

Meetings (10.30am - 3rd Sunday)
 81 Greville Street , Chatswood
 Next Meetings – 16 June 2002
 21 July 2002

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Editor's note

I received notes during the month pointing out errors in my accounting and record system. Some addresses were out of date and the renewal dates for postal copies had not been adjusted for some subscribers. The due date appears above the address to indicate when the subscription falls due. I treat subscriptions as confirmation that you want to continue. If the subscription falls too far behind I assume the reader wants to drop out. Because the email version is free, I rely on email readers telling me when they have had enough.

I will include a small hand written note with this issue to those of you I think want to drop off the list. If you have paid and I have not adjusted your date please accept my apologies and let me know what the right date should be. I have enough trouble pulling all this together without becoming obsessive about the accounting but I've decided to start issuing receipts to reduce the chance of future errors.

Don't hesitate to let me know if you want to stop, as the last thing I want to do is to spend time sending out postal or email versions to people who wish I wouldn't. Finally, the usual appeal for notes, articles, poems and responses of all kinds for inclusion in future issues.

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.

Subscriptions: Postal \$15 per annum, Email – Free

Fearless - Response from Dave Knowles

I enjoy reading film reviews anyway, but I greatly enjoyed John Wren-Lewis' s review of "Fearless" in NowLetter #80. I haven' t got to see the film itself yet but there' s a lot ~~react~~ to in the review itself. "Yet far from aggravating fear of dying, the final effect is the absolute reverse. Weir has pulled off the incredible achievement of enabling viewers actually to feel for themselves how at such moments human consciousness can transcend fear, and indeed mortality itself, by moving out of time."

I relate strongly to this as I remember my NDE as a teenager when I was rescued from (presumably) drowning. At the point I was fished out I was certainly not in the "normal" world' s time but dreamily examining the newspaper headlines about my death and reading with interest what they were saying about me. I was curious about my rescue as I was quite happy where I was and retain the sense that I have nothing to fear about death by drowning. The curious thing for me, which John' s review caused me to ~~re~~examine, is that, though I have had no other NDE, I feel in a sense that I cannot have another as it won' t (can' t) be experienced as that at a subsequent time ~~everything~~ everything has shifted due to that experience and some similar attributes can be experienced in "ordinary" (hah!) life. I think of the numerous crashes I have had in my career as a bike racer - suddenly I am precipitated out of the hectic hurly-burly of the bunch of racers and I am moving in liquid slow motion, performing impossible handstands on the handlebars as I pirouette through the air, hearing sounds slowed down and seeing the fine granularity of the road passing close to my face as my body rolls. And the times down a long snow-covered mountain where everything clicks and the skis, knees, body move so slowly, so gracefully, so fluidly, so at-one as the slope hurtles by you - and as you curve around throwing a curtain of crystals up against the sun all you can do is laugh in indescribable joy as the rainbow falls. And the unasked for epiphanies where a tree against the summer sky represents all of life' s possibilities to you and you can' t quite separate your life from the tree' s.

More films that touch moments such as these: Peter Brook' s "Meetings with Remarkable Men" on the journeys of Gurdjieff. The moment in "Thelma and Louise" when Thelma realises she has awakened in a way that she has never experienced before and wants to tell Louise but can' t find the words or rather the words she finds cannot communicate what she wants to. "The Thin Red Line" where a dying man is entranced by the sunlight shining through the trees (and more). Gurdjieff dwells a lot on our attitudes to death and would see it highly beneficial to us to have an organ implanted in us that would keep us vividly aware of the inevitability of our own death, rather than shunting it off to the suppressed area. Good biography "Gurdjieff: The Anatomy of a Myth" by James Moore (Element 1991). Talking of Gurdjieff reminds of the 20 seconds (guessed) I experienced doing the "movements" with a teacher where I was completely "with" the movements of my body and time stopped and I was flooded with joy/unity. So, given that I cannot access these experiences any more through extreme sports how can we "induce/allow" them given that we have had the gift of an NDE which has acted as Gurdjieff' s organ? For me, a sort of phenomenology of the body pay close attention to everything as you put the body through some graceful regimen, bracketing our expectations and the cycling of common-sense but come back to the "things themselves" as Husserl said.

Thanks, John - now down to the video shop.

It' s now a couple of days since I wrote the above and I' ve rented "Fearless" and watched carefully ~~re~~commended. This was not an effort - Weir' s depiction is masterly I too found tears streaming down my face when I watched it - just, I think from at last seeing something related to what I have felt without being able to describe and without having any such extreme experience as Max' s or John' s. I am reminded of when, on a business trip away from home, I casually saw "Thelma and Louise" and then went back 4 more evenings to see again what I had never seen brought to film again. I recorded the dialogue:

Thelma: Something' s like - crossed over in me and I can' t go back I mean, I just couldn' t live. [she has just had a Max-like vision of what life really consists in and she can' t (won' t) get back to where she was before. Driving through Canyonlands in the early morning sun, eyes washed clean - Thelma doesn' t know what' s happened to her and can' t get it across to Louise.]

