



Meetings (3rd Sunday)
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Editor's note

Thank you to this month's contributors. Margot and I have been at Nelson Bay for a couple of weeks. This break interrupted my dialogue with Gary Hipworth, which I hope to continue in the next issue. In addition to the content of the essay by John Wren-Lewis on page 5, you will be interested to hear it was selected for study in USA universities as an example both of drama criticism and good writing.

We showed the opening section of the Gangaji tape as planned at the November meeting at Greville Street (summary below). The responses varied from enthusiastic endorsement to sceptical rejection which was very dialogue-like and provided me with an insight into what might lie behind Andrew Cohen's reservations about dialogue.

My apologies to John Toler for describing him as "abbot of a Zen monastery in Kyoto", instead of abbot of a Zen hermitage in the mountains of southern Nara prefecture.

We have set the date for the Greville Street dialogue with John David for Sunday 18 Feb 2001. I am planning to include a brief introductory preview in the January Now letter.

The Nowletter appears between 10 and 12 times every year and is a vehicle for news and views about awakening to what is really going on. Contributions from readers are considered the most valuable content so please think about letting me have your thoughts, experiences, discoveries and any responses to what you read here.

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Climbing Out of Forgetfulness - Lyn Willmott

In this Age of Information there is too much to absorb. This especially applies when we attempt to investigate the spiritual constructs of reality.

The trouble for many of us is that when we read or listen to our chosen guru speaking about the potential of the human spirit, most of us are using our 'normal' state of consciousness. The limitation of this state can cause feelings of frustration because it is so hard not to fall into the trap of comparing where we are to where they are coming from, and if we do it's possible to be faced with ghastly inadequacies. In fact a few are driven even further, becoming angered by what is given because the challenge is too great for the ego to cope.

I'm drawn to speak of this once again because of having to deal with the rancour of an unrelenting ego. Along side this exists the mystery of Forgetfulness. How can one forget insights and revelations that kick in immediately one moves into an expanded state of awareness? I think many of us have discovered these more profound states, but tumble back, then mysteriously 'forget'.

Constantly I am being faced with everyday issues that cause bad reactions. Mainly to do with fear, but often there is a bad taste of envy mixed with resentment or anger. These are negative mind games that I play with other parts of myself. What makes it so hideous is that I know that I am causing my own pain, even as it's happening. Worse still, I am aware of, but keep forgetting there is another state within me where none of these awful reactions exist. The fact is I do not have to suffer at all, but it's forgotten knowledge. So, if this happens to me, then it happens to others, thus I write this for my own sake hoping others might use the information.

It is so hard to offer a description of this expanded state of awareness. It has to do with energy, like a pressure around the temples that is connected to the throat and the heart area. It is a much calmer, more compassionate state, with vast understanding and intellectual depth. Yet I am unable to live in it for long. I keep getting dragged back into my normal conscious state. It's as though in my head I am living in a small room that exists within a much larger room, but I am so used to this small cramped place that I forget there is a larger space around me. I guess it has to do with the robot-like training we all go through as we learn - also there is a subliminal feeling that this must be right because there is safety in its familiarity. I've lived in this small room for most of my life. It's normal, and although using the bigger space outside is wonderful, I keep forgetting it's there.

This analogy is actually a good way to begin exploring states of consciousness. In fact its how it started for me. First make contact with your large 'me', the part Gary Hipworth has so aptly named "the intangible something in my head". When I looked I found this 'big me' sitting on a chair in my frontal lobe - and it scared the hell out of me - but after a few tentative visits it helped me move from the confines of that small frontal space back into the cathedral-like, cavernous emptiness behind and beyond. That space extends forever - if one has the courage to drift out there. For me it started as an accident, but anyone can try this method. Believe me, your 'intangible me' is waiting to guide you.

As I say I can't stay out there, I keep getting drawn back into the limitations of my normal state of mind, so for me there is a great deal more de-programming and letting go to be done. Still these expanded states are available. Maybe I should start leaving notes around the room reminding myself of this.

