

Vipassana Meditation Group of Long Beach
Seven-Day Temecula Retreat - November 2003

DHARMA TALKS

(The following is a combination of personal notes taken by Cali Rose during the seven dharma talks given by our teacher, Dr. Victor Byrd, with some additional comments from Victor's recollection of the talks).

MONDAY

Resistance is just part of being human. It isn't personal so don't take it that way. There is a part of everybody (including me) that will resist the hard work of practice on this retreat. There is a part of us that has no interest in enlightenment. We will all experience this. So, ride the waves of effort and coasting as we do this retreat. Be patient and honest with ourselves, and honor the body. The Buddha said that an exhausted body disturbs a concentrated mind, so if you are too tired, let the body rest.

Concentration is the ability to block out what I'm not looking at and to stay focused on what I am looking at. Sati is the silent witness watching the process. Sati is not coming from the personality, it watches apart from the ego.

But we are *fused* with our name, our face, our body, and certainly our story. Someone may ask me, "where are you from?" and without pause I'll respond, "Washington D.C." Boom, lost in the story again. It is the Buddha mind that is always here and free of self-identification. It does not come and go.

But ego wants to *think* about things. It wants to "do" Sati and whip up concentration, but this kind of spiritual practice is not about thinking. It does require some faith --- faith that enlightenment really did happen to one human and that it can happen to me. Faith that there really is such a thing as the *other shore*. This side of the shore is death. But the other side is the deathless --- our true essence is neither born, nor can it die.

So, from faith, we *practice* so that we can open up to the possibility of enlightenment. It creates some space for the grace of deep understanding to enter in.

If the mind is always chattering, why not at least choose the chatter? Direct the stream of monkey-conversation. "Noting" what is happening right now, in the body and mind, is an excellent start. Noting exercises a muscle that can lead us towards Sati (mindfulness). But it is only a technique that can lead us toward Sati; noting is an exercise, mindfulness is a state of awareness.

Also noting does not stop once we leave the cushion or the zendo. At a vipassana

meditation retreat, we are encouraged to practice concentration and mindfulness in all our activities --- from sitting and walking to eating, brushing our teeth and going to the bathroom. Here is a precious opportunity to practice 24/7.

"Character is what you do when no one is looking." Do we continue to practice once no one is looking and we are alone in our rooms?

Covering is important. That means that if I am doing walking meditation and noting "lifting," I do not merely think "lifting" at the initiation of lifting the foot, and then let my mind wander off. I think "lifffting" through the entire movement of lifting the foot into the air. (Or I could note "lifting, lifting, lifting, etc."). My intention is to stay through the entire experience. And then I think "moooving" throughout the entire process of moving the foot forward. This is what is meant by covering the experience with the note.

At this retreat we are taking a "fierce step into the unknown with no thought of return." (this from a poem by David Whyte) Our journey will be an inner one, and metaphorically it really is leaving home and beginning the spiritual quest.

At the end of the talk, Victor reminds us that Noble Silence now begins and asks us to remember to lower our eyes so that we are not looking at each other. This is a gift to everyone else so that we are all free to walk around with our true faces --- no masks. We can have any face that we want, sad, happy, or neutral and feel safe that no one is watching. With lowered eyes, we are looking at ourselves.

TUESDAY

The unknown is NOW, not the future. The future is but the past pushing itself through this unknown present. So says Krishnamurti.

Addiction to *knowledge* offers escape from fear of this unknown present, and from fear of loneliness and emptiness. Because the mind is frightened of the unknown it escapes into knowledge and this knowledge is a hindrance to entering and abiding in the present where truth resides.

Ignorance is lack of self-awareness. So true knowledge is knowledge of the self. The desire to store up comes from the need to be secure, to feel safe. Accumulation of facts is a kind of knowledge that actually separates us from the present moment where life really is.

Vipassana is a technique to get us to the unknown. But the downside of learning any technique is that the ego wants to perfect it, learn it, and get rid of suffering while holding on to its own sense of control. But if identification with ego is the root of suffering, you can see the problem in the ego's need to perfect technique. We are just digging a deeper hole for ourselves.

Sati means REMEMBERING. So, what are we remembering? Self-remembering, which

is to look at what it is that is sitting and walking. What is self? Where is self?