Thelma: You awake?

Louise: Guess you could call it that, my eyes are open.

Thelma: Me too. I feel awake.

Louise: Good.

Thelma: Wide awake. I don' t remember ever feeling this awake. Know what I mean? Everything looks different. You feel like that too? Like you got something to look forward to?

[but conversation is useless. Gurdjieff says (with some justification) that we are all asleep - all acting like automata - we should awake, self-remember, and become real human beings and if it takes the shock of near-death to bring us to this - well that' s how it goes. We need, each of us, to become diligent in devising new shocks for ourselves to precipitate this waking into life.]

And sometimes, oh grace! we are given an epiphanic vision that can awake us freshly - just don' t expect to be able to communicate this.

Now the winter time is coming
The windows are filled with frost
I went to tell everybody
But I could not get it across
Bob Dylan - It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry

I said to the almond tree
"Sister, speak to me of God"
and the almond tree blossomed
Nikos Kazantzakis

Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs. *James Joyce, Ulysses*

Heidegger' *Dasein* (roughly "our being") must be considered as a whole, and this requires an account of death. *Dasein* can be genuinely authentic only in its ' being towards death' , since here it accepts its finitude ... Thus death is a criterion of authenticity: I must recognise that 'I' will die, not simply that ' one' dies. There is, Heidegger believes, [like Gurdjieff] a pervasive tendency to conceal the inevitability of one' s own death. His account of death is influenced by Tolstoy' s "The Death of Ivan Ilyich", which see (please) and please also see that most moving of all Tolstoy' s short stories, the sublime "Master and Man" in which the master, caught out in a blizzard with his man, comes to face his death in a manner which changes everything about his life, short though it may then be. I feel a sense of awe approaching this story (I feel it now) it is so profoundly unsettling of my emotions - at the end I can only say, like Max Klein, and with tears on my cheeks, "I' m alive!"

Dave Knowles

Probably Not Dialogue from David Allan.

He told me that his years of study,
of science, philosophy, religion,
(garnished, no doubt with a side serving of meditation)
had shown him what humanity was,
and where he stood,
in the big picture.
Oh! I mustn' t forget here, of course, his speciality-
the relationship between technology and mankind,
from stones and bones in caves,
and such symbols and all the rest
to the great cyber-whatever.
(I wish I lived in cyberspace

where I' d let my own mind pace,
up and down,
therein I' d let the bastard race,
till at last it found its place –
Recognition! And renown!)
But,
I suggested that all this only told him,
who he *thought* he had become
in the little picture,
of his little mind. After that,
he didn' t ever tell me anything else,
ever, again.

David Allan

Comment on Newsletter 80 from Jim Clatfelter

It' s been a long time since I' ve enjoyed an article as much *Now you see it!* I always liked the face or vase optical illusion, but I hadn' t thought about stereograms and their parallels to Seeing. I suppose I enjoyed it so much because it gives my views exactly.

Patient looking may be needed at first, but after that it' s easy. It' s a matter of softening your focus to include the whole view. Very Taoist, isn' t it?

*How do I see my inner core,
My heart and central locus?
I do not strain. I settle back,
Let go, relax, unfocus.*

It' s instant realization. It' s all or nothing. You can repeat it any time after the initial seeing.

*If you can see your nothingness,
You see it whole and clearly.
You cannot see it partially
Or see it pretty nearly.*

I really like that phrase "including infinity/eternity in my gaze." That' s it exactly! You say that was the topic of Richard' s workshops. I have never heard it put exactly that way. Include the infinity/eternity that is my origin and destiny. What more could I ask for? Who wouldn' t want this? Is there a wider view than the infinite and eternal void (and its ever changing contents)? It doesn' t sound like it to me. What' s it gonna cost me? How long' s it gonna take? Why' s the guru ~~to~~ only one having any fun?

I see Seeing as total seeing (total awareness), seeing all at once. And total seeing begins with the famous Void that is infinite and eternal, origin and destiny. It goes out from there (Here) to the world of appearances. Seeing it this way might help a lot of people to see the setup, the grand design as Douglas calls it.

Your stereogram metaphor is also right on in showing how Seeing works. Don' t strain. Be natural. Unfocus! The new way of Seeing pops up instantly, and it can be repeated any time. Douglas talks of a ding-dong between the two ways of seeing, the focused, interested way and the unfocused, accepting way. You can alter (ding-dong) the two ways. One includes the infinite-eternal, one focuses on the temporal. Both are necessary. But why miss out on any dimension? Why not See totality and truth too? Why not See the timeless from time to time? Why see the flat chaos all the time? Why not relax and let a new dimension pop into view? Why not allow a See change?

