

Meetings (3rd Sunday)
81 Greville Street

Next Meetings – March 18 & April 15
(02) 9419 7394
amann@bigpond.net.au

Issue 71 –March 2001

	Email Conference Proposal	<i>Dave Knowles</i>	2
	Freedom to be Nothing (<i>follow-up</i>)	<i>Gary Hipworth</i>	2
	What do you do after you say – Aha!	<i>David Clouston</i>	3
	Take Enlightenment Lightly	<i>Graham Bird</i>	5
	Leaves on a Spiritual Stem	<i>Dave Knowles</i>	6
	The Process of self-realization	<i>Geetha Waters</i>	7
	Dogma	<i>Lyn Willmott</i>	8
	Fact or Fallacy – Follow-up 2	<i>Ann Faraday & Alan Mann</i>	9
	Meetings		12

Editor's note

There was a series of mistakes in the January edition for which I apologise. Warwick Wakefield sent in the report of his meeting with Satyananda with the name Satyananda abbreviated to 'Sat'. I decided to give the teacher his full name by using the 'Find & Replace' feature in the word processor. Unfortunately, it also picked up the 'sat' in satisfy and turned it into Satyanandaisfy. When I re-read the article I read it as a Warwick joke instead of an Alan mistake. The computer also managed to slip one of them into Ann's article on Gangaji. Gary Hipworth had adjusted his original article for greater clarity but I put in the original by mistake. Gary's modified comments are included in this issue. After going to some trouble to provide a contents table I was told the email edition is not page numbered and that has now been corrected. Last one – owing to the high contribution level, for which much thanks, some items planned for this month are held over until the next issue.

I draw your attention to the proposal that we extend our connections to like-minded folk through an email exchange, as explained by Dave Knowles - see his letter outlining the possibility of a link-up with the existing Transpersonal Email conference. I would appreciate your feedback, whether positive or otherwise, so I can give Dave some idea of whether we should take it a step further.

Subscriptions: Postal \$12 per annum, Email – Free

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.

A letter from Dave Knowles to the NowLetter Subscribers:

As part of the work of the Australian Transpersonal Institute and Association, I have been running an Internet-based electronic listserver for them. A community of people interested in the transpersonal (loosely) became members of this e-list (known as the "atia-list") and exchanged ideas and discussion on this list. A member simply sent a contribution to atia-list@atia.asn.au and this would be sent out automatically to all current members. If a member received a message from the list this way and replied to it, the reply would go back to the list and hence to all current members. People became members via an e-mail to me, or by a subscription request e-mail which would come to me to be approved.

For various reasons the ATIA moved away from support of this "open community" and I ended up inviting all former members of the atia-list to rejoin a renamed list known as "open-spirituality-list@hcn.net.au". This has not been a very active discussion community, possibly because the community has not been large enough.

As a result of all this, I mentioned to Alan I effectively had a small mailing list set up ready to serve a larger community and wondered if it could prove a useful adjunct to the NowLetter? We waxed enthusiastic on this but then I started to think of the possible disruptions to the long-standing NowLetter community and we thought we should proceed a little more carefully and solicit opinions from you all.

The "pros" would be:

The list would be a place where ongoing discussion, usually on items appearing in a previous NowLetter, could take place, i.e. it would form a "complementary channel" (more immediate, more interactive) than the Letter. This could stimulate dialogue and hopefully lead to more extensive contributions to the NowLetter.

A list is an ideal place for fairly short, almost "real-time" exchanges of views amongst a community of interest to take place. This could be particularly welcome to people who cannot get easily or frequently to a common meeting point.

The "cons" would be:

The list requires contributors (and "listeners") to have functioning e-mail over Internet connections and not all the recipients and contributors of the NowLetter would have this. This could be seen as divisive and disrupt the stability of the NowLetter community. (There could be a synopsis of the more interesting list conversations in a subsequent NowLetter.)

If a list "takes off" it could be time-consuming to stay up with. This is not a current problem. The list could be "moderated" (see below).

Other possible desirables:

The existing list is "closed" (members only) but not "moderated". A moderated list is one where all contributions to the list are first routed to a moderator for approval. In this way the moderator can act as an editor, keeping things on track, or limiting excessive volume.

So - Alan and I would be very interested in what you all think about this. I have sounded out the current members of the list to see how they feel about expanding their community and got a positive response. One comment (from Richard and Maria Maguire) was 'it makes sense to us to connect these relatively small caring and thoughtful groups on the broader spiritual scene with each other.'