Another way to stimulate a change in awareness is to keep reading people like Krishnamurti or John Wren Lewis. This state helps when K states categorically that 'the observer is the observed' or when John Wren Lewis tells us of the joyful awareness of his (our) continual creation. One knows immediately that there is a different awareness in operation. It is accepted that these men speak to us from a conscious state that is in some way altered, or different from what is considered normal, yet many try to receive this information through the limitations of an everyday, working consciousness. In an article by Dr Ann Faraday "Towards a No-Self Psychology" she outlines the wonders found in her state of inner and outer Emptiness, drawing a picture of the constant renewal as life fluidly ebbs and flows through this 'emptiness'. Gary Hipworth ties himself in fantastically complicated knots by asking at a very deep level, 'what am I if I am not an idea'?

These magnificent people with their creative concepts and insights push us right to our edge in an attempt to help us contact our 'intangible something'. And they do! And we thank them! We recognise their words stream through from other states of awareness and it becomes very exciting when one accepts that in this outpouring is an inherent promise that we too might enter into the freedom of a similar experience - that's if we remember of course!

Lyn Wilmott

Time to Tell the Truth - Gangaji

(This is a transcription of the opening words of a video-tape entitled 'Time to Tell the Truth'. There may be errors and where I am uncertain of the exact words spoken I have put my interpretation in brackets. Ed)

I have noticed over these last years travelling around meeting with people there is a deep and strong and true desire to wake up - whatever that means in any particular mind-stream - to realise God to realise truth, to stop the violence, the hatred, the suffering.

To wake up to what is possible in this lifetime. And I've often said to people 'if you want that one hundred percent, if you want that more than anything else, if that has priority over everything else then immediately you are awake! That's the truth - and so I continue to meet people who say but I do want it, why don't I have it?

And not examine it.

I (have) looked at it because it's a mystery to me. I know, I stake my life on it. My life is a guarantee of it. That, if you want to awaken to your true nature - if you want that totally - you awaken to your true nature. Very simply.

And I recently realised that the biggest obstacle that I've seen so far in this awakening is that awakening is actually wanted for something else.

Awakening is wanted for: feeling better, so you don't have to be the same person you were - you are; awakening is wanted, for recognition, so you can forget all the bad things that you have done and that have been done to you. Awakening is regarded as a vehicle or a tool. This is not good - truth must be desired for itself regardless of any consequences that follow. This is the shocking truth. We are so used to wanting something to give to the personal, to make it better. And God knows, we have tried and tried and luckily most of us have become deeply disillusioned with the possibility of getting rescued - of getting something else that will take care of this longing - this true desire to awaken.

So, I'm asking you today to look inside, to be ruthlessly, relentlessly honest, truthful with yourself and see what it is you want to wake up for - for what will awakening give you.

And even if it is some beautiful, grandiose, altruistic result such as 'peace on earth', 'harmony of all people' - see if, just for a moment, you can put that aside; if you can give up the hope for harmony, the hope for peace on earth - the hope of getting anything out of it for yourself. Just for a moment! And see if the truth of this unknown state of awakening is desired for itself regardless of consequences.

I'm asking you to tell the truth. Most of our lies (involve) lying, in gross ways and in very subtle ways and the mind gets very intricate and the web gets tighter - but there is an opportunity, now in this moment to discover what is it you really want for its own sake. Without it giving you any comfort, without it taking care of anything. Is there something, which is only for its own sake?

You know, I can feel the fear that this evokes - because it is not a usual consideration. It is very easy to play in the drama of awakening 'Oh I will get it some day' or 'Oh they had it back then' or 'She has it or he has it and I will just be in the aura of it and then I can keep my lies and my web'.

All (through) fear.

It' s time to recognise that. It' s time to tell the truth.

What I am asking you to tell me is what it is you want truly for its own sake and if, somehow, you still imagine you don' t have that let me know what it is you imagine keeps you from having that. And let' s examine that and see if it is real or part of the webbing, part of the fabric of your imagination.

This is not very esoteric - very concrete. The esoteric takes care of itself!