I had forgotten about the movie Fearless. I saw it when it came out, but I couldn' t remember the first thing about it. When I read the John Wren-Lewis "review," I went out and bought it on DVD. It was only \$6.99. It all came back to me. I guess you need to have had an NDE to appreciate it. To me, he becomes kind of weird and creepy after the crash.

Jim Clatfelter

The All-pervading Intelligence - Lyn Willmott

There is a living 'All-pervading Intelligence' existing here, now, in this reality, waiting for each molecule of our collective consciousness to become aware of it. Thankfully I have found what I have spent a lifetime looking for, but I must begin slowly, softly, if I am to offer any remnant of the majesty of the experience. I' ll take each word and let it drop carefully into the pool of consciousness, asking you to hear the sound of what is being said, to feel the enormity of what lies beyond this everyday layer of social awareness. Take the feeling inside as you listen to me whispering its glory.

Though I have found what I have been seeking, fretfully, in my need to pass this on, I am only too aware of the way each of us see through a conditioned eye. This challenges my ability to communicate, and I know I' m not up to the task. If what I am speaking about was obvious then it would not have taken me so long to recognise. If it was easy then others would have efficiently described the methods and the state of mind needed. I guess I am asking for your indulgence, for I do have information, and maybe my puny words will be enough for some of you? Perhaps it would help if I referred to the days prior to this awakening. The comparison might assist. This diary entry indicates the depth of the darkness.

28th Jan 2001 Have lost it again! Not through depression but through a physical reaction to the isolation I have placed myself in since leaving work. My energy level is so low I can barely think, indeed I have to force these words. There's a real problem here, because I feel to be at the bottom of the pit. It's dark and weak in vitality, restricted, with no direction; no purpose, yet strangely I am loathe to contact or talk to anybody. I know I must sit at the bottom of this still, empty, nothingness. For all my insights and freedom of attitudes, if I can't find my enlightened core then living is useless.

This diary entry was written only a few days before my peak experience. One could almost say it was the fore runner to a type of near death experience because for many weeks I had been avoiding physical as well as mental contact with the outside world. Every day repeated the day before as I sat alone in my house. I could feel my energy diminishing, yet I persisted, almost as if it was a scientific experiment. I watched my own reactions, taking note, analysing and recording, waiting for... what? I was aware this had become an important crossing point, but could not see through the fog of my own confusion. Meanwhile something was changing, was moving closer. Oddly enough when eventually it did happen the experience was nothing like I imagined. Diary ponderings at this time told me that life simply 'IS'. That living is 'BEING'. Intellectually I understood that in the larger scheme of things, the small self did not exist; put simply 'being' was unconditional love itself; two days later I recorded this:

How do I reach you? I have tried and tried, but the focus of the intention is leading me away from the reality of a higher form of self. I lie watching the apricot tree outside my window and I can feel its soft 'beingness'. It is simply there. Calmly standing, moving with the wind yet it is not moved. There is such stillness in this tree as the wind tears through it. It is rained upon and accepts the water as another necessity. Impassive, immovable, forever growing, I feel its strength and its gravity, but most of all I am aware that it IS. It is living now, without a past or a future, but the only way I can be aware of this is by comparison. I pitch my own wasted helplessness against its impassive being and the tree helps me to know that I am caught in my ego self. That I am unable to just 'be' while I still have expectations. Maybe I am at the eye of the needle. Maybe transformation is almost here? Maybe I shall remain a seeker... with all the expectations that this state brings... for the rest of my life! I know I must remain in this extreme state if I am to reach a supreme unity. I have read there is no experience beyond consciousness, just the experience of being. They say that the state of pure awareness is beyond our consciousness. I know at quantum level, consciousness itself is full of gaps; an intermittent state we move in and out of even though there is a continuity of identity. I think the states I have found myself in over the years show this. As other realities descend, gaps mark my consciousness... so where do I go during these gaps of consciousness? What is this sense of identity that supports me like a puny rope bridge over the chasm of lost awareness? Is it the mystical self, waiting inside the cathedral of my mind?

I felt it was. I was reaching another plateau, and as is always my way, it was tainted with uneasiness: still the question of my identity needed an answer. Since the birth of my son, I had occasionally touched on the knowledge that we are beyond the mind. Now retired, for the first time in my life I was free. Gone were the pressures of dependency, expectations, and duty. But instead of freedom I whirled into panic, lost energy and ended curled up at the bottom of the dark pit where the solid self was collapsing under the weight of self imposed emptiness, the sense of self was vaporizing. It was both terrible and fascinating, and I continued to watch and record the cyclonic mood swings.