Dave Knowles

(I hope you will reply to us with your thoughts on this suggestion and whether you see yourself as a likely participant. In particular the interstate and international subscribers input would be welcome. Drop a note to me at the email or postal addresses on page 1 and/or to Dave at Dave.Knowles@spirit.net.au Ed.)

Freedom to be Nothing (follow-up on last month's article from Gary Hipworth)

Alan, this is the adjustment piece - hopefully, for greater clarity it replaces and expands on the last 2 paragraphs of our dialogue that went into Nowletter 70 - that begins, ...Is everything connected? (para 2 page 6)

There is now another relationship that is hidden from anyone else's perspective, because it is an inner one. When I had an insight into the nature of ideas – that they are mental constructs, not the thing itself – I understood that 'I' could not be an idea, other than as a mental construct. In short, the unknown cannot know itself, but it can see a false shadow of itself when it creates false images. The ego is a necessary 'evil' for understanding our unknown depths and this new relationship with the unknown is what wakes me up on a moment-to-moment basis. Various names have been given to this new form of awareness – Krishnamurti called it 'Choiceless Awareness', Gurdjieff used the term 'Objective-Consciousness', and it is described in Buddhist literature as 'Self-Recollectedness'. Albert Blackburn used the term 'Now Consciousness'. The critical point is that this is a living process, not more knowledge to be memorised.

Our unknown nature cannot be put into words without limiting it, and it has no limits! When some people claim that our true nature is formless or changeless, or not the body or this or that, I think they do us a disservice and only confuse people with more ideas about the unlimited. Ideas are always limited – whether they are psychological or of a practical nature. When we understand this one basic fact about knowledge and then apply that understanding to our psychological world, we have the key to understanding what we are not. There is nothing else to 'know'.

Is everything connected? You bet! I came home from Ballarat in the country today to find Melbourne and surrounding suburbs blanketed by smoke that had drifted across Bass Strait from a nasty fire on King Island. We normally associate cause and effect by an event that is close in space and time. The structure of our collective, common language is the reason that we do this automatically. It (language structure – at least in the West) is based on separate objects acting on (verbs) other separate objects. We are taught to think this way as infants, and we are also taught to objectify ourselves – both physically, and more critically, psychologically. We become parts that are terribly cut-off from each other (psychologically), and all we see is parts in the rest of the world. We don't see whole-interconnected energies, because that is the way our mental language models have been developed.

Why is our language structure made up of event-driven parts? In cave-man times, it helped us survive being eaten by sabre-toothed tigers. However, the real threats to human survival are no longer immediate events, but gradually developing inter-connected processes that are too complicated and dynamic for our cave-man language. For example, the greenhouse effect, hole in ozone layer and increasing third world poverty. We have become trapped in this outdated structure. It is pernicious because it is 'hidden' from our normal view, and the underlying assumptions are never challenged. It is the mother of all 'sacred cows'. With this deeply flawed tool, we try and understand the unknown. No wonder we get confused, and never see the whole situation instantly. Our brains are just not wired that way.

What can be done? The insight that language structure itself is causing us to suffer is the beginning of a new way of looking at the world – seeing whole processes unfolding including our inner thought processes. When humans first looked back at the Earth from outer space they saw one undivided, whole beautiful blue-green planet. Most of us have not had such a direct experience or maybe we would already be changed in our hearts. No national boundaries as seen from up there and no opposites! They never actually existed – except as figments of our imagination. How long do we keep the lie going? Until we wake up to what is really happening and see that reality is not made up of separate, autonomous objects or entities, other than as ideas.

Gary Hipworth

What do you do after you say - Aha!

Both Ramesh Balsekar and Wayne Liquorman make the same point over and over again. That our experience of ourselves as "do-ers" is an illusion – a divine hypnosis, to use Ramesh's own words. Put even more simply, consciousness is all there is. There is no 'me'.

I don't know whether this is real Advaita, or a grossly simplified version for over-educated Western idiots like me. In any case, the preceding paragraph is pretty much the extent of the teachings.

Ramesh answers questions at his home every morning for a couple of hours: after a few visits in August, it was clear that I had heard everything. Judging by conversations with other Ramesh-heads, this is an almost universal experience. A day spent with Wayne at his weekend seminar last year similarly exhausted the subject: the second day added nothing.