(The discussion which followed involved a range of responses from enthusiastic endorsement of the message and the way it was presented to challenges on the lines of who is this person who has set herself up to tell us what is what, plus questions about her self-image based on her hair colour, etc. All to be expected at a Dialogue meeting. But, given my views on cross-level issues outlined in my contribution below, her question is a good one. Do I really want truth more than anything else, more than my interpretation of or belief system about what is going on and more than your agreement that I am right? Ed)

A Sleep of Prisoners

I am indebted to Don Bowak for the following poem he submitted to the ATIA email list which, in addition to its general relevance, caught me in the middle of a personal re-awakening or shake-up which the poem also underlines and which I hope to cover in some future issue.

The human heart can go the lengths of God.
Dark and cold we may be, but this is no winter now.
The frozen misery of centuries breaks, and cracks,
begins to move.
The thunder is the thunder of the floes,
the thaw, the flood, the upstart spring.
Thank God our time is now when wrong
comes up to meet us everywhere,
never to leave us, till we take
the longest stride of soul men ever took. *
Affairs are now soul-sized.
The enterprise
is exploration into God.
What are you waiting for?
It takes
so many thousand years to wake,
but will you wake for pity' s sake?

Christopher Fry, A Sleep of Prisoners.

**Note from Don - You will note that Fry wrote in a former time. I have taken upon myself to change ' man' to ' we' in the interests of not deflecting people from his lovely message.*

Adam, Eve and Agatha Christie: Detective Stories as Post-Darwinian Myths of Original Sin - John Wren-Lewis

The longest running play in human history is now approaching its second half century on the London stage. Agatha Christie's detective thriller *The Mousetrap* has become almost a British National Monument. When I went to its opening night on Nov 25th 1952, to see the young Richard Attenborough playing the detective, we were still only just emerging from the shadows of World War Two. The possibility that forty years on I'd be in Australia wasn't in my mind then, but even more remote was the thought that the play could still be going in the next century. And I don't think the idea had crossed anyone else's mind either; Christie herself, interviewed in 1962 on the (then) phenomenal occasion of the play's tenth anniversary, said she'd expected a run of no more than three months and was greatly buoyed by the assurance of impresario Peter (now Sir Peter) Saunders that it was good for at least a year!

In fact the extraordinary success of this rather ordinary well-made play is itself something of a mystery, and the detective in me has been stimulated to investigate. In so doing, I've been led into some rather deep waters of the human psyche, regions where psychology overlaps with anthropology and even theology – bringing some surprising insights about the underlying forces that make detective stories so fascinating, especially, it seems, to people with religious interests. For it's not only English vicars who are notoriously 'whodunit' fans: Jiddu Krishnamurti, who read practically nothing else, delighted in them, as did Carl Jung, who read almost everything else. Religious thinkers have also been prominent among producers of the genre: G K Chesterton, Dorothy L Sayers and Father Ronald Knox were co-founders, with Christie, of London's famous Detection Club in the 1930s. And after Sherlock Holmes, Hercule Poirot, and Miss Marple, probably the most famous of all fictional detectives is a priest - Chesterton's Father Brown, who latterly has been joined on the shelves and on screen by several other persons of the cloth, such as Harry Kemmelman's Rabbi Small, Ellis Peters' Brother Cadfael, and Brother William of Baskerville in Umberto Eco's *Name of the Rose*.

I now see something more than coincidence in the fact that the whodunit is a fairly new literary phenomenon. Tales of good defeating evil after a struggle are probably as old as humanity, but until the second half of the nineteenth century, the age of Poe, Wilkie Collins, and Conan Doyle, there were hardly any stories in which the struggle took the form of a mystery, with the unmasking of a *hidden* villain at the climax. The ascendancy of detective fiction as we know it coincides with the post-Darwinian period when, for the first time in human history, religious belief was declining sharply among the literate Western public. The detective emerged as a saviour-image as people began to lose faith in those more traditional saviours, the holy man, the righteous ruler, and the knight in shining armour. And stories about evil as a mystery became popular when ancient myths about the so-called 'problem of evil' began to seem discredited.