Occasionally I would feel a sense of IT. I would begin to cross the bridge into bliss, but ego always stopped me half way. Many people experience this state of bliss, as the small 'I' eases back its grip on what it believes is reality. For an increasing number of us there is a chance of obtaining this state. It depends on just how attached we are to our beliefs and identity.

Let us start with the 'formless intelligence'. Here, beneath the eyes and above the page, hovering formlessly before you is an intelligence of enormous magnitude. It waits for you now. If you can open up to this reality, allow contact to be made, then read no further for the recognition is already beginning. I had no awareness of such an entity, so the contact was made almost by accident.

In a meditative state I held my needs aloft and imagined them being pressed into my brain. I did not rationally pick the area but for some reason it was chosen, just above my right temple. This maybe important because there is so much of our physical functioning we do not understand. The All Pervading Intelligence, understanding the motivation behind my strange action, immediately swept into me causing an ecstasy beyond description. But I suspect none of this is making sense. Maybe we could try an analogy. It was as though I had created a pad of clay inside my head and as I pressed my aching want into its softness I was filled with an electric force beyond anything I had ever known. Joy washing through

me in waves, lifting me to a new level of passion and wonder. It was exquisite; sadly though, no words can express its creative power.

Twelve months later I can say with absolute certainty that this intelligence hovers inside each molecule of matter interpenetrating everything in its all pervading formlessness, waiting for us to interact with its mystery. It exists in us right now! While it is inside us, we live within this intelligence. But I did not know this when I experienced its reality for the first time. An explosion took place, such as I had never known, and all I could do was to thank It over and over and the more I acknowledged the wonder, the more profound the experience became. I am very aware that this sounds like a religious experience, and maybe those people who say they have been reborn into Christianity or have found Jesus, have had exactly the same experience. Not being Christian, and being very aware of the illusions Mankind can create for itself, I simply want to refer to this 'aliveness' as intelligence. I don't think God has anything to do with this. I believe such transformations are an intrinsic part of the human process, written into our DNA and available to everybody. At any time in our lives, at any moment we have the right to reach out with our slender tentacles of awareness and make contact with this intelligence. It is a special mind-stuff of the heart and it packs every tiny cavity of our lives, inside us, around us, permeating everything. So you see I am not talking about the remote god of religion or myth - I am talking about a living intelligence that is part of who we are.

See why I say I must begin slowly, softly, if I am to offer any remnant of the majesty and wonder that we live within? I know of no other way than to say again, there is an all pervading intelligence moving throughout the world, and like a mass of energy, like a flash of sunlight, like a whisper of wind, it pervades everything. It is joyful beyond understanding, and it belongs to us all - or maybe we belong to it?

All my life I had been examining the question of identity, searching for what I felt would be the ultimate experience. **I had no idea that Love was actually an identity in itself!** Always the question of Nirvana has sat like an indisputable rock. I wondered what this state could be; deciding it must be a 'loss of self' because that's what the masters spoke of. Consequently I worked away using the intellectual concepts of reality trying to understand who I was so I could rid myself of who I was. The paradox was ridiculous. For example, I did not feel female or male, mother or daughter, best friend, breadwinner, lover or owner. Indeed whenever I looked for myself I found I did not exist. Now I am in contact with a far greater reality, the reality of Love, none of this matters. The mind standing alone always distorts, but the mind as it interfaces with Love disappears altogether. Without the inclusion of this All Pervading Living Intelligence, words are like sawdust and the intellect becomes the mind trap of the ego. These days I find that there is emptiness in dialogue and debate and the thrust and parry of intellectual communication has become a pathetic plaything without the tangible adornment of unconditional love.

In our cynical, competitive society we have tried to either deny unconditional love or align it with some type of 'new age' doctrine. None of this works because it is in us! It is not to be worshipped it is to be experienced! Unfortunately the word love has been so abused that I'm wary about how to use it in a way that includes but moves beyond western story and song. Perhaps it might be better to go back to the first statement and say there is a formless intelligence waiting within you, ready to be recognised whenever you are ready.