Just to make sure I wasn't missing anything, I asked Wayne a question. The following conversation ensued:

- David: I sometimes experience periods of depression. A major symptom of depression for me is that I wish for things to be otherwise: I want my circumstances to be other than what they are: *this* (whatever *this* is) is not okay. So it is a curious feeling to hear you say that there is nothing 'I' can do to change anything; that 'I' am in fact not choosing. Can you say anything on this subject?
- Wayne: Yes. It's as if you have been hypnotized into believing that your clothes are on fire. You experience them as burning. This experience is completely real to you. So you go to see your Guru, and you say 'Help me! My clothes are on fire!'.
Your Guru replies, 'Your clothes are not on fire.'
You say, 'Yes, yes. Of course. But help me here! I'm suffering.'
And the Guru says, 'Your clothes are not on fire.'
'No, no. You don't understand. My clothes are on fire. Help me!'
The Guru replies, 'Your clothes are not on fire.'
- David: And, of course, he's right.
- Wayne: Yes.
- David: Let me get this straight. My clothes are not on fire. But I think they are. There is nothing I can do to wake up to the truth, because 'I' cannot do anything. I cannot choose to do something. I cannot choose *not* to do something. If it is God's will that I want to wake up, I will want to wake up. If it is God's will that I *do* wake up, then I will wake up.
- Wayne: Yes.
- David: So from a practical point of view, in terms of anything I can *do*, all this is utterly, completely useless?
- Wayne: (*smiles*) Yes. Completely.

Fine.

But, of course, it's not enough. The practical, real-life, here-and-now part of me cannot accept that there's nothing I can do. Particularly, I cannot get my mind around the idea that a concept is simultaneously 100% true and 100% useless. It doesn't add up.

I notice that I am not alone in this. At some point, nearly everyone questioning Wayne and Ramesh says, in effect, "Yes, Yes. That's all very well. But what can I do to get it?" Nothing: that's the whole point. But, but...

In response, Ramesh simply cheats (and good on him). He recommends a particular mental practice. He carefully adds that whether or not someone actually *does* it is God's will. But nevertheless, in prescribing – however cautiously – a course of action he is stepping from the Absolute into the Relative.

("Absolute" and "Relative" are Buddhist terms that have nothing to do with Advaita. But I hope that using them in this context is useful. So to speak.)

What does all this amount to?

- a) Contemplation or discussion of the Absolute are impossible, since by definition both are subject-object activities.
- b) At the Absolute level, nothing can be – or needs to be – done. It just Is.

In the wrong hands, Advaita can be nihilistic (like Zen). It can lead to all kinds of silliness, as described in Ann Faraday's article last month 'Mellow Dramas in Paradise'. But that need not concern us here.

So, speaking Relatively, is it any use?

For myself, I find that Advaita is useful in very small doses. A teaspoonful a week is enough for me. I like to sneak up on it occasionally, give it a sidelong glance, take it off the shelf and dust it... and quickly put it back. Occasionally, it sneaks up on me. Those are good moments.

But that is all. I have a tendency towards nihilism (hence, probably, the episodes of depression) which I do not wish to encourage. In those moods, Advaita can be like sulphuric acid – burning away all meaning in life. Why do anything? Why go to Dialogue? Why get out of bed? As Pema Chodron puts it, “A psychotic is drowning in the same stuff that a mystic swims in.” Yes.

I am a 40 year-old Western man, living in the year of our Lord 2001. I must believe that I have choice over what I do. So I practise certain techniques which – as Wayne would put it – resonate with me. I call this my spiritual practice. If, ultimately, these techniques turn out to be useless because ‘I’ cannot do anything, then so be it. I must occupy my time somehow. Why not do it in ways that appeal to me?

Ramesh told me, “I can promise you one thing. You will never have to apologise to God for anything you do.” Fair enough.

Now, where was I?

David Clouston

Treat Enlightenment Lightly

When we heard about enlightenment,
it sounded fine and free
so we wished for IT
to ‘strike us now!’
Yet, of course IT didn’t,
no matter how we tried.

So we went away to India
to sit at gurus’ feet
and listen to them
talk and talk,
or sometimes sit in silence
or laugh and laugh,
which was so delightful
we’d go again next year.

And as we’d left to
come back home,
good old Oz for me,
we were still complaining
about the queues
at railway stations,
in this ‘backward’ country !
So it was really certain
that the gurus’ words
were wasted,
IT hadn’t yet dropped in.

Then we filled the waiting rooms
of shrinks and other healers,
asking for the key.
So, of course,
they invited us
to come back again,
and again and again

while we remembered
more about our childhoods
which helped them pay their bills
and some to buy their yachts.