Public debate on 'science versus religion' revolved around issues like the conflict between new discoveries and the literal truth of Bible-stories, but the real conflict, we now know, went deeper. Few serious thinkers in the Judeo-Christian/Muslim tradition have ever been overmuch concerned with the literal truth of the Adam and Eve story or the six-day timetable for creation, and the same holds for myths of origin in other religious traditions. The primary reference for all such ideas has always been to the felt existential human situation, and that was what science in general, and Darwinian science in particular, seemed to have changed in a radical way. It appeared to undermine the notion of harmony as the basic characteristic of reality, for which metaphors like *Tao* or Divine Purpose could be appropriate expressions, replacing it with the principle of 'nature red in tooth and claw'. And human destructiveness needed no explanation if we are simply children of a universal struggle for survival: the only problem of evil in that case is the practical one of preventing the struggle from making life intolerable, and the best hope for doing so seemed to lie in developing the faculty of intellect, which was apparently where the wish for something better had entered the picture in the first place.

But evidently the feeling of evil as something out of tune with the general nature of things and requiring explanation wouldn't go away, for there grew up in the West this new addiction for stories in which an act of violence shatters a previously harmonious scene, causing waves of conflict and suspicion to spread everywhere until the new-style saviour figure, the detective, brings to bear a special kind of intelligence in ferreting out where the violence came from. For three reasons, I'm sure there's much more to this than an

outdated habit of thought lingering on in a form of popular entertainment, like the myth of the Evil Angel surviving as the Demon King of pantomime.

In the first place, science itself has now shown, with the study of dreams, that while the expression of thoughts and feelings in dramatic form may be an older kind of mentation than rational analysis, it is in no way outdated. On the contrary, it is the basic mode of all mental activity, underlying rational analysis itself - so we are well advised to pay attention to its collective manifestations in popular entertainment. Secondly, if violent struggle for survival really is the basic reality of everything, where does the human desire for something better come from? Thirdly, evidence has emerged from biological science during recent decades to indicate that the popular perception of nature as essentially red in tooth and claw was a gross over-reaction to Darwin's discoveries, a failure to see the wood for the trees.

Darwin was not, after all, the first to observe the ubiquity of conflict and violence in the organic world - it was every bit as obvious to anyone with half an eye in earlier cultures as to us today, and probably more so, since urban life has never been really sheltered from nature until quite recently. When earlier cultures assumed harmony underlying the conflict, and expressed that assumption in various kinds of theistic image, it was because elementary logic dictates that unless something like this were the case, nothing would ever survive at all - and Darwin as a naturalist took this as much for granted as any theologian, even if he was a little more tentative about the use of theistic imagery.

In fact it would be fair to say that biological science has provided massive confirmation for what was earlier just an assumption of basic harmonious order underlying nature's apparent conflicts. Microscopes and, in more recent times, cine-cameras and a plethora of other instruments, have uncovered in minute detail the astonishing built-in mechanisms which *limit* the expression of competitive and destructive urges throughout the sub-human biosphere, curbing them so that they are always ultimately contained by harmony. In the years since World War II biologists themselves in growing numbers have begun to articulate this thought, a notable example being the work here in Australia of Professor Charles Birch, which won him the prestigious Templeton Prize and is very clearly set out in his excellent book *On Purpose*. And the specific contribution of evolutionary theory, of which Darwin is the archetypal representative, has actually been to extend our understanding of this principle into the time-dimension, by showing how conflict and competition serve development by selecting the strongest and most flexible strains for breeding.

This means there is indeed something almost *un-natural* about our human species, where aggression and competitive greed continually shatter harmony - between individuals, between tribes and nations, and between us and the rest of the biosphere. *Something has been going wrong throughout recorded history*, so that the best efforts of holy men, well-meaning rulers, and knights in shining armour to contain the destructive urges always come unstuck. To paraphrase a famous declaration of St Paul, the human mind dreams of harmonies more wonderful - more gentle and loving - than the rough but powerful balances of the animal kingdom, yet in practice human intelligence again and again finds itself sidetracked into the service of greed, aggression, and even cruelty, such as would shame any animal. And here too, science has served to make explicit something which formerly could only be intuited in a general way; the 'unnaturalness' of human nature, which was formerly expressed in myths about a primordial Fall, has today become inescapable, as the cumulative results of our intelligence threaten to destroy our species altogether, and maybe even the whole planet.

