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### Awareness—Alan Mann

We have a follow up to something I said in the last NOWletter. I was asked to enlarge on, explain, what I meant when I said:

*It is possible to overcome this habit (the sense of me as the observer of what is happening) and come upon immediate direct experience of the occasion. It sometimes happens spontaneously, it can be a result of meditation practices or as a result of turning awareness upon itself.*

The question was about what exactly I mean when I speak of ‘turning awareness on itself’.

Answer: My ‘Everyday awareness’ is a third person perspective. It assumes an observer (me) and the observed (everything else, the not-me). The experiments are designed to reveal a first-person perspective.

Third person perspective: I am an object in the world and separate from all else.

First person perspective: The world appears in awareness and I am not other than that.

The third person perspective is not eliminated but experienced as secondary.

The first-person awareness is primary and, experientially, what I really am.

To see that this is so I have to put direct experience of what is happening before knowledge about what is happening. This is similar to, or the same as, the Buddhist “Only don’t know”

To illustrate this we take the apparent absurdity of headlessness as a demo.

A common response: ‘Don’t tell me I can’t see my head, I know I have a head’. What though, is the actual experience?

Awareness doesn’t see a head, it has some sensations in what it knows and calls the head area. What is the actual experience? The experiential awareness is whatever the occasion presents, be it birds, trucks, trees, sunsets, etc.

This in Krishnamurti speak is reported in his oft-quoted aphorisms such as:

You are the world  
 What is - is sacred.  
 Is there a field which is uncontaminated by the known?  
 The observer is the observed.  
 You want to go North whilst still facing South  
 The first step is the last step.

I pick Krishnamurti but we recognise that these sorts of statements crop up all over the world of perennial philosophy. And the first step is, as raised in the question, the backward step involved in awareness turning back on itself. And thereby discovering, that what it is looking out of is what it is looking for.

I have a favourite quote about enlightenment. Someone in a study group asks Jean Klein “If there is no Self, as the group had just discussed and agreed about, what is it that is enlightened. After a brief pause Klein answers “This”.

There are two major obstacles as I see it. The first is the obviousness and immediacy of what is thought to be missing. The second is the attempt to acquire it as an aspect of Alan rather than to be it, as it is.

The trick is to simply ‘Stop looking through something that isn’t there’. You are more truly what is apprehended than an imagined apprehender, a thought constructed self-image. To see this I have take off the ‘mask’, see through the fog of the assumed personality.



*(The above is a particularly useful image as it not only shows the mask coming off but also the indicates an openness ‘behind’ it).*

The classic version of the Indian sages is Tat Tvam Asi “That thou art”.

I have always been uncomfortable with this famous saying as I felt it could reinforce rather than replace the sense of self as entity, albeit a more complete self, a wiser or enlightened me. However, this email exchange led me into what I feel is a better understanding. To say Thou Art That can be read to imply an aggrandisement of ego. Whereas That, Thou Art is more likely to mean that what I previously regarded as other, is what I really am.

If I allow this possibility, I may then apprehend the occasion, as revealed by all the senses, to be what I truly am, as opposed to a completely separate observer of what is going on.

It is in this sense that Jean Klein's statement that enlightenment applies to 'this' as opposed to the 'me' makes perfect sense. And of course, Krishnamurti and Bohm's 'The observer is the observed'.

The reference to Indian philosophy reminds me of some earlier research when, about forty years ago I developed a meditation technique of maintaining attention on my breaths for a count of 100 and, if my attention strayed at any point, I would have to start again. If I reached the target of 100 breaths without wandering off, I was entitled to ask the universe a question. I did crack it a couple of times and on one occasion I asked, "If Atman' is the aspect of Brahman present in all humans, why the need to seek enlightenment?" The answer came "It is in the perfection of creation that we are engaged". I interpreted this to mean it is not about the individual you Alan, it is about the undivided wholeness of being. A slap on the wrist for me and not unlike the Jean Klein reply.

This sort of experience attracts rebuttal in the same way as the 'So what' to Headlessness, e.g. 'I don't need you to point out to me that I can't see my own head'. In the case of my meditation question a common response is 'Good to know the Universe speaks to us in the English language'. But I gave it the words, it was my translation of what the 'universe' delivered and that was the simple understanding.