Then one day an old lion strolled by,
and a merry old soul seemed he,
as he said ‘It’s time for you to see!
If your I or ego
is seeking enlightenment,
then you’ve got to keep it ‘round.
‘cos it seems so natural
to be equipped to SEE
whether IT has come.
So you’ll know for sure
you are enlightened,
which would be
such a buzz.

Ho, Ho, Ho
HA, HA, HA
He, He, He.
Now that’s the trick
which traps you
‘ cos if IT had,
your I would disappear
or at least
drop off to asleep.

So its best to
treat enlightenment lightly.
Play at it, pretend at it,
ACT as if you are.

Graham Bird, January 2001

Leaves on a Spiritual Stem

I have periodically felt that I was "odd" in some way, or at least perceived the world in slightly different ways from those of my friends, particularly in the area of spiritual matters. This was all brought to somewhat of a head in April last year when I attended a marvellous conference in Tucson, Arizona, called "Toward a Science of Consciousness." Part of the richness was in the friends I made there and with whom I was able to talk over matters that arose in the workshops and conference - Don from Seattle, Charles from Vancouver, and Vicente from Valencia, Spain. What was fascinating was that it was an ostensibly scientific conference but also one that was tentatively reaching out to other ways of knowing and seeing how these could be included under the mantle of consciousness. So at times we got into strange stuff for scientists: shamanic journeys, meditative sessions, discussions on the effect of ayahuasca, spiritual intelligence, etc.

As I participated in various workshops, listened to presentations, and talked into the night with Don, Charles & Vicente I came to an increasingly aware sensation that all my "spiritual leaves" were on the other side of the "stem" than what was predominantly on offer, so to speak, both at the conference and in the world in general.

At Tucson I seemed to be faced with a whole set of situations in which I felt differently from anyone else so I started to map them out to see if there was a pattern to them all. It felt as if I was going on an exploratory path with a group of people and together we moved into a tunnel which took us from ordinary reality into some alternate world for us to explore. But then, having issued as a whole into this new open space, the rest of the group "turned left" en masse while I felt this urge to "turn right."

The Tucson conference really brought these feelings to the fore because I was with a large group of people exploring other realities together in a focussed and heightened environment and in a restricted time period—probably the most intense such situation I had been in since the first transpersonal conference (and the Grof workshop) I had attended in Sydney. In the first 2 days of pre-conference workshops this "left/right" situation arose several times and then again periodically throughout the rest of the conference. I started taking notes on this and also started to draw a wider, more organised, perspective in my e-mails home. I'll try and tabulate the situation as I see it now:

'On offer' exploratory path	My 'alternate' path
Vipassana meditation or any other form of meditation that subjects the body to long periods of inaction while the attention is developed.	Being with the stillpoint at the centre of the bodymind action as in "sport as yoga" (Murphy), Taoist living "as a ball in a mountain stream", Gurdjieff movements, cycling in the Brindabellas. (For others: dervish dancing, Tai Chi, Zen in the art of archery.)
Sitting, non-action, non-movement. "mind -play".	Mindfulness of the body in action, fitness, health, speed, skill, responsiveness, alertness, joy in movement. Like the Gurdjieff work in action: moving bricks, serving food, washing up.
Shamanic travel into mythic and magic realms.	"Gebserian travel," consciously, intentionally adopting an integral/aperspectival perspective. "Integral shamanism."
Encountering the shamanic/archetypal animal	Vivid encounters with wild animals in the real world.
Dream awareness/exploration, lucid dreaming.	"Waking up" from "consensus reality", developing a sensitivity to epiphany, being flooded by wonder in the midst of "waking normality", allowing spontaneity to arise.
Creative visualisation—a constructed inner world.	The spontaneous encounter with grace and epiphany in the outer world. Allowing myself to experience diaphaneity, to encounter the <i>numinosum</i> .

This feeling of my rejection of what is being offered (by current Western consensus, it seems) is often expressed quite forcefully to myself along the lines of:

"Why would I want to sit on my arse in a room for 6 hours when I could be dancing on my pedals over the moors / prairies / high veldt / foothills feeling the exhilaration of being in the world, of tasting the unity, of feeling my whole embodied self working and cooperating?"

"What about a mindfulness discipline that can be exercised at 80 km/h coming down a mountain on my bicycle or, say, chasing my daughters down a ski slope on the graceful side of catastrophe?"

"Why would I want to muck about in the dream world when I could be learning to be truly awake, to wake up out of this "waking sleep" that most people accept as living?"

"Why would I want to go back to the weird world of magic when I can taste an emerging "concretion of spirituality" (Gebser) and would wish to learn the (aperspectival-integral) disciplines that would guide me in *that* realm?"