When I was young, and the nuclear arms race was just beginning to make these dangers apparent, scientists and religious folk alike thought in terms of humanity's 'higher ideals' battling with 'lower animal instincts' - but we know now that if our instincts were **really** animal the drives towards harmony would always contain the destructive ones. It is at the level of mind or spirit itself that something goes wrong, and I believe it's a gut realisation of this fact that finds expression in the popularity of detective fiction, where in all the best stories the harmony-shattering act of violence is tracked down to a source quite unexpected by the society concerned; the hidden villain turns out to be someone who, until the denouement, is considered beyond suspicion.

True, in the very early days of the genre this feature was by no means universal: in fact one famous classic, Poe's *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, is a perfect expression of the belief that our troubles spring from animal instincts getting out of rational control - the murders are eventually traced to an escaped savage ape! But as the art-form developed, the main focus came to be on the author's skill in finding ingenious ways to keep the villain above suspicion until the end, and the Detection Club even drew up rules about it. On the hypothesis I have been developing here, this can be seen as something more than a need to tickle the reader's crossword-solving faculty: it is nothing less than a new mythological form for understanding humanity's great existential problem of evil.

Against this background, the extraordinary success of *The Mousetrap* would imply that it contains some particularly acute, nerve-touching insight into the origin of evil in the human psyche, and I believe this to be indeed the case. For the play gives a very special twist to the 'least likely suspect' theme, a twist anticipated occasionally in earlier stories (for example, in more than one by G K Chesterton), but never (to my knowledge) before put into drama form, the mode which appeals most directly to the mythopoeic imagination. After all these years of exposure on the London stage, I don't think I shall be giving away any secret by mentioning what that twist is. At the end of *The Mousetrap* the detective himself, the young policeman who appears as the protector of the innocent and the guardian of law and order, turns out to be the murderer. I find a clear echo here of a theme expressed in different ways in many of the world's ancient Fall myths, but most clearly in the one which, more than any other, has exercised emotional appeal across many different cultures - the biblical story in which the Loss of Eden comes about because of a 'snaky' temptation to assume a divine role of moral guardianship, 'knowing good and evil'.

I would translate this as a diagnosis that the responsibility for humanity's destructiveness lies with the very element in the psyche that purports to aim at harmony, the moral impulse - not that it is too weak, as conventional social wisdom assumes, but that it usurps power and tries to control all other impulses by judging and repressing. 'The punisher alone is the criminal of Providence,' wrote the mystical poet William Blake - and this too is something we are in a better position to understand today than any earlier generation, thanks to the detailed investigations of psychologists and sociologists.

There is now ample evidence that behind all really violent and destructive human behaviour, whether it be the ridiculously excessive ambitions of military conquerors and empire-building capitalists, or the sadism of tyrants great and small, or the insatiable violence of the rapist, or the blind destructiveness of the hoodlum or child-batterer, there lies a screaming protest on the part of some much more limited desire that has been repressed by overweening morality - in society, in the family, or in the individual psyche itself. And on the other side of the same coin, egoistic, aggressive and destructive urges become really dangerous and outrageous precisely when they are moralised and amplified by righteous indignation. The inquisition really did think they were saving souls, and while mere greed or ambition would never lead any sane person to plunge the world into nuclear winter, a holy war might easily do so.

'Better to rule in Hell than to serve in Heaven' were words which Milton put into the mouth of Satan himself. His poem followed much Christian tradition in linking the biblical story of paradise lost with yet another ancient myth, thereby giving it a definite whodunit flavour of its own by suggesting that the serpent was just a disguise for the cosmic Mr Big - Lucifer, the Archangel of Light who subverts humanity in the course of trying to usurp the role of God. The moral impulse, or 'conscience', could indeed be described as the angel (i.e. messenger) of light in the human psyche, and the loss of Eden myth unmasks its constant tendency to get above itself and rule the roost instead of simply serving life. Thus a vicious circle is created, because repression and moralisation exaggerate the very impulses they claim to control, thereby giving 'conscience' the excuse for still more repressive measures and still more moral outrage against others. This was why Blake went beyond Milton's interpretation of the story and represented Satan as having to all intents and purposes taken over the place of God in most religions, Christianity included, by making them agents of repressive moralising. That, he argued, was why Jesus "died as a reprobatepunished as a transgressor" - because he had seen what was going on in the world and tried to reverse the process by urging "mutual forgiveness of each vice", only to have his name and image taken over in their turn to serve repression and moral indignation.