*Alan Mann*

### **Summary—Peter Lim**

When the weary and long-suffering world  
has lost its every golden cherished song  
and life is no longer a feast nor a pearl  
my heart shall still sing, brave and strong-

when the yawning sunset has sadly fallen  
on lonely earth's every known nook and corner  
I'll not walk away, nor hope will I abandon  
patience and faith I'll reach out to gather-

when my heart is sorrow-laden  
unto love's bosom I will surrender  
to me my beloved's words will be spoken  
so gentle, so comforting, so very tender-

when the last days of winter begin to beckon  
and past scenes of youth old age yearns to remember  
let not our joys be stolen nor our spirit be broken  
farewell will only be a metaphor as what follows is a welcome crossover

*Peter Lim*

## House for Sale—Margot Mann

The house looked run-down. They walked up the uneven stone path and the agent fished the key out of her handbag and opened the door. It groaned and scraped along the floor. “It always does that she said, smiling. “We’ll go through to the back and start there. It needs a bit of TLC but there’s been quite a lot of interest.”

The kitchen had been renovated and extended, but not recently. In spite of many small-paned windows, the room was dark and smelled musty. Curtains hung limply at each end of the windows. Sparse furniture included a pink formica-topped table and some chrome chairs with grey vinyl seats. The linoleum had once been patterned with blue and red diamonds but was now faded and worn. The agent said she couldn’t switch on the light because the electricity had been cut off. Julie thought it was just as well. She flicked a glance across to Ray who raised his eyebrows in response. This was the fourth house they had seen that day and it seemed that every place in their price range was old and shabby and often unwelcoming, but this place felt different. “You have to have a feeling for a place,” Julie had told Ray after they had inspected a depressingly run-down house, “we’ll know when it’s the right one because it will feel right. It doesn’t have to be beautiful and new, it just has to have the right feel.” Ray grunted. He had to admit Julie’s hunches were usually sound. Julie hoped they would soon find a place they could afford because Ray was finding the whole process increasingly difficult to handle.

The agent was pointing to the large back garden they could see through the windows. Some sweet corn stalks were growing at odd angles. She said, “This is a wonderful place if you’re a gardener or a handyperson.”

“Um,” began Ray in reply, “is there any truth in the rumour that someone was murdered in this house.....?” The question hung in the air for a moment before the agent replied with a laugh, “Oh you don’t want to believe everything you hear – but that’s a new one on me.” She looked sharply at Ray for a moment and then shepherded them into the hallway and from there to the front room. Julie nudged Ray with her elbow and gave him a warning look. He continued, “It’s just that another agent told a friend of ours that there was a murder-suicide in this house and that’s why no-one wants to buy it, even though they’ve lowered the price. “ “I don’t know anything about that,” the agent replied quickly, “it sounds like one of those stories that people spread around when they want to get a property cheaply. I think the general consensus amongst agents is that this property will not be on the market for long at such a reasonable asking price. The large garden, alone, is a strong selling point for people looking to live in this area. I think it’s an excellent buy, “ she finished briskly, and turning into the hallway, added, “Let me show you the rest of the house.”

The agent and her mother ran a real estate business in the northern suburbs. An advertisement for their business, screening at the local cinema, showed the younger, smartly dressed woman looking towards her elegant, white-haired mother, both of them laughing at some private joke, while the comments of several very happy clients were flashed onto the screen. Julie especially liked the testimony of one young couple – ‘treated us just like family’ and she suggested to Ray that they visit “The Truehome Agency.” Ray was initially reluctant and muttered that he hoped they would be treated better than his family had treated him, but he trusted Julie’s judgment and finally agreed that they should pay “The Truehome Agency” a visit.

The agent ushered them into the bathroom, which was tiled in pink and grey. “Your favourite colour scheme Ray,” murmured Julie, “so seventies.” They moved on to the first of the two back bedrooms. Ray walked around the small space for a moment and then said, “Look at this big stain on the floor, near where the bed would have been. I bet that’s blood.” He folded his arms and stood with his legs apart looking at the agent. “That’s a really big stain,” he added. The agent was rapidly losing patience. She thought that Julie and Ray were typical of many young people who wanted something for nothing and who had no scruples about their methods of getting it. Forcing herself to smile, she said “It could be anything,” and walked purposefully towards the front door.