There is this burning desire to consume what energy we have. It is as if we need to fall into bed at night having expended every ounce of energy that we had available. This is our human condition, the body of desire consuming itself: projecting ahead, always seeking to BECOME. But, what in us is not involved in this burning up? What doesn't come or go?

So we work to come closer to the essence of the Self, that sense of I AM. There is an essence of silence, of peace and being still and concentrated that is what we are. We can meet this here and now.

The journey we are taking is to find our true home, and our true home is the SELF. We have to surrender to allow in something that is already here, to yield to something far greater than our little self. At a retreat, we allow this space and energy to enter and to heal. **We are at a detox facility!** Disguised as a beautiful retreat center. We are detoxing so many addictions. Keeping quiet and stilling the mind allows that detox process to begin.

WEDNESDAY

Victor asks us to note when we first become mindful each morning. What is the first thing that I noted?

"Covet nothing" --- what is the essence of this mind? "Our mind is as endless as a snowflake dissolving in the pure air." (from a letter to a dying man by the Zen monk Bassu) He asks the disciple to question "what is the essence of this mind?" And V. suggests that we might ask ourselves the same question.

"WHAT IS THIS?" "WHAT IS GOING ON?" Ask this when walking or sitting in meditation. Victor suggests asking "what" rather than "who" because the word "who" hooks us into personality.

V. told a funny story about himself. Yesterday morning as we all sat together he noticed how concentrated and still the room was. He said that he had deep clarity and was pleased with how deep his and our concentration was. Then, last night after the dharma talk, his mind "sank like a stone." He could not concentrate and Sati had left his mind entirely. He said that he could not note one single thing and simply longed for 10 PM when he could fall into bed. Forty-five minutes seemed more like two hours. He also said that had he not been the teacher he would have stolen into the night long before the last sit.

What happened? What do you do when the mind contracts and you are just hanging by a thread? What do you note when Sati has abandoned the field and there is just a block of stone sitting on the cushion?

Victor said that all he could do was to keep asking himself, "is this just a mind state?"

Am I really creating this misery?" And he said, even though that was all he could do, it was good enough! It was an attempt to keep practicing, and the important thing was that he at least was able to keep asking himself the question, "is my mind creating all of this?" He listed the five mind states in yoga (not to be confused with five hindrances in Buddhism).

A stupefied mind is like a block of stone. It is solid and there is no movement in it. (I know this one. I've been so exhausted that I've slept through several sits). Indeed, the mind is comatose, lost, numb.

Restless (Monkey) mind is gone too----racing in a thousand directions and equally lost. (Yes, am there doing that too

The distracted mind, ironically, does have the ability to concentrate sometimes and it is pretty much where we all are. This is the mind that is ready to travel a spiritual path. Sometimes it is capable of strong concentration, other times it is quite distracted. Spiritual seekers start here, so it is a good place to be.

The one-pointed mind is a mind that has learned how to maintain concentration. So, if you imagine that there is a space or gap after each thought as it rises into consciousness, when the mind is one pointed, the same thought keeps rising or "bridging" the gap.

The arrested mind is the mind in total stillness. There are no thoughts to disturb it. Like a mirror, or a lake it has not even a ripple so it perfectly reflects the light of the moon.

The intellect is not the SELF. Intellect is born and dies. But essence is not born and never dies. It is.

Intellect loves to read and learn concepts, but there must eventually be separation between intellect and Self. Identifying with intellect leaves no space for SELF to abide in itself.

The Buddha said "House-builder! I behold thee now." What is this house builder inside, accumulating and always busy building this and that and coveting what I think I don't have (but you do. . . .)?

THURSDAY

"What is this?" During dinner, Victor asks himself this question. "It is a body eating." (I, on the other hand, was lost in greed and avarice, considering how delicious and plentiful the food is on this retreat).

But, one way I know to answer the question, "what is this?" or "what is going on here?" is to remember the first foundation of mindfulness. It is a body in a certain position. Standing, sitting, walking, lying. This line of investigation grows the witness consciousness. There is a body, but there is the witness that is not lost in the body, not

confusing itself as the body. Watching. This is separating in a good way.