After the first magnificent contact I was a little afraid to approach this wonder again. At that point I had no idea it was part of the very matter that forms us. I felt as though if I tried too hard to imprint myself into its softness, I would wear out the joyous feeling. Unfortunately what I suspected did start to happen. The power of the energy diminished each time I attempted to feel it again. I was cast immediately back into my pit of doom. Had I found it only to lose it again? Then understanding flashed! When we perceive anything our 'interpreter' cleverly takes the experience and replicates it. This is fine if one is learning to drive a car, the automatic function smoothes the actions and one can drive almost without thought. Congratulations to this process, it helps us enormously, but paradoxically it deadens us to much of what living has to offer. In my case I had made contact with the most ecstatic adaptation of living, yet I was losing that contact. Symbolically I saw this as what happens when we wipe muddy shoes on a doormat. Each time we wipe, mud piles on top of mud until we have lost all contact with the mat. So it is with any experience. Each time we respond to the 'known' feeling we are further from the original. All we have is a memory therefore most of our living is nothing more than an illusionary impression of that initial impact; a conditioned response. The first time, when the information is received and passed through to memory, it is interpreted then filed away. This process causes us to lose the colour and the sound of the sparkling original, no matter what it might be. It really is not worn out - in fact it remains forever fresh and alive - it has just been hidden behind automatic reaction. Apply this to music, clothes, food, and paintings. Even more dramatic; apply it to a close relationship. One can understand how some people are addicted to seeking more and

more in an effort to rediscover the original sensation. The blandness of our lives is often due to how our interpreter has copied the original perception. So it was with my joy. As soon as I realised how the whole human process operated, my original impact was once more revealed, and I was again transported into rapture.

So it was then, that through this subtle discovery that the mystical experience I had been seeking for so long consisted of a recognisable intelligence, physical contact was made. I know - with absolute certainty - that if it has happened to me, it can happen to anybody! Simply by allowing contact to be made we can activate the pervading intelligence lying within everything. There is no need for a near death experience, an out of body experience or a crash on one's head. We live within a broad band of energy that gives and maintains life; operating within this energy structure is a most sacred mind waiting to make contact. It would appear that reality is simply veiled spirit, and once the heart is opened there is no relevance to most of the questions keeping us so occupied.

My contact with the all-pervading intelligence has shapeshifted many times during the past year. Now it only needs my full attention to be embraced. Awareness of this entity has loosened the roots of my expectations, reformed my belief structure, dismissed the need to prove my worth, reduced the power of my ego, and most remarkable of all, has dispelled most of my fear. Each day I reach for the wonder of this formless, all-pervading intelligence - now a living part of my life - always grateful, always in awe, but always knowing the surge of love will enter even as I begin to think about It.

Lyn Willmott

A Strange Experience in Normandy by Jack Geddes

(In his Fearless article in the last issue (No. 80), John Wren-Lewis referred to his friend Jack's experience in a tank battle as another example of the sort of action, under crisis conditions, which the film illustrates. As Jack is a Nowletter subscriber and contributor I asked him to let us use this story of his experience which he originally prepared for Consciousness Magazine. Ed.)

Experiences are often termed 'mystical' when the recipient encounters a higher form of consciousness which seems to transcend the everyday world to reveal an underlying vision of complete, unified beauty. It is as if one suddenly tumbles through the veils that obscure the senses to discover the tranquillity and beauty of a different order of things. It also seems to be a 'journey out of time'.

The separateness of things in the world disappears and everything is inexplicably 'All One'. The physical becomes dream-like and the newly experienced world becomes 'the real'—somehow more real than anything known before. And an underlying love and compassion invests this world with a sensation that one is 'coming home'.

Except for those like Fr Bede Griffiths, who may have achieved such states through personal spiritual disciplines such as yoga I do not believe it is any personal achievement. In my case it simply descended on me 'out of the blue', and at the time, I had no way of understanding or identifying what had happened to me. Yet, it is as if 'truly, then I saw, now I am blind again'. What remains now is the memory of turbulent thoughts and great emotions that tumbled through me then, and some lasting effects such as banished scepticism and fear of death (though not the manner of dying - may this please be merciful!) I have had three mystical experiences, but by far the most significant occurred during a tank battle soon after the Allied landings in Normandy. I had no way of comprehending the experience then and could not even discuss it with the regimental padre when he came over later to see if I needed consolation after my narrow escape from death. When I later went in search of others who might have had a similar experience I found them in the mystical poets and philosophers like Wordsworth, Plotinus, Plato, Meister Eckhart, Dante, Dame Julian of Norwich, Hildegard of Bingen, Whitman, Boeme, Bucke and Koestler.

But let me now recount the experience as I remember it and as one of my colleagues-in-arms recorded it. At that time we were holding the towns of Bayeux and Caen and had just lost the disastrous and strange battle of tanks at Villars Bocage which had involved our medium tanks against 80-ton German Tiger tanks. Often, after the tanks withdrew from battle to leaguer for the night, we could still see, on the horizon, the burning tanks we had lost that day.

This was a sad spectacle, and each night we could only contemplate surviving the morrow, with no concern for the days after tomorrow. When yet another of our tanks 'brewed up' I would wonder when our turn would come. On the day when my worst fears were realised the Canadians, past whom we advanced, were entrenched in a cornfield.