It was the rich conversations with Vicente, Charles, and Don at Tucson that allowed me to roll these ideas around and see if there was some sort of pattern.

On the Saturday, when Don and Charles had left, Vicente and I explored Tucson and ate fine Greek food together. During these wanderings, in some local bookshop, Vicente found a slim Taoist book for me, the *Hua Hu Ching*. I opened it to this:

Do you think you can clear your mind by sitting constantly in silent meditation?
This makes your mind narrow, not clear.
Integral awareness is fluid and adaptable, present in all places and at all times.
That is true meditation.

Who can attain clarity and simplicity by avoiding the world?
The Tao is clear and simple, and it doesn't avoid the world.

What finer summary?

Dave Knowles

(I asked Dave for a few words of introduction and he replied: "I still work in Information Technology - to a large degree because it has allowed my mate and I and our daughters to see a good part of the world and live in several countries. I love literature, riding bicycles, musing, the 3 women in my life, conversation with friends, and have a great interest in just about all the subjects raised in the piece above." Ed.)

The Process of self-realization

I wonder if it helps to know that the inquiry we are involved in has an end! While involved in understanding ourselves, there are times when we imagine that we have embarked upon an interminable journey! During such times, I found the company of like-minded people to be a great blessing. They give one a sense of support, of friendship, of not being all alone in the world. This enables our mind to look deeper into the nature of confusion. No matter how hard we try, it is only by seeing the nature of confusion and conflict that the mind flies free from it. It does so by seeing that the conceptual paradigm of reality poses certain problems which need not apply to the world around one. The absence of a deep-rooted conviction that life amount to something, that it mean something is intrinsic to this freedom.

For me, the insistence that life "mean" something ceased with the insight: if you look into yourself, what can you expect to find, other than more of yourself? It was as if my brain was responding in exasperation! Thankfully, I could not stop laughing after that, at my long drawn, self-centered endeavor to find truth! If you watch the insistence that drives the desire for truth, it is clear that it is appropriate

in the realm of the spoken world. Why we carry it on to include the real world is a mystery that is resolved when the nature of psychological activity is clear.

When the limitations of thought in relation to awareness become evident, we are free from the inquiry that insists that life (including ourselves) amount to something! As long as this insistence carries on it is clear that the mind is being subject to the authority of the known. The conditioning, which endorses this search, is powerful since it begins from the time the child attempts to acquire language, to make sense of the spoken word. It is likely that we do not encounter the same level of encouragement doing anything else! Therefore, although the process of making sense is relevant to the realm of ideas and is cultivated diligently throughout school; it is blindly carried on by most of us in relation to the rest of life. Thankfully, it is a habit which no longer encroaches upon the mind as one becomes aware of the urge to interpret everything in accordance to what is already known and we come to terms with the implications of relying upon the limited to explain the limitless! As the nature and limitation of thought become evident in this manner, our outlook upon life is transformed and one walks free of the weight of knowledge, or the burden of our past!

What is present is a capacity to appreciate life as a whole. It is clear that freedom is responsibility and, needless to say, there is no blinding desire for freedom anymore! Being free of this desire, psychologically one is free of fear. There is a greater presence of mind. The world that one created as a child remains just that, a product of one's childish, imagination! There is no drive, no obligation to fulfill it! It is as if we are moving in a stream of life (consciousness). We are never alone except in thought. When we see the nature of thought that is isolating, we see ourselves suddenly in the context of life rather than the context of self, which describes the rigid confines of our attachment to concepts and things. This is what happens, as the mind lets go of its' preoccupations and attachments to ideas and sees life free of the insistence that requires life to conform to ideas of it! It is such a relief to be free of this inward drive that complicated life for so long!

Geetha Waters

Dogma

Feeling unusually cautious I edged my way through the first few pages of Now. At first I tried to ignore what I was feeling, admitting that I was too dogmatic about the disunion caused by left brain analytical thought.

"It might be necessary in academia, but not in a newsletter whose stated premise is awakening" I muttered, then pulled up short, begging myself not to go to such extremes. So I turned back to the first page, to the commentary on the world as illusion, trying to accept that every approach to awakening is legitimate. I tried to be still, imaging the calmness of a Zen monk, sitting, breathing deeply, chastising myself for being so bloody-minded, hating myself for being so unkind. But a balanced viewpoint is almost impossible for an extremist, so it didn't work. Everything inside was screaming, "No!" So I apologize for the following tirade. Please accept that I am fanatical, arrogant and dogmatic and in the spirit of balanced generosity allow yourself to read on.