"The only sinner is one who sees a sinner in the other." Vivekananda said this. To see a sinner is to be a sinner, and it is not up to me to label someone else. But how hard! Does that mean that I cannot call Hitler a sinner? "Every saint has a past, every sinner a future." Vivekananda was a disciple of Ramakrishna, the great Indian sage who worshipped the goddess Kali. Ramakrishna said that the only way for us to move toward the divine is to thirst for it as one thirsts for a lover. It is like an obsession, but an obsession that can take us far. On this retreat, we are thirsting for the vast. Ramakrishna did this every day of his life.

So there is a second factor to this practice that perhaps is even more important than the willingness to work so hard on technique. It is the level of our sincerity, or deep desire to be free, that guides the practice. Victor asked us to imagine a scale of 1 to 10 and then ask ourselves what number we would give ourselves on the scale of "sincerity." He said that we are all fooling ourselves if we deny that there is a part that has no interest in this stuff at all, and this pretending that we are totally here and engaged in this practice is a huge hindrance.

The divine will not come unless I long for it, but I also must be friendly with the shadow part too, the part that is afraid of being annihilated, the part that is terrified of emptiness.

At this retreat there is a battle between sleep and being awake. We long for sleep and there is a part that longs to be awake. We have to work within those two forces. Samadhi (complete concentration) is 180 degrees from sleep, and it requires a kind of nourishment (energy) from the system just as the body requires sleep for nourishment. So we struggle in this practice between sleep and concentration, back and forth, back and forth.

Gratitude leads us to a kind of inner spaciousness. The dark part of us is bitchy about being here. It wants to sleep, and "it" is in all of us. But I can't beat that part up or despise it. I can only be friendly with it. When we can work together (me and my shadow) there is space, otherwise my shadow will win the war. The shadow part is ashamed, it is really ashamed of its body. We never see a little dog or cat and think it is ugly. Each animal is lovely in its own way. But see how we judge our own bodies: too fat, too old, ugly. We are kinder to puppies than we are to ourselves.

Imagine this: the sun reflects on the water. The image of the sun is neither the sun, nor the water. We are like that image. We identify ourselves with the water (the body) and call ourselves a wet sun. But in truth we are neither the water (the body) nor the image of the sun (our "individual" consciousness).

Rumi has a wonderful poem which says it all:

I have lived on the lip of insanity

Wanting to know reasons,
It opens.
I've been knocking from the inside!

This work is folding consciousness back on itself, and this is unbelievably difficult because we have no training for it. Our experience is of consciousness always flowing outward. It is an evolutionary leap forward to begin to redirect the flow toward the inner life.

The narcissistic part of us looks to the outside to find validation. So, I exist through you, through your looking at me. Think about it. Imagine being raised by a mother (or dad) who cannot truly see who you are because she, herself, was always longing to be seen. So she looks at you and sees a reflection of herself. For most of us, we are left longing to be seen and our only sense of existence comes from the reflection we get of ourselves from others. This narcissistic wound has been handed down, not only through generations, but through untold centuries. It has marked us all.

So, we seek the reflection of ourselves by looking outward. But now we are in a meditation retreat and asked to close our eyes and look inward. Imagine how difficult this is to do --- to grow the capacity to turn our eyes inside, to the source, the witness. Think how frightening this must be to one who has the core belief that there is nothing inside, and that "reality" and mirroring is only based on the things outside! We must honor how formidable is this task. Nothing in this world or in our lives has prepared us for this.

FRIDAY

This ain't no picnic --- subjecting everything to the lens of Sati. It is very difficult. If we are having a hard time, that means we are probably doing well. Concentration requires tremendous effort and the nurturing of energy. So, the food may be delicious, but eating should not be too much fun. It is still another meditation, an opportunity to watch, rather than to get lost in the pleasure and desire of eating good food. It's so easy to forget that we are nurturing Sati and samadhi in addition to giving food to the body.

There is a legend that says: We humans are the only animals on earth who are superior to sleep, but we live our lives dominated by sleep. (Go figure). What is it that rises above sleep? An awakened mind.

Watch yourself always with alert interest, but also with the intention of understanding rather than judging (Nisargadatta's advice). We are so busy judging or comparing our actions that there is no space for understanding or for acceptance of whatever may emerge ---- where the deep is allowed to come to the surface. When it can come to the surface, its captivated energy is released. (Carl Jung taught this, and it is the meaning of Krishnamurti's asking us to stay with whatever comes up until it "flowers").