When they were all on the front porch, the agent said “What do you think? This place is going for auction on the 14<sup>th</sup>, and if you want to make an offer before that, I’m pretty confident we could negotiate a very good price. Is there anything you would like to ask me?” She didn’t look at Ray.

“We’ll get back to you,” Ray said. He and Julie walked to the front gate and turned to look at the house. The agent was writing something on her clipboard and missed seeing Julie give Ray a little push. “You can be such a pain Ray,” Julie muttered, “this could be the house we’ve been looking for and now the agent doesn’t like us.” Ray laughed. He took out his mobile phone and dialled one of the numbers on the display board at the front of the house before taking Julie’s hand and hurrying her around the corner. “I’m making a call to the opposition,” he explained. Julie sighed.

The following day they were back at the old house with an agent called Derek, whom they knew. He had already shown them several houses, most of which were out of their price range, and he was unenthusiastic when he recognised Ray’s voice on the phone and even less impressed when Ray asked him to meet them at the house they had just left. Ray and Julie were the kind of annoying couple every agent wishes to avoid, but Derek realized that postponing another meeting was just a short term solution to an immediate problem, and so he agreed to see them the next day.

“What’s up?” asked Derek’s colleague Mark when he heard Derek swear and bang down the phone. “It’s those tossers I’ve been carting around for the last couple of weeks.” Derek said. They are never going to buy and I’ve wasted too much time on them already. Now they want to see that old house in Benson Street that’s stirred up quite a bit of interest. I think it’s up for auction soon.” His mobile rang and he answered it quickly. After a few minutes conversation, he turned to Mark and said, “That was Alison from Truehome. She’s just been to the place in Benson Street with these two I’m supposed to meet tomorrow, and she wanted to know if there was a murder-suicide in the house and if that’s why it’s being offered so cheaply. Apparently the guy, Ray, said he’d heard it from another agent. What an operator. I’ll get the bastard!” He jumped up from his chair and ruffled Mark’s hair as he walked quickly past his desk.

The following day Derek took Ray and Julie through the Benson Street house and then outside to the large back yard. The sun was shining and although overgrown, the garden looked green and lush. While Ray and Derek were in conversation, seated on a rickety garden seat, Julie wandered through some old fruit trees a short distance from the house. She noticed a large bare patch under a couple of trees and wondered if someone had started to clear away the weeds to make a garden bed. She could live in a place like this, she thought, it felt right. She was cross with Ray for all

his silly talk yesterday about a murder-suicide, and hoped he was being more sensible with Derek. It was probably the only property they could afford and she was sick of house-hunting. They could paint and renovate and they might even get used to the pink and grey bathroom. She smiled at the thought and hoped Ray wouldn't ruin their chances.

The two men were standing up when Julie emerged from the trees. She heard Ray say "we'll be going then," as he beckoned her to hurry, and she barely had time to thank Derek who was smiling and waving, before Ray dragged her through the house and they were out the front gate and into the street. "You won't believe this," he said to a protesting Julie as they turned the corner walking quickly, "but there *was* a murder-suicide in that house a few months ago and that's why it's such a good price. Did you see that spot in the back yard where the weeds had been cleared away? Derek told me that the husband buried his wife and her lover under those trees near where you were walking and then he took off. Apparently he had quite a job convincing everyone he didn't kill his wife and there could even have been a child involved. Derek said not to spread the story around because the house is going to auction soon and there are quite a few people interested. What a lucky escape."

*Margot Mann*

## **Sleepless—Louise Joy**

Longing: how I miss India she said ruefully why did you come to Australia? you never know how you will miss a place until you leave

Absence: the absence of the other creates a longing nothing can fill

Nurture: from an early age nurture brings growth a gradual reality

Limits: the ancients we are told had no limits they would throw their affections on each other in the street

Orgy: the ancients again have left an image of orgies a free for all en masse

Friendship: a universal sustaining life possible anywhere purity robustness with humour and grace

Age: age is no barrier to feeling at 5 or 85 possibilities are there

Isolation: in isolation understanding can come is this the secret of the Trappist monks?