I've been told any type of dialogue is good, is necessary, and helps people to understand, but I can't accept this because there is a vast difference between understanding and knowing. I'm looking at the opening statement, at the top of the first page, headed The World as Illusion, and the words 'point of view' jump out like an insult. The world as an illusion is a 'knowing'. It needs to be felt within, felt by the whole self! Experienced as an 'Ah-ha' mind boggling, heart opening revelation. As soon as we try to reason with it we begin to pull it apart dividing it into a thousand pieces and the 'knowing' slips through the net of the cortex .

"Maybe" I thought, (trying to excuse my rudeness) "if this magazine's thesis was aimed at pure academic discussion and analysis I would be wrong to criticize. But isn't Now a forum for mystical wonder? For spiritual insight, directed toward awakening us to who we really are?"

I turned back to the newsletter, making huge scribbling notes down the sides of the pages, but it wasn't enough. Because of my fear of how the mind dominates our existence, the greater part of my concern will always be that while humans use the rationale of the mind we divide and are conquered. We concentrate on the words and miss the message. Is this not dangerous? We could circle on this reductionist path for the rest of our lives. For example, thirty years ago I had to leave a Krishnamurti group that met at the TS in Melbourne. Meeting after meeting the nebulous wonder of his message was being torn to shreds as they systematically discussed his words. They would lock themselves up in syntax, logic, semantics, judgement and when they were done I would ache with emptiness. I used to struggle to find the meeting place between insight and logic often ending up in tears, because in those

days I thought they were right; also in those days I believed that compromise was right. Nowadays I know that compromise is simply a way for us to lie to each other, and that Krishnamurti (and many other teachers) are/were asking us to unify our separation - found at a physical level in the left-right brain dichotomy - by a symbiosis between body and spirit. Krishnamurti also warned us not to follow his words, but to go out there and discover our own reality.

It is interesting that some of the writing of Huang Po has been included in this edition. I am sure many scholars have been doing a similar thing with this dialogue. Using the mind to analyse what has been said. Reading the work, revering the wisdom, debating its meaning, wallowing in its paradox while totally ignoring what Huang Po says at the end of answer number three:

“Do not look to what is called the Dharma by preachers for what sort of Dharma could that be?”

I am not saying that we should not read and explore the vast spiritual library now on offer to the world. We are privileged to live in this wonderful age with so much sacred information released and available to everybody. But when it comes to the crunch the real work lies within us. And we do have the wisdom. We would not be asking the questions if somewhere, in some part of us we did not know already. If we can learn how to die to the illusory self then the internal work will be made so much easier.

Travelling parallel with the concerns already mentioned, but I suspect far more divisive, is the way we use the mind to avoid. Dare I mention that magnificent world on the edge of madness, cloaked in the darkness of our avoidance—the illusion of identity? The mind constructs a set of beliefs that can occupy us forever, cleverly attaching us to a whole system that functions in an identical manner (The illusional world). Many people are not even aware of what is being avoided. But the readers of Now know because we have been told. This is a struggle to the death. Gary Hipworth calls our identity a set of ideas. It is this that must die. The mind is the creator of the illusional self, set into the body we walk around in. We are not the body, and we are not the mind, we are something else entirely. To confront this fabricated self we need more than our capacity for feeling, intuition, imagination, symbolism, imagery and dreams (necessary as they are). We need the courage to accept that our identity is built on a construct of beliefs put there by us. If we built it then we have the power to dismantle it. Remove the belief structure and what is left of identity? We can choose at any time to change any part of ourselves - or all of it if we are ready and have the courage. (You may want to debate this point, but I assure you it is so) This is where the death takes place. At the point where we recognise that our belief system has been fabricated. Made up by ourselves. A fantasy. Our identity is a fantasy! I called it a dark world on the edge of madness, but this is only the view from this side, and this side is not real!

We are living in a new time. People like Krishnamurti led the way. Led us to where we are now, but his teaching comes from of a century now passed. Change is accelerating, is moving us into a world that is different. Everywhere there are new leaders and their knowledge is within our reach. We can contact them via the Internet. Here in this very magazine we are in contact with people able to give us exciting new directions. The instruction is no longer passive. We do not need only to read and to listen. Today we have the chance to actually bring about our own change so let's not dwell in the world of semantics, let's act NOW.