If we can invite and accept what comes up, then it can be released. But what is really

happening is that I have appointed myself as the jailer of my own prison, pushing unwanted stuff down and not accepting my present experience.

So, take an interest in whatever comes up without judgment and it can flower. Let it sing the whole song of its existence, and then it is finished, done, and its energy is released, set free.

Nisargadatta says that intelligence is the door to freedom and alert attention is the mother of intelligence. A lot of people can astound you with their intelligence in the sense of accumulated facts and theories, but this is not real intelligence in the way Nisargadatta means it. According to him, intelligence is just seeing what is. V. says that he gets nervous around any teacher who has all the answers.

So we try to watch ourselves all day long, self-remembering. Too often we are lost in the external world, judging, comparing, pushing away or grasping and God forbid if we make a mistake. We don't get a prize if we make a mistake. Ha ha ha ha.

Vipassana is a technique that will allow us to stay with observing ourselves. Where else can we learn this, considering that there is no background or "self-observation" in the West? I have to take it on faith that there is something good in learning to watch myself. It won't help us to "DO" anything. Watching self is about "BEING" and our culture is, quite frankly, all about "doing."

So, we use the foundations of mindfulness --- watching the body, the feelings and the mind. Each level includes and encompasses the one(s) below it. For example, the mental knows the body and feelings, but not the spiritual. The spiritual beholds it all, as witness.

But, as the energy sinks down, we slip out of the capacity to "note." Our minds sink into the stupefied or monkey-fied minds. When we are distracted we can at least begin practice, in fits and starts. We can identify when we are confused, hooked on fantasy or planning, worry, etc. The one-pointed mind can maintain attention from moment to moment. In samadhi, the mind is fully concentrated. In the state of samadhi the mind can merge with formless truth and enter into the whole. "The personal self returns to the endless source, where the sage leaves behind all traces of him(her)self. PERCEIVING THE TRUTH, YOU BECOME THE TRUTH." (from the Upanishads)

These mind states in yoga certainly parallel the states of mind in daily life and meditation. Technique won't get us there. Vipassana is just a technique, as are all forms of meditation. There must be real earnestness, and face it, there is the part of us that is not sincere, for sure, and not completely earnest about anything. We struggle with our shadow. So embrace the ambivalence. It is incredibly freeing.

SATURDAY

Can you believe it! This retreat is almost over! (Of course part of me is saying, "Thank God." And another part says "Oh No!").

Silence is where we all meet and speak the same language. Silence is where the mind opens to truth.

To be in the present is to be mindless, WITHOUT ego. (The Buddhists call it mindful, and the Indians call it mindless.) The removal of the small self, the small "i" is the beginning of the spiritual experience.

The theme of this talk is identification. Victor says that this is the way that we humans build up an inner psychic structure, through identification. He told us a story about walking down the street a few months ago and watching a man and his young daughter walking in front. The little girl had exactly copied the very masculine walk and gestures of her dad, and Victor said it was amazing just to consider how precise is our capacity to internalize what we have identified with.

According to Nisargadatta, "to identify with the particular is all the sin there is," meaning, to identify with what is temporary and impermanent rather than the whole, that which never dies. The Buddha did not speak in terms of sin, but he would certainly have agreed that suffering is caused by identification with the particular: I am my body, my name is ---- my religion, political belief, nationality, etc.

Some of us are identified with our body. If it is sick then I am sick. Or we identify with our feelings. If I feel bad, then I'm miserable. We don't say "there is a negative feeling." No, it's more like "I'm tired, I'm angry," and we are lost in the feelings and not able to observe from the silent witness. But can awareness be tired? Can it be hurt or angry? Can you punch a hole through awareness? The witness of the passing show is only watching. It is the witness consciousness.

So we feel good about feeling good, and we feel bad about feeling bad. We have identified with the feelings. You could actually be tired but not at all lost in it.

Most of us are identified with the third level of human development, our mind. We give our thoughts complete authority (I am what I think). Krishnamurti says that the thinker is the thought. We are so merged with the thought in our head that it is almost impossible to find a "wedge," a space where we are separate from the thought and thus not completely lost in it. It takes tremendous energy to be able to do this at all.

What to note at the third level of identification? Even "mind" would be a good start. "Oh, that's just the mind. . . again!" Or, of course, "thinking."