Carer: paid to care yet without pay caring by a carer can be, is unique

Distilling: distilling wisdom of this most profound of human experiences like a rare perfume

Writing: writing all alone in the early hours transmuting experience with words

Substitute: there is no substitute for genuine feeling and experience

Diversity: I think of friends enjoying each and every experience in their diversity

Parent: parent to child love in pure adoration has no limits

Softness: softness of two enfolding each other in the softness of the sheets

Morning: morning has broken like the first dawning a new day begins opening to another new life

Love: and the greatest of these is love more than faith and hope many have tried to describe and go on trying Acknowledgements to all the people I have ever known

*(Author Louise Joy is 85 living in a Nursing Home. She wrote these words in one sleepless night).*

## Amid A Half-Mad World—Mal Mitchell

What hope is there for love to grow  
 In realms so riled and sad?  
 O might it sprout belief or doubt  
 So things don't go so bad?

Well ~

Love's rooting for a deeper choice  
 Amid a half-mad world  
 So might it rig reminding twigs  
 With buds both burst and furled

Well ~

What the hell does that mean?!  
 Surely more than first surmised...  
 Passion-fuelled insight-enlightened  
 Patience sees things fertilised

*Mal Mitchell*

## Krishnamurti Dialogues—Alan Mann

I was tickled by a comment in our ongoing dialogue on Krishnamurti related matters when one of our foursome said: "I know that I myself had a bit of trouble for some time, trying to understand how someone who was 'self-realised' would affect an elaborate comb-over". To which I replied that when I first became aware of Krishnamurti myself, Margot couldn't understand why I was so impressed by someone who needed to hide behind a comb-over.

I am also always delighted to find someone who sees the relevance of the Harding story to the Krishnamurti teachings. For me it is a marriage made in heaven in that all the wonderful Krishnamurti aphorisms, 'You are the world, the observer is the observed, etc., etc.', become crystal clear in the realignment of perspective that Douglas offers.

I must have told you of my attempts to run 'Seeing' workshops at the Springbrook Krishnamurti gatherings. I had zero success as it was regarded as contravention of K's 'no method' strictures, plus the fact that Donald Ingram-Smith and others of the hierarchy were actively against what they regarded as non-Krishnamurti intrusions into the sacred teachings. This began to change when they discovered that Alan Rowlands was as keen on Douglas as he was on Krishnamurti.

In your message, you said: *I would suggest that realisation has nothing to do with the self at all. In advaita they like to use the metaphor of waves on the ocean. We believe ourselves to be the waves but if we realise that we are actually the ocean, this does not transform the waves into a calm surface. The ocean has always been silent and deep. Waves have always danced on the surface.*

That is exactly how I feel about it. And why I think Harding is relevant in the Krishnamurti context is that he offers the seeing of it as opposed to the saying of it. Then, listening to the saying of it and observing the seeing of it, can perhaps lead into the being of it.

*Alan Mann*

### **Where life Begins—Krishnamurti**

This is lifted from the latest Krishnamurti email bulletin. It is an extract from Krishnamurti's book *The Only Revolution*, the extract is entitled *Life Begins Where Thought Ends*.

"If you pass on through the meadows with their thousand flowers of every color imaginable, from bright red to yellow and purple, and their bright green grass washed clean by last night's rain, rich and verdant—again without a single movement of the machinery of thought—then you will know what love is. To look at the blue sky, the high full-blown clouds, the green hills with their clear lines against the sky, the rich grass and the fading flower—to look without a word of yesterday; then, when the mind is completely quiet, silent, undisturbed by any thought, when the observer is completely absent—then there is unity. Not that you are united with the flower, or with the cloud, or with those sweeping hills; rather there is a feeling of complete non-being in which the division between you and another ceases.

The woman carrying those provisions which she bought in the market, the big black Alsatian dog, the two children playing with the ball—if you can look at all these without a word, without a measure, without any association, then the quarrel between you and another ceases. This state, without the word, without thought, is the expanse of mind that has no boundaries, no frontiers within which the I and the not-I can exist.