My regiment then was the 4th County of London Yeomanry, known as "Sharpshooters, and equipped with Cromwell medium tanks and a few Sherman "Firefly" tanks which were specially fitted with 17 pounder guns, without which we could not tackle the heavy and better armoured monsters, the German Tiger tanks. I was a Firefly gunner.

The following is taken from an eyewitness' s narrative. He was a gunner in a nearby tank and a longlost, but recently rediscovered friend the Rev. John Fisher of Wells in Somerset: He wrote:

"I was looking through my periscope at a Firefly which had just fired at a target unseen to me. This was Jack' s tank. I saw the Tiger and asked the Commander if I should fire. He said "No" but it was too late, I had fired. They' ve got the Firefly, sir", I shouted, as the crew baled out. Jack spent some difficult moments trying to persuade his Commander to get out. I believe the latter was blinded and disoriented, so Jack stood on the hull trying to guide him through the hatch"

The Reverend John Fisher had unwittingly captured the very moments of my mystical experience. A moment before the bale-out I had seen first the vague outlines and then the clearer sight of the heavy German tanks emerging from a smokescreen. I had fired and missed the leading tank which fired back immediately, and more accurately.

I momentarily saw the gun traverse on to us before a non-exploding, armour piercing shell passed through the turret of our tank. With a crash and a strange sulphurous smell it entered just above the mantle to the left of my head. I looked behind me and saw the Commander, who had been looking out of his open hatch, collapse to the turret floor with blood pouring down his face.

It was time to go! The wireless operator had baled-out and I followed through the Commander's just-vacated hatch. The driver, Alf, had a miraculous escape. Having no open hatch he had to struggle to open one below. As he did so, two more AP shells passed through on either side of him. After our bold rescue, clinging to the back of another tank I could see metal dust, no doubt from the passage of the AP shells, glinting on the hairs of his arms.

Two days later I was back in action again on another tank. Although our Firefly had been struck three times, by some miracle it hadn't caught fire or blown up. The salvage crew rescued our kit but the tank was beyond repair. Fortunately for us, the German counter-attack was broken by rockets from Typhoon fighter planes. In reference to my return to the tank after bale-out in order to rescue someone left inside, I must say that such acts were not uncommon. At the ' sharp end' , in the midst of battle, the human spirit is quite wonderful.

My mystical experience resembles what I later heard Professor John Wren-Lewis describe as a near-death experience (NDE). Mine was associated not with an actual temporary clinical death, as in his case, but with a perilously close encounter.

During the instant I was prompted to turn back after the bale-out and during my rapid flight into the cornfield - at my instant decision to do so something seemed 'to move'. There was a sudden ' shift' in things, similar to that described by Hemingway when his hero, at a vital point in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* felt the 'earth move'. Suddenly the world receded and I found something going on which was more important than the prevailing 'reality' of the German counter-attack. There was probably great noise as well. Inside a tank, the noises of battle are muffled, even when firing one's own big guns. Outside, the firing must have been ear-splitting yet, in retrospect, a sort of silence prevailed. The visionary experience followed instantly, even as I remained aware of the continuing and threatening outer world.

The separateness of things disappeared and I knew that all things were of one 'stuff'. I had become part of a living tapestry of wonder and exquisite beauty. The mystery was all in the "I". As my small self seemed to recede, I thought, "how could I ever have thought that was me?" The tank battle and my small self, whilst still active, had seemingly retreated into insignificance. Words are inadequate to describe it. In the depth of my moment of wonderment I was overwhelmed by the fact that love prevailed and was beyond all evil. This perception was so clear to me that I couldn't understand why I hadn't known it all along. It was as if my heart really knew it was always so. (That awareness gradually left me, but maybe one day I will know it again.)

Shortly after the experience, as the memory of it passed continuously through my puzzled mind, I recalled some schoolboy lines of poetry from Thompson's *In no Strange Land*.

*O world invisible, we view thee.
O world intangible, we touch thee.*

*Cry, and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder,
Pitched between Heaven and Charing Cross.*

I sent home to my mother for a copy of Thompson's works and found, in *The Mistress of Vision*:

*When to the new heart of thee,
All things by immortal power Near or far,
Hiddenly
To each other linked are,
That thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling a star.
Search no more.....*

Despite what I have said, during the time I stood on the back of the tank, as I was seeing things at that *other level*, I was evidently still functioning quite well. As the experience left me, shortly after I got down from our knocked-out tank and our incoherent Commander had been given morphia, I had a strong feeling that close by me was some invisible observer.

