, were all living at Esalen, although the youngest, Sharis was leaving soon. Their mother, Be, was living near-by at Carmel. I had trained with Bill in Primal Integration at the Churchill Centre, after I met him in 1976. He had lived in my flat in London, and had meant a great deal to me. Meeting his children and grand-child unleashed an emotional flood-gate, and I found myself having to deal with unresolved feelings of loss and abandonment. On Christmas Eve I offered a reading of some channelled writings of the words of Master Jesus from the Ascended Masters, and Be Swartley came to congratulate me and present herself.

The scenery at Big Sur is sensational, and lying in the hot sulphur pools, perched on a cliff overlooking the Pacific, is a rare and wonderful experience, particularly at sunset, whilst watching the whales sporting and spouting. Living at South Coast, a mile and a half away from the Institute, enabled me to view the sun rise as I walked the coast road to work. On my days off I was able to do some dance classes, and some singing with Susan Richards, and I managed to fit in a Tregar massage. Esalen appeared to be going through a period of change in beginning to get rid of some long-term community members, and placing more emphasis on financial viability - shades of Thatcherism! Much has changed since Dick Price died - killed by a falling rock whilst sitting in meditation in the hills nearby.

A week of my seventeen days stay in Hawaii was spent at a growth centre on the Big Island called Kalani Hanui (Harmony of Heaven and Earth) at a Yoga course. Then on to Japan for two weeks of visiting Buddhist and Shinto temples. After travelling through Malaysia from Sinapore, I arrived in southern Thailand by minibus in time to attend a ten day silent meditation retreat at Suan Mokhh, a forest Buddhist monastery, with fifty other westerners. In intense heat, and primitive living conditions, I began to learn more about my mental and emotional processes, and how to calm them. I was asked to take a Yoga class each morning, which put me in the privileged position of being able to speak for an hour each day! Twelve days later I was sunning myself on a remote tropical island. Then on to Bangkok and Chiang Mai, and finally after six months, home.

What have I learned? It will take me some time to assimilate all I have learned. Here are some lessons so far. I have learned to break my habitual mould of work, to give myself more time and space, to trust my guides (I always felt pro-

tected), to live more in the present, without too much planning. I discovered that everything I sought in California and elsewhere is right here at home. Travelling in other parts of the world has helped me to be more appreciative of my own country, and particularly, Devon, where I now live. It has been about developing a wider perspective, getting an overview and clearer understanding and appreciation of my life and work.

My journey of exploration has come full circle to my knowing the one truth that everything I have to learn is right here within me.

(Written in May 1989)

MEETING POINTS BETWEEN HUMANISTIC PSYCHOLOGY AND PARAPSYCHOLOGY

by Serena Roney-Dougal

Serena Roney-Dougal is author of "Where Science and Magic Meet", published by Element Books

In 1989 there was a conference in London on the interface between clinical psychology and parapsychology. This conference confirmed that any reasonably open-minded psychologist working with disturbed people, and particularly, it seems, with psychotic people, should at all times be open to the probability that they are in fact highly sensitive to clairvoyant, telepathic and precognitive impressions and that these may well form an unacknowledged core source for some of their thoughts and behaviour.

The other point that this conference brought out was that official psychiatric diagnosis considers that anyone who believes in psychic phenomena is exhibiting symptoms of psychosis!

Over the years of attending parapsychology conferences and discussing this area of clinical parapsychology in the various workshops, the feeling has been growing that we really do need to regenerate traditional methods of dealing with these exquisitely sensitive, unstable people, labelled psychotic by our society. In traditional societies if a person had a breakdown or showed signs of epilepsy, typically around late adolescence to young adult, then this person was considered to be marked with special gifts and would be taken in by the sha-