In vipassana, we learn to note what is in our head (sensation, feeling, thought) and in the process of learning to note, we move toward a crucial shift inside. We begin to DIS-IDENTIFY with the particular and temporary thing presently occupying our attention. This is the beginning of freedom.

How on earth do we learn to dis-identify? Nisargadatta says that it is easier than you think. He says we just need to behave as if we are awareness (not the thinker) and

"bodiless, spaceless, timeless, beyond the where and the how. Dwell on it and learn to accept its reality," says Nisargadatta. It is what he did. (And it worked!)

In releasing what is NOT enduring - "nama rupa" (name and form) - we can feel a huge relief and become lighter.

But the process of dis-identification continues on, and we even have to let go of an identification with the spiritual as we move to an even higher level of consciousness. (No one said this was easy).

So how do we let go of our particular stage of identification? We must die to it, and that is the meaning of that "fierce step into the unknown." To move on we have to let go of the safety of where we are.

And then we get lost again as we identify with the new stage of consciousness. In a sense we have to get lost in it in order to "find" the path again. Victor said that he realizes that his identification is of being "the teacher." So he watches his thoughts go in the direction of teaching, of thinking about dharma talks, etc. So he knows that he must let go of that identification in order to continue his own process of going from the unreal to the real.

Most of what I am is an unconscious program that is inherited and embedded in the collective unconscious. How much of what I am and do and think is truly a conscious choice? How about 3%. Whatever the numerical figure, it is very very small. Frighteningly small.

Hence it is so vital that we examine ALL our ideas and thoughts and especially to examine our present identification, and see how caught we are in this web.

What about love? Love is not a need. Love can never need, nor does it grasp or cling. Love is giving space to everything (in other words, not identifying with it) and allowing everything to be free. (Krishnamurti said this).

Victor read a poem about loving others, which spoke of the parable of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. The poem refers to "the will of the water and the tenderness of the towel." V. said that he loves the way the author had referred to the "will of the water." Water always finds its level and its way. You can push it and force it, and it will just give way and never fight you. But in the end it is incredibly powerful. And the towel of kindness (Metta) truly is tenderness.

"The alms of love and of giving begin with loving myself," says Victor. "If you cannot give the alms of kindness to yourself, then do not wash my feet." In other words, metta begins with ourselves. If we cannot show kindness and patience and compassion with our own little bodies and minds then what is the metta that we are sending others? It is ersatz and hollow, void of real empathy, but heavy with ego.

It's Saturday night and difficult not to begin to prepare to leave the retreat, both

mentally and physically. But Victor points out that in this present moment, leaving is not real. The truth is, there is still time for whatever it is that I was led here for. We each have a unique purpose in being here, and we must trust and stay with it. The effects of this retreat will flower and have a deep impact on our deep psyche whether we realize it or not.

SUNDAY

"We would rather be ruined than changed." (Auden) The poem says that we would rather "die in our dread" than let our illusions die. V. then read the Samurai Creed: "I have no parents; I make heaven and earth my parents...I have no castle, I make immovable mind my castle." A reminder again that a meditation retreat like this really is a psychological step in leaving home.

Victor talks about samskaras, which are prints left in the brain. Every thought we have ever thought since birth creates a little imprint in the brain. Then the slightest trigger activates these samskaras, and we are controlled by them. But when we sit and the mind is still, we create new samskaric imprints. These samskaras of peace and silence are also imprinted in the brain.

So, maybe we had some moments of insight and silence during this retreat. This gives us hope and helps us tolerate the difficulty of this practice. Victor reminds us that we started at 6 AM and tried to practice until 10 PM. 16 hours! That is incredible work, and new samskaras will flower from this in their own time. They are there and this is good reason to be hopeful and optimistic.

V. told us one of his favorite stories about the Sixth Patriarch of Zen, Hui-neng (a story that is reminiscent of the movie "Good Will Hunting"). Hui-neng was a very poor boy living in what is now Canton, China. He was completely illiterate, and sold firewood on the street to support his mother. His father had died when he was a small boy. One day he heard a monk chanting the Diamond Sutra and he understood it completely. He said that on hearing it, his mind awakened. He asked the monk where he had heard this sutra and the monk told him of a monastery up north (a thirty day's walk for Hui-neng). As fate would have it, someone took notice of the fact that his understanding was very rare, and offered to support his mother, allowing Hui-neng to make the long trek to the monastery of what turned out to be the Fifth Patriarch.