The Mousetrap doesn't attempt to pursue the story into these depths: its villain simply gets killed at the end, much as in most other whodunits. But Chesterton did take that extra step: Father Brown never sought punishment or death for his villains, but unmasked them only as a first step in trying to redeem them. For Blake that was the ultimate life goal both in society and the psyche itself, to 'have pity on the punisher' and restore the moral sense to its proper role as servant of life, by subordinating its judgements to forgiveness – or as Shakespeare's Portia famously said long before "And earthly power doth then show likest God's/When mercy seasons justice". Blake had the mystics' vision that while no individual can make more than a small impact on the patterns of society by pursuing this goal, determined exposure of satanic judgementalism within the psyche will open up direct experience of eternity even in the midst of the world's unresolved conflicts. He identified this as 'the Everlasting Gospel of Jesus', yet he also insisted that "All Religions are One" prior to satanic perversion. And in our own day this insight, expressed in different terms, has been the core 'gospel' of Krishnamurti, who stood apart from all formal religion: he urged the regular practice of non-judgemental 'choiceless awareness' as a way of opening to the eternal. Maybe it was no coincidence that he was a detective story buff.

The ending of any detective story after the unmasking of the villain is inevitably something of an anticlimax and in my view one of Blake's most powerful insights was that the unmasking of the Great Originator of Sin in human life brings something of the same feeling. Like the Wizard of Oz, pretension is the essence of Lucifer's power in the world and in the psyche: unmasked, he becomes something of a joke:

*Truly, my Satan, thou art but a Dunce,
And doth not know the Garment from the Man.
Every Harlot was a Virgin once,
Nor canst thou ever change Kate into Nan.
Tho' thou art Worship' d by the Names Divine
Of Jesus and Jehovah, thou art still
The Son of Morn in weary Night' s decline,
The lost Traveller' s Dream under the Hill.*

Perhaps that was what Chesterton was getting at, in a different idiom, when he said that if humanity were to be sufficiently struck with a sense of humour, we would find ourselves automatically fulfilling the Sermon on the Mount. And perhaps too it's why the murderer's motivation in *The Name of the Rose* is suppression of humour. So do join me as a detective buff, for the sheer fun of it - and do go to see *The Mousetrap* if you're in London - it's fun even if you know the end.

John Wren-Lewis

The 20,000th performance of the play was given on the 16 December. The day before the last Greville Street dialogue meeting.

Fact or Fallacy? – Alan Mann

In our discussions about the nature of self and of reality over the years I have wrestled with a number of recurring difficulties, many of them have been and continue to be the subject of contributions to the Now letter and our dialogue exchanges. Our last Greville street meeting ended with what I interpreted as a misunderstanding arising from assuming all the matters we raise can be resolved at the same level. Lyn's article on page 2 of this issue also addresses the same question. I thought I would attempt a one paragraph per item summary of my understanding in the hope of clearing my mind and stimulating some feedback.

In aiming for brevity I sacrifice the personal experiencing which underwrites these views and which Lyn expresses so well in her contribution but I could return to a more detailed and 'personal' approach if any of the claims I am making catches fire and results in an ongoing exchange.

My difficulties seem to result from ignoring the existence of two perspectives - the First Nature perspective and the Second Nature perspective - and of trying to resolve First Nature perspective issues at the Second

perspective level. I understand this is what the philosophers call category mistake and although the question came up in the Nowletter some years ago and we had some helpful input from Ken Wilber, I continue to suffer the consequences of ignoring the distinction. I think this charge can be laid against Gangaji in the notes on her introduction which I report in this issue. She asks a question which can only be resolved at the First Nature level but leaves her listeners wrestling with it at Second Nature level. Krishnamurti always did it, e.g., the observer is the observed example which Lyn refers to in its positive aspect.