After Normandy I had two more mystical experiences but they were much more fleeting. In conclusion: I have looked into the hands of atheists, agnostics, behaviourists, reductionists and materialists and I have found them empty. I discovered that F C Happold, the author of "*Mysticism*" (Pelican) and other works was a man whose own interest in this topic derived from personal experience under fire in World War 1. In the introduction to his book, he states what I believe to be a great truth:

"Though he may not be able to describe it in word, though he may not be able logically to demonstrate its validity, to the mystic his experience is fully and absolutely valid and is surrounded with complete certainty. He has been there, he has seen, he knows."

Jack Geddes

(After a long career in the legal profession in NSW, Jack retired to the South Coast of Queensland where he now lives with his wife Olga whose popular autobiography, I Kept on Dancing, has just been published by New Holland Publishers (Australia) Ltd., Sydney, and is available in all bookstores.)

Western science and non-dualism

(This extract, taken from pages 26-28 of Francis Lucille's book Eternity Now was used as a contribution to a recent version of the endless debate about self and other. It is particularly relevant as Lucille is both a non-dualist teacher and a physicist. *Questions in italics* with Francis's replies in plain type)

How would you explain the difference between the views of the world held by Western science and non-dualism? Are there any fundamental similarities, or are they simply radically different?

They are radically different. These perspectives exclude one another. From the point of view of Western science, of physics, there is such a thing as an objective "but there" existing independently of awareness, and this alleged world (as the non-dualist would say), is the subject matter of science. The scientist starts with the study of a world the existence of which he has no proof, whereas the non-dualist, taking a radically different approach, commences from the only certainty he has, the only certainty we can have, that of being. This certainty can never be denied. It is our moment to moment experience. For this reason, unlike the scientist, the non-dualist takes a firm stand in certainty and in reality.

You are saying that the radical difference between these two perspectives derives from their different points of departure, and in particular the point of departure of the non-dualist is that he or she as an individual commences from the certainty that I am, whereas the scientist would say that his certainty of the existence of the external world is supported by the common experience of virtually the whole of humanity. It is a collective view, not an individual view as the non-dualist's is. Would that be correct?

Yes. Once you grant existence to the so-called objective world, existing independently of awareness, then you grant existence to the whole of humanity. From the vantage point of the non-dualist, the undeniable subject is the subject matter. From the point of view of the scientist, the alleged object is the subject matter.

If we can just go back a little, do I understand you to say that the non-dualist takes himself to be the only subject, and the existence of the whole of humanity, along with the rest of the objective world, is in question?

It depends on what you call 'himself'. What the non-dualist calls 'myself' or 'I' is not limited to a specific body, to a specific mind. Body and mind are limitations that are superimposed onto awareness. The non-dualist starts from experience. The scientist, although he claims that he starts from experience, starts in fact from a concept, the existence of an alleged world, and then thoroughly studies this alleged world.

Perhaps it would be useful for you to be very clear about how you use the word 'experience' when you say that the non-dualist starts from experience, whereas the scientist does not, he starts from a concept. Is the ordinary experience of the average person no more than concepts?

The essence of our being is not a concept.

For each of us?

Of course, it is life itself. It is beyond any concept. Concepts are superimpositions such as I am a man, I am forty years old, I am an M.D., I am a U. S. citizen, and so on. All these distinctive features are mere superimpositions onto our real nature, the substratum, which is free from limitations, which doesn't have any boundaries, which doesn't need a knower to reveal itself, which is self-evident and autonomous.

Somebody hearing these views for the first time will be struck perhaps by your stating, on the one hand, that each of us is life itself, but on the other hand, that the non-dualist does not grant existence to the rest of humanity in the objective world in the way the scientist does. He remains at home, as it were, with himself and puts everything else in question, including each of us, the rest of humanity. Somebody encountering your views for the first time would see a conflict there. How would you resolve that?

When we say that the non-dualist sees humanity as non-real, we mean that he doesn't see it as an object, as something that is separate from awareness, from himself. He sees instead humanity as one with himself. From this vision of oneness, of non-separateness, real compassion, ethical behavior and justice follow. We should not consider the sage as some crazy solipsist, isolated in his ivory tower, denying existence to the rest of mankind and granting existence to himself only as a person. On the contrary, the truth-lover starts by questioning his own existence as a person, as a separate entity, asking "Who am I? Am I this body? Am I this mind? Am I this limited entity?" He is not interested in theories, but in reality. He starts with the only field of experience that is available to him, that is, himself.

The answer to this question can never be a positive statement. It is the understanding of what we are not. When what we are not is eliminated, not by effort or by violence, but as a result of understanding, what remains is our real nature. It is an experience, but not an experience in time and space, and for this reason we could call it a non-experience, a non-event. In this non-event, we are one with mankind. It is a non-excluding, an all-comprehending perspective.

To go back to the beginning, the distinction between their points of departure is that the non-dualist does indeed disagree with positing the existence of the rest of humanity as a group of individual conscious entities which could agree individually or disagree with our view and rather leaves open the possibility that the whole of humanity is one with him...