He was greeted sternly by the Zen master, who asked why he had come. (All Zen teachers seem to give their students a hard time!) Hui-neng said that he was seeking no particular thing, only to learn the Buddhadharma, to which his teacher responded something like, "You? You are from the South where everyone is a barbarian. How could you aspire to become a Buddha?"

Hui-neng responded that he was not aware that there was a north or south in Buddha nature. The master recognized at once the level of Hui-neng's understanding and sent him to the threshing room to hull rice. He wanted to keep Hui-neng away from the Meditation Hall, knowing that many monks would be jealous of this ignorant boy.

The master was near the end of his life, and it was time for him to choose a dharma successor, one who would receive his robe and bowl. He asked everyone in the monastery to write a verse, and if anyone displayed true Buddha wisdom, that person would receive his robe and bowl.

The chief monk was the prime candidate and everyone figured he would write the verse and be chosen. But Shin-shau (the head monk) was hedging his bet, not wanting to appear too confident, and perhaps also making sure that if his verse was not acceptable, no one would know. So late at night he wrote his verse on a wall that had been scraped clean for new paint. It read:

The body is the Bodhi Tree
The mind is like a clear mirror.
At all times we must strive to polish it,
And must not let the dust collect.

There was a great stir the next day and everyone was convinced that this really was profound wisdom, and Shin-shau did agree that he had indeed written it. The Fifth Patriarch had everyone go around reciting it (it won't harm them, he concluded), but suggested to Shin-shau that he needed to return to the drawing board, so to speak. Needless to say, Shin-shau was not very happy!

And of course, Hui-neng eventually heard a monk reciting the verse, even as he was working in the threshing room. He recognized that the verse was not coming from an awakened mind, and asked someone to take him to the wall and write this verse.

Bodhi originally has no tree,
The mirror also has no stand.
Since mind is emptiness,
Where can dust collect?

Hwang-yan, the Fifth Patriarch, came out and saw the new verse and immediately erased it (so everyone took it for granted that the verse was shallow). Later, the master secretly went to where Hui-neng was hulling rice and asked him if he had written the verse. Hui-neng said "yes." The master, recognizing Hui-neng's profound enlightenment, asked him, "Is the rice ready?" "Ready long ago," came the response, and Hui-neng received the robe and bowl. He left at midnight in order to escape what would have been murderous jealousy, and became the Sixth Patriarch.

Victor says that one reason he wanted to tell us this story is to remind us once again that we cannot cling to the idea that all the technique and book knowledge in the world will get us to the other shore. Here was a young boy who could neither read nor write. He had no book learning at all! He knew no theories nor high Buddhist concepts. And

of course he had absolutely no technique. Yet his mind was pure and open. It heard the truth and became the truth.

It is crucial for us to remember that we cannot "get there" by accumulating knowledge. Knowledge comes from liberation, not vice versa.

After Hui-neng had become famous in China, he would begin his talks by lighting five sticks of incense. Victor held up five sticks of incense to give us the meaning of the "five perfumes."

The first stick represents **Sila**---the conduct part of our practice. Right speech, right action, right livelihood. In other words, the practice begins with our conduct in the world and in our interactions with each other.

The second stick represents **Samadhi** (right effort, right Sati and right concentration) the mind that is controlled and ready to receive truth.

The third stick represents **Prajna**, right understanding and right thought.

The fourth stick stands for **Liberation**. Dis-identification from the particular leads to release from suffering.

The fifth stick is for **Knowledge** that comes from freedom. We cannot force liberating knowledge, no more than we can push water. Hui-neng's mind was already free, and when he heard the truth he knew it.

This retreat has been life changing and I don't have to know it for that to be true. The robotic way that we live our lives is a life of slow dying. That is also something that I do not have to be aware of for it to be true!

WHAT MORE IMPORTANT THING CAN WE DO IN THIS LIFE THAN THIS:
TO LOOK INSIDE AND BE WITH WHATEVER IS THERE?

During the first sit of the day, V. talked about Krishnamurti's statement: If meditation takes us deeper into our illusions, we are just "decorating the walls of our cell." The work of meditation teaches us to look hard at whether we are just decorating the walls of our cell or "breaking through the walls of illusion into the clear, bright air of freedom."