Some argue the existence of many levels and consider what I am calling First Nature perspective a low-order transpersonal level but I think I can best make my point by sticking to the two readily demonstrable perspectives of First and Second Nature and avoid speculation about areas of consciousness which may or may not exist.

There are many ways of describing the two perspectives and to reduce confusion I include the most familiar in the following table showing their synonyms in column:

First Nature	Second Nature
Impersonal	Personal
First Person	Third person
Self	self
Essence	Personal Essence
Noumenal	Phenomenal
Personal	Transpersonal
Spirit	Soul

Second Nature perspective is the objective world-view, the perspective of consensus reality where I understand myself as a separate entity dwelling amongst other objects in time and space. First Nature perspective is harder to describe because any description is necessarily couched in Second Nature terms. I think First Nature perspective can best be described as what is revealed as awareness when identification with the Second Nature ends or is suspended. It is important to emphasise that it does not involve the ending of Second Nature but the ending of the identification with or claiming to be Second Nature.

Failure to make this distinction results in what I claim to be a series of fallacies.

the fallacy of inaccessibility
 the fallacy of continuity
 the fallacy of impotence
 the fallacy of either/or,
 the fallacy of ecstatic transformation
 the fallacy of something missing
 the fallacy of personal enlightenment
 the fallacy of 'one true way'

The fallacy of inaccessibility

The fallacy of inaccessibility is based on the idea that I am locked in at the Second Nature level and that the First Nature perspective comes about spontaneously and only through 'grace' or the result of some crisis whereas, in fact, all that is really involved is a shift in perspective. The shift required is from Second Nature to First Nature perspective and the fallacy results from the belief that it is possible to function only at the personal, Second Nature level.

The fallacy of continuity

The fallacy of continuity is the idea that because impersonal, First Nature is often revealed as 'glimpses' of short or no duration it cannot be the real thing. The notion being that the 'real thing' would be a permanent state. Another way of expressing this is that because the Second Nature functions in and as time, First

nature, which is prior to time or timeless, is similarly restricted. The absurdity of trying to impose continuity on the timeless should be apparent.

The fallacy of impotence

What I am calling the fallacy of impotence is the frequently made claim that anything that I do will be counter-productive. That is, any action at the Second Nature level is bound to reinforce Second Nature and thereby make First Nature inaccessible. That might be true from the perspective of Second Nature but I am claiming that Second Nature is not the only perspective available. All Second Nature has to 'do', to demonstrate the fallacy is to stop 'blocking' the view, undertake the action of inaction as it were, and the ever-present First Nature perspective, which is, in any case, always the case is revealed.

The fallacy of either/or

For some reason, most lines of enquiry seem to focus on eliminating or transcending Second Nature and arriving at a state where First Nature obliterates Second Nature. The truth seems to be that Second Nature continues to arise but is apprehended in the context of First Nature - the difference being that the movement of Second Nature is now free of identification. Thus, it is not a question of either/or but a matter of both.

The fallacy of ecstatic transformation

The shift in perspective, especially the first occasions, is often a blissful experience. The most likely explanation for these transports is that they accompany an awakening from long standing ignorance of a truer state of being. But it isn't necessarily so and many people report 'matter-of-factness' as being the most significant aspect of awakening to First Nature. If I'm looking for bliss and matter-of-factness turns up instead, the shift might be overlooked and matter-of-factness completely disregarded as a possible answer to my question - simply because it doesn't match expectations.

The fallacy of something missing

Interest in this line of enquiry usually arises from a sense that I am asleep or there is something missing from present experience. This typically starts a process of search in which freedom or awakening to First Nature is conceived as a future achievement. If liberation has any meaning at all it must be 'now' and 'this' so what is required is the freeing up of 'this now' complete and as it is - not ideas about a 'free me then'.

The fallacy of personal enlightenment

The only way out of the fallacy prison is by seeing what is happening, free of my own and other people's interpretations, descriptions and explanations of what is happening. The most effective means I have found are the headless experiments but I realise they don't seem to work for everybody. The experiments are designed to bring awareness 'itself' into awareness and anything that achieves that is fine. Re-acquaintance with our fundamental awareness clears the way for First Nature perspective. This perspective seems to be what a lot of people call liberation or enlightenment some even might say 'redemption'. But liberation is liberation from identification with the Second Nature level. The belief that it can be acquired as a Second Nature accomplishment is evidence of another blockage - the fallacy of personal enlightenment.