Don't think this is imagination, or some flight of fancy, or some desired mystical experience; it is not. It is as actual as the bee on that flower or the little girl on her bicycle or the man going up a ladder to paint the house—the whole conflict of the mind in its separation has come to an end. You look without the look of the observer, you look without the value of the word and the measurement of yesterday. The look of love is different from the look of thought. The one leads in a direction where thought cannot follow, and the other leads to separation, conflict, and sorrow. From this sorrow, you cannot go to the other. The distance between the two is made by thought, and thought cannot by any stride reach the other.

As you walk back by the little farmhouses, the meadows, and the railway line, you will see that yesterday has come to an end: life begins where thought ends."

*J. Krishnamurti Life: A Summary*

## 17<sup>th</sup> Century Phenomenologist

Our December Zoom meeting involved a discussion of an article by Forrest Gander *The Strange Case of Thomas Traherne*. I found the article some years ago, included the link to it on the Capacitie website and then forgot about it. In the meantime, thanks to my engagement with a few close friends, I learned something about phenomenology and realised that my attraction to this article was that it showed me the relevance of Traherne to contemporary philosophical enquiry. This is what Gander says in his introductory comments:

*What of this long-lost, multi-genre extravaganza can be translated across the centuries? More than I imagined at first. In fact, if we look closely at even one poem from Commentaries of Heaven, we'll find that Traherne's visionary imagination surprisingly anticipates contemporary phenomenological philosophy, not releasing his work from its 17th century English and Christian contexts, but preparing a curious place for itself in our own moment. Which is to say: its implications still resonate.*

It is uncertain to what extent Kierkegaard can be regarded as a phenomenologist but I have always been impressed by this quote, *True religion is to be grounded transparently in the power that constitutes one*, which I think is very phenomenological and also a matter that Traherne's approach makes plain.

Gander considers Traherne's message in relation to Levinas, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Ricoeur who, for all that they might not agree with him about, share his conviction that there is an aspect of human being which humans almost invariably overlook, and agree with him about the means of its restoration. Our next Zoom meeting will be about why I have found this to be so in my life.

The links to the article: <http://jacketmagazine.com/32/k-gander.shtml>  
<https://www.capacitie.org/traherne/links.htm>

*Alan Mann*

## The Poets have the words for it.

### Tennyson

In a letter to Mr B.P. Blood Tennyson reports of himself as follows:

"I have never had any revelations through anaesthetics, but a kind of waking trance — this for lack of a better word— I have frequently had quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has come upon me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state but the clearest and surest of the surest, actually beyond words—where death was an almost laughable impossibility— the loss of personality if so it were seeming no extension but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble descriptions. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words?"

Professor Tindall, in a letter, recalls Tennyson saying of this condition by God almighty there is no delusion in the matter! It is no nebulous ecstasy, but a state of transcendent wonder, associated with absolute clearness of mind. *Memoirs of Alfred Tennyson*, ii. 473.

## Wordsworth

Oft in these moments such a holy calm  
 Did overspread my soul, that I forgot  
 That I had bodily eyes, and what I saw  
 Appear'd like something in myself, a dream,  
 A prospect in my mind.

*From The Prelude: Book 2: School-time*

.....And I have felt  
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
 Of something far more deeply interfused,  
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
 And the round ocean and the living air,  
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;  
 A motion and a spirit, that impels  
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
 And rolls through all things.  
*Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*

## Traherne

What hinders then, but we in heav'n may be  
 Even here on Earth did we but rightly see?  
*Thoughts IV*

## Thomas Jackson

This is a gap-filler, a slide from my latest research into Traherne, top right, a number of interpreters of God as 'Nature'. Jackson, roughly contemporary with Traherne, thinks it better to consider God as being itself. This is very similar to how Traherne himself presents the 'deity' and maybe Jackson was a factor for him as well as 'being itself'.

Thomas Jackson 1579- 1640

The Alevis  
 Spinoza  
 Bohm

*He speakes more fully and more safely,  
 that saith, God is being itself, or  
 perfection itself.....*

From:

- *A Treatise of the Divine Essence and Attributes:* By Thomas Jackson Doctor in Divinitie, Chaplaine to His Majetie in Ordinary, and Vicar of S. Nicolas Church in the Towne of Newcastle Upon Tyne. 1668