The non-dualist is not interested in concepts. He is interested in his true nature only. After seeing his misconceptions for what they are, what remains is a non-state, a non-event devoid of fear and desire in which certainty and peace prevail. Because he starts from reality, he soon reaches his goal, reality; reality reaches reality, unity reaches unity. Because the scientist starts from a mere hypothesis, a misconception, his point of arrival is as shaky and unstable as his point of departure. He can never reach a satisfactory understanding. He is bound to be eternally dissatisfied, moving from object to object in an endless process.

The non-dual perspective we have been discussing is certainly radical and intriguing. How can I know that this is not one more very sophisticated form of conditioning, much like the others, however radically different it might appear to be at first sight?

You can reach a completely satisfactory answer to your question because the answer lies within you, or, more precisely, the answer is you. Any other approach requires at some point a certain degree of belief. Belief belongs to memory, to the mind, to the past. Belief can never be a solid foundation, since it is a concept you take for granted without understanding. In this perspective we take nothing for granted, radically nothing. We could say that it is the ultimate scientific vantage point, with the difference that the subject matter in this case is not, as we have seen, an object, since we don't even assume the existence of objects. Because we make no assumptions, the understanding we arrive at is free from the past, from conditioning. The mind, having completed its investigation, becomes still, and in this stillness our desire for truth finds its ultimate fulfilment.

This satisfaction is somehow analogous to the one we experience when, after having thought about a problem, be it a math problem or a daily life problem, the intuition of the solution suddenly comes to us from an unexpected direction, and so the solution finds itself in us. We call that process understanding. However, since our comprehension is relative, this satisfaction is limited, and pretty soon dissatisfaction takes over, a new problem arises. But when this understanding, instead of referring to a relative question, refers to the ultimate question, to the source of all questions, satisfaction is total.

Francis Lucille

The state of seeing is more important than what is seen

The past is all our accumulated memories. These memories act in the present and create our hopes and fears of the future. These hopes and fears are the psychological future: without them there is no future. So the present is the action of the past, and the mind is this movement of the past. The past acting in the present creates what we call the future. This response of the past is involuntary, it is not summoned or invited, it is upon us before we know it.

To be aware of this movement without choice - because choice again is more of this same movement of the past - is to observe the past in action: such observation is not a movement of the past. To observe without the image of thought is action in which the past has ended. To observe the tree without thought is action without the past. To observe the action of the past is again action without the past. The state of seeing is more important than what is seen. To be aware of the past in that choiceless observation is not only to act differently, but to be different. In this awareness memory acts without impediment, and efficiently. To be religious is to be so choicelessly aware that there is freedom from the known even whilst the known acts wherever it has to.

Krishnamurti

Meetings Sydney -

Dr Alex Reichel (02) 9310 4504 – 2nd & 4th Tuesdays Academy of the Word Seminar Programme – Under St Peter's Church, Devonshire St., Surry Hills.

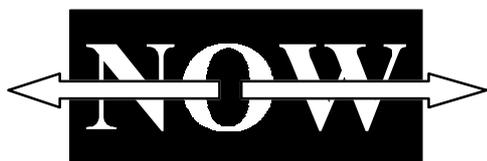
Second Tuesdays 6.15pm - Healing & Well-being - **Fourth** Tuesdays 6pm - State of the World

Blavatsky Lodge of The Theosophical Society

Level 2, 484 Kent St., Sydney (near Town Hall Station) Talks Programme

Every Wednesday at 2.30pm and 7pm – Printed programme available 02 9267 6955 and

at.....<http://qmtech.com/blavatsky/index.html>



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

Dialogue and Self-discovery Meetings				
LOCATION	DAY	MEETING PLACE	TIME & CONTACT	Phone Nos.
<i>Self-Discovery</i> Melbourne	Third Saturday	St Stephens Anglican Church Church St., Richmond	12 Noon to 3pm Gary Hipworth	0352 581119
<i>Dialogue</i> Sydney City	Third Saturday	Theosophical Society Level 2, 484 Kent St., City	2.30pm Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379
<i>Dialogue</i> Chatswood	Third Sunday	81 Greville St. (off Fullers Rd) Chatswood	10.30 am Alan & Margot Mann	02 9419 7394
<i>Dialogue</i> Clontarf	Fourth Sunday	49 Peronne Avenue Clontarf	11am Terry O'Brien	02 9949 8379
<i>Dialogue</i> Nowra	First Saturday	The Tea Club, Berry Street, Opposite Roxy Cinema	4-6pm –Riche Riche du Plessis	4423 4774
<i>Dialogue</i> Nowra	Third Sunday	3/117 Berry Street Nowra	10.30 am Riche du Plessis	4423 4774