The fallacy of 'one true way'

This summary is an outline of how my particular investigation turned out. It doesn't necessarily follow that others will be the same, similar perhaps but not identical. Any attempt on my part to persuade you that I'm up the right pole or the only pole is perhaps the greatest misunderstanding of all.

I realise that one person's fallacy could be another's truth so I welcome corrections, adjustments and additional fallacies which I will add to the list in future issues. I would be especially interested in anyone prepared to explain away my conviction that the notion of the world as illusion (non-substantial or non-existent) is not another dangerous fallacy. In what circumstances or at what level could it be held to be true?

The implications of failing to make the distinction of levels clear, as far as gurus and teachers are concerned, are quite extraordinary. The view I have of the guru business is a landscape of sincere and dedicated listeners trying to grasp a First Nature message that is not available at the level they are operating

in and as., i.e., Second Nature. The consequences are there for all to see - legions of seekers and not much to show for it. Even Krishnamurti who set out to set 'mankind unconditionally free' ended up admitting that only one or two seemed to have got the message. I suppose as one of the people who listened to K at length over the years I should have a clue as to why this might be and I think it is to do with my persistence in mixing the categories.

I am deeply indebted to George Schloss who recently banged my head against another distinction I have failed to recognize: the difference between teachers who tell and teachers who show. I am convinced that telling is no longer good enough – showing is all!

Alan Mann

Sea of Faith

Thank you to whoever introduced me to the Sea of faith organisation. I'm sorry I've forgotten who it was but I visited their web site and then got their permission to reprint material which they list, for example:

Sea of Faith and the Quaker Tradition
Sea of Faith from a Roman Catholic point of view
Sea of Faith and Humanism
Radical Christianity and Buddhism
The Unitarian Universalists

Here are the opening paragraphs of their introduction which space prevents me printing in full in this issue:

“Sea of Faith - SoF for short - had its small beginnings in the 1980s, in the wake of a BBC television series which examined the decline of institutional religion and asked what might replace it in our complex postmodern world, where the certainties of scriptures, clerical hierarchies and supernatural underpinnings no longer make sense. The Network, like the TV series, borrowed its name from Matthew Arnold's classic 19th century poem Dover Beach which famously likened the decline of organised religion to the outgoing tide of the “sea of faith””.

SoF recognises that a huge and fundamental shift has taken place in the last thirty years: a shift not only in what we believe but in how we believe. We have entered a time of unprecedented thinking and rethinking, building and rebuilding, in which beliefs about belief are shaken as never before. We are exposed to other cultures, other paradigms, other religions, other politics, other ways of making art, other ways of doing science, other ways of building moral and ethical frameworks. We can no longer convince ourselves, let alone others, that our religion story is the “true” one, or that our political ism is the “correct” one - and we marvel that our culture ever had the arrogance to make such plainly nonsensical assumptions. In this sense, Sea of Faith embraces postmodernity and is postmodernist.”

It looks interesting and in line with much of what goes on in these pages so I thought I'd reprint some of their material from time to time in 2001.

I can't list the web address for their main page at this moment as my bigpond modem is out of order but it is easy enough to find. Their contact in Australia is www.sof-in-australia.org, or email greg.s@t131.aone.net.au.

Meetings Sydney

Academy of the Word Seminar Programme –
Under St Peter's, Devonshire St., Surr y Hills
Second Tuesdays 6.15pm - Healing & Well-being
Fourth Tuesdays 6.15pm - State of the World
Dr Alex Reichel (02) 9310 4504

Satsang with john david. Tuesday & Friday - ongoing - From 7.15 -9.15pm.
Theosophy House, 484 Kent Street, City - Near Town Hall Station
Call Open Sky (02) 9388 8344 for details.

Nowra

Dialogue Group meets the first Saturday of the month from 4-6pm
The Tea Club, Berry Street, Nowra - Opposite Roxy Cinema - Call Riche 4421 5947