Lyn Willmott

Fact or Fallacy – Follow-up 2

Letter from Ann Faraday

I'm glad we managed to get your fallacies down to manageable proportions, and to learn that they are not, after all, hazardous to our spiritual health. If they were, I fear, no one would ever ‘get enlightened.’ As one of my old meditation teachers used to insist, ‘Don't put cart before horse. First enlightenment, only then ‘right view.’” As you say, Alan, anything else is just a concept.

Even in their now decimated state, I'm still flummoxed by your fallacies and where they come from — your own delightfully named ‘low level enlightenment’ (LLE) involving only a perceptual shift from the relative to the absolute, or the arguably ‘higher level enlightenment’ (HLE) of traditional mystics and a handful of NOW readers. So until you can tell us much more about your LLE—how exactly the shift occurs, what it looks like, feels like, tastes like, how long it lasts, whether or not it permeates your daily life, how often you do the headless experiments, etc.—we have no chance of dialogue simply because neither of us really knows what we are talking about.

Are your fallacy arguments based on direct personal experience, your ideas about your experience, other peoples' ideas of enlightenment, scientific research or philosophical abstraction? Or a bit of everything? Let's try to find out. Here's my latest attempt to personalize your position:

‘I, Alan, find that I can move from ego -mode into absolute perspective by means of the headless experiments. This shift in perception is a cool, undramatic affair, and while so far it hasn’t resulted in a radical, permanent, transformation of consciousness (HLE), I feel in my bones that it is somehow essentially just as authentic. In fact I’m beginning to wonder whether HLE isn’t just an over-emotional or over-exaggerated state of LLE. Anyway, whatever—any kind of enlightenment should be NOW and not some time in the future (though I feel I might be muddling categories here). And although I’ve lectured my ego on the futility of its self-seeking, it takes no notice at all, pushing me into the headless experiments which only result in its demise. Silly old Fred - he never learns!’

And if you will indulge me just one more time, Alan, I’ll have a shot at personalizing your most recent comments on why you don’t want enlightenment - by which I am assuming you mean HLE:

‘I, Alan, don’t want HLE because it’s only a concept, and I’m not going to waste my time chasing after rainbows. I want happiness which doesn’t seem to depend on HLE. Also HLE doesn’t produce the goodies I want—kindness, compassion, purity of heart and social service. My LLE does produce these qualities which is why I am satisfied with it. At least I’m well-intentioned and harmless which is more than can be said of certain alleged HLE gurus and their disciples. I can’t understand why more people aren’t enthralled by my message. Am I missing something?’

Maybe—but we won’t know until you tell us more about your LLE. Over to you now.

Ann Faraday

Alan replies

My views on the fallacy business are based on my own experience and my interpretations of that experience. The first title for the fallacy article was “A Ladder of Misunderstanding.” I thought that would underline its purpose as a record of the red-herrings, and false leads that had distracted me on the road to here. It might have been wise to stick with the original heading.

I note you feel I should explain where they come from, so here goes. I had a number of openings, starting in my late thirties, which it was fashionable at the time to call ‘Peak Experiences’ in which the changed perspective came with the unshakeable certainty that these experiences were more true, more complete, more real than everyday consciousness.

I checked an index which I kept at the time under the heading “Altered Consciousness.” There were about fifty entries between 1974 and ‘87 when I stopped the record. I always felt these ‘openings’ were a common feature of life and not that they were in any way special to me. What are they like? When the shift takes place, the usual ‘me-self-here’ against the ‘other -there’ is replaced by a transparency in which the distinction fades away and whatever is happening is what is and without any separation. The usual interpretations of what is going on are absent. It is rather as though I become a three dimensional canvas on which the world is painting itself. There is also a strong sense of inside-outness in which the customary context of myself as entity dwelling in time and space is inverted and the true context revealed as this capacity in which time and all things arise and fall away and in which neither the need for certainty nor the fear of death has a place. I don’t like talking about it because the words make it all sound like the sort of intellectualization Lyn is complaining about.

After the first of these experiences I started to search for whatever lies behind them and was attracted both to people who claimed to know and to examples of the wider seeing wherever they could be found. I was led to Krishnamurti (this you will be interested to hear, in view of your professional involvement in dreams, was the result of a dream) and K’s “observer is the observed” caught the flavour of those openings. Contrary to K doctrine I pursued parallel lines of enquiry and found Zen to be the most fruitful. In *Zen in English Literature and the Oriental Classics* by R H Blyth there is a chapter on Traherne. This led me to Traherne’s poems and prose and to the voice that spoke most truly to my condition. His theme of *Enjoying the World Aright* seemed to deal directly with my questions about the nature of the wider/deeper vision.

*My naked simple life was I,
That Act so Strongly shind
Upon the Earth, the Sea, the Skie,
That was the substance of My Mind.
The Sence it self was I.*

*I felt no Dross nor Matter in my Soul,
No Brims nor Borders, such as in a Bowl
We see, my Essence was Capacitie.....
(Poems My Spirit)*

In 1990 Douglas Harding came to Sydney. Although I had heard of Douglas before and read the famous article *On Having No Head* I knew nothing of the experiments. During his visit the experiments did their stuff and delivered the perspective which I had, up to that point, believed to be the consequence of extensive meditation or 'grace'. The value of the Harding approach is that it not only reveals the obviousness and accessibility of what is generally believed to be obscure and out of reach, but provides the means of making the transition from knowing to seeing and a language in which this otherwise incomprehensible shift can be talked about, communicated and shared.

The two modes are the basis of the fallacy article in which I treated them as levels. I believe this two-way seeing and two-way functioning to be the essence of Traherne's "enjoying the world aright" and that any attempt to transcend the lower by becoming the higher, on a full-time as opposed to part-time basis, to be just more third person greed and ambition. It just doesn't work that way—at least not for me. And if, as it is claimed, it does work that way for some, the full-time version should not be set as the target otherwise the readily accessible 'part-time' version will continue to be undervalued and overlooked.

What is it like? How does it show in everyday experience? Well, it is just everyday consciousness. Usually focused and mediated through the 'I' process as I grout the kitchen tiles or whatever. Then, when the awareness itself is brought into the equation—the view is as before but free of the interpretations, explanations which constitute the me and its world-view. Light, free and often joyful - as the world, in its everyday ordinariness, is revealed as the miraculous. Just 'what is' as it is—liberated again from my insistence on standing a-part.

Does it permeate my daily life? Yes, it does—although as a clear background rather than an all consuming emptiness. Someone recently said they occasionally feel like a membrane between the seen and the unseen. I sometimes have that feeling and when I do it also seems to be smiling. I was pondering this in Wynyard Station and wondering how you could ever write about such matters, I was simply awareness of the flow of people appearing and disappearing thoughts coming and going, etc., and the smile must have taken on a physical form for I noticed it being both reflected and rejected in the stream.

This seeing is not dependent on the experiments. I don't go around with a paper bag handy or constantly pointing at this 'aware space here'. The experiments just break the overlooking of a lifetime and reveal that what I had come to consider as inaccessible is ever the case. Once seen never lost. Jim said something helpful about it in a recent email message – "how you see it, now you are it".

Will that do? Now, your turn Ann, what bits of the fallacies do you find particularly irritating?

Alan Mann

P.S. A couple of recent quotes from helpful friends, which might assist:

**.....One foot in the still
centre, the other in the
changing world.
Richard Lang**

**There I am the temporal.
Here I am eternal.
There I am peripheral,
Here the nut and kernel.**

Jim Clatfelter

Meetings Sydney

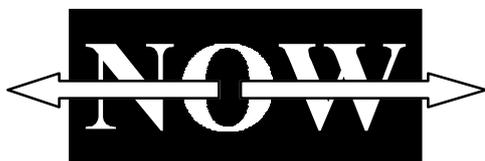
Academy of the Word Seminar Programme –
 Under St Peter's, Devonshire St., Surry Hills
 Second Tuesdays 6.15pm - Healing & Well-being
 Fourth Tuesdays 6.15pm - State of the World
 Dr Alex Reichel (02) 9310 4504

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

Greville Street Meetings and Nowletter gap

There will be a meeting on Easter Sunday (April 15). There will not be meetings at Greville Street in June and July when Alan & Margot will be travelling. There will also be a two-month gap in Nowletters (June & July). The August issue will carry reports of both the Traherne Festival at Hereford and the Harding Gathering at Salisbury.



**If unable to deliver please return to:
 81 Greville Street, Chatswood 2067
 amann@bigpond.net.au**

DIALOGUE MEETINGS SYDNEY AREA

LOCATION	DAY OF MONTH	MEETING PLACE	TIME & CONTACT	Phone Nos.
City	Third Saturday	Theosophical Society Level 2, 484 Kent St., City	2.30pm Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379
Chatswood	Third Sunday	81 Greville St. (off Fullers Rd) Chatswood	10.30 am Alan & Margot Mann	02 9419 7394
Clontarf	Fourth Sunday	49 Peronne Avenue Clontarf	11am Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379