

DuVersity Journal – Issue 51 – 2020

from the *Masnavi* by Jalal al-din Rumi (1207-1273), trans. Jawed Mojaddedi

A fly in donkey's urine, perched on straw,
Just like a boatman gazing at the shore,
Said, "Straw and urine are my boat and sea,
I've contemplated this fact recently:
I'm in the sea, the captain of my boat,
Following maps and methods learned by rote."
In urine it would steer its straw-made raft
As if in boundless seas, for it was daft:
It is thought a single drop could stretch so far
Unable to observe things as they are,
Its world stretched out as far it could view,
Small eyes count as a sea a drop or two!
Narrow interpreters are like this fly,
With a straw and urine they all falsify,
If you stop reading from your own small view,
The phoenix will grant kingdoms then to you!

Being Realistic– Sunday Talk - J G Bennett

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Being Realistic – Sunday Talk 21st June, 1964.

J. G. Bennett

Slightly edited by Anthony Blake.

This is one of the rare talks by Mr Bennett that goes into the meaning of hazard.

What does it mean to be realistic? I am going to talk about three kinds of realism. It may help us if we know how distinguish them and to come to terms with each of these ways. First of all there is being realistic about the facts, not to disguise from ourselves what are the facts with which we are confronted and also to see how we stand in front of the actual situation whenever we have to make a decision or action.

It is necessary not only to look at the facts, but to look them in the face: to look for the facts, that is to say to realize that there is nearly sure to be something in the situation that is there to be seen and known, if only we will look more intently and also more unprejudicedly, or in a more free way.

There is a great tendency that everyone of us has to see the facts according to our own habits of thought and just not notice the things that we are not accustomed to look for. There is a training also required in being realistic about facts.

The second kind of realism is to be realistic about what we really want and hope for. We can easily pretend to ourselves that we want something that we don't really want, or intend to do something that we are not going to commit ourselves to doing. It is also in this realism about intentions that it is necessary for us to make sure that our intentions do correspond to possibilities.

This second way of being realistic is just as important as the first - that is facing the facts - it is also a question of facing what we intend to do about it, what we can do about it.

The third kind of realism is the realism of action; the opposite of that realism is drifting, letting things happen to us, even though we may know enough about the facts and even though we may have an intention. Yet we don't bring the third kind of realism, the realism of the act. You can see I am sure that these three kinds of realism hang together; if any one of the three is omitted there is no realism, or one can say that one kind of realism is not realism at all, two is only half realism; one is only realistic when one is firmly grounded on fact, one knows one's own Mind and one acts. The next enemy in each case is that kind of imagination that allows us to pretend to ourselves.

I am going to say something specially about the second kind of realism, that is, the realism connected with our own intentions, with our alignment in front of the possibilities of the situation. The first thing is really to satisfy ourselves that there is something to be done, that there is an opening. You know very well that one can be planning, working out schemes for doing things, and really if we are quite honest with ourselves we know that there is no intention of doing anything, no intention of finding an opening, and this often happens because we go beyond what is really possible, and we do that because we go beyond what we are able to understand, therefore we should bring this second kind of realism back to a certain starting point. And this starting point is the recognition of

openings, of *holes*, as they are also called. If everything is fixed and has got to happen as it will happen, then intentions are no good, they waste.

Sometimes the situation is for all practical purposes like that, if you Jump off the top of the Empire State Building and change your mind half way down and say I didn't intend to hit the ground it won't help. This exaggerated example still corresponds to things that happen to us in our lives, that is to say we do get ourselves involved in situations where the outcome is almost as inevitable as jumping off the Empire State Building and then afterwards when things have already begun to go with an irresistible momentum we begin to want to change things.

Learning to look for openings, you might say this is really nothing else but a way of facing the facts, that is the point that I want you to see more clearly. The opening is really a place where a fact is missing: if there were a fact there then that would have to produce its results and there would be nothing to be done and the outcome would be inevitable; but the world of fact is such that it is full of holes, full of empty places, not full, but it has plenty of empty places where facts are missing and we have the possibility of putting in what we intend. If the world of fact were packed tight like sardines in a box then we should have no more chance of moving about than sardines in a box have. You must understand that this other world is the world where we can have intentions, where we can take commitments, where we can make decisions. This is different, this is at it were the other half of the reality, and fact is only one half.

I called one of these the world of facts and the other the world of values , and I also said that first of all the values is the awareness of there being an opening; in technical terms it is called contingency, or uncertainty, but really all that it means is that there is an opening, something to be done. Learning to recognize this possibility of doing something, is the beginning of the second kind of realism; it is not enough to be honest with oneself and to say I really want so-and-so, if we are not able to see a hole for so-and-so to enter. This is why with good intention one only can achieve something if there is a hole, a place, and if something is to be put into that hole then this has to be done by an intentional decision of our own, it will not come by itself.

All day long holes appear in the world of fact around us. We don't know how to recognize those perhaps from this way I am putting it, but the way that we can recognize these holes in the world of fact is when we notice that there is something that *can be done*, when we remember, when as we say it occurs to us to do something. If you have the wish not to be completely as if you are sterilized in the world of facts, and wish to come into a richer world where you have freedom to do what you want, then you have to make use of the moments when there is the possibility of inserting, adding something, and these moments have to be recognized and they have to be valued. As you gain experience in this you come to see that this is the thing that is the beginning of value, that this really matters much more than the things that are already there. This is being realistic—we may have good fine and beautiful intentions about what we do but if you begin to recognize this, then you can begin to care, and when you begin to care, then this world opens out to you, because your caring came from yourself. It brings us back to what we will do with our lives and how we will behave towards people and the sort of things that we will accomplish, but in the end comes

back to the moment when it is possible to do something and the recognition of that moment. Until you have understood this, you haven't understood at all what the second kind of realism is.

When you come to the third, what do we do about it, it brings us back to the world of act, of doing. It is the way in which we combine the two, the world of what is and the world of what might be, that is the world of fact and the world of value—these come together and become reality only through action; if you think about it couldn't be otherwise than that. This is why we are given the will, this is why we are given the possibility of understanding, so that we should be able to achieve this third element of reality, of doing what we choose to do, doing what we wish to do, doing what is possible to be done, not neglecting the opportunities. It may seem very small compared with the kind of intentions and dreams and hopes that we have of what we will do with our lives, but all these things will come if we begin here at this point of learning to use the moments when there is the possibility of doing something. When I say that the world of fact is full of holes I meant more like a sponge than an empty place. The trouble is that we don't see for the most part the holes, we look at something which has got holes in it and we only see the material, tangible side of it that is we see what is there, we don't see what might be there and all that is concerned with "might," with the possibilities of things we lose touch with, because we don't get close enough. Thus our world, and the lives of most people consist in just living with the facts which they only half face, and living with dreams which they hardly ever realize. So if you reflect a little on this, what I have called three kinds of realism and also if you will practice during the day that we are together and working together, because it has to be done in the middle of action, if you practice looking for the moments when it is possible to do something intentional and observe for yourself just how much and how often in the course of the next two hours you actually are able to do something that you are intending to do. How many times in two hours and for how long?

Dzogchen Practice in Everyday Life

by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, translated by Keith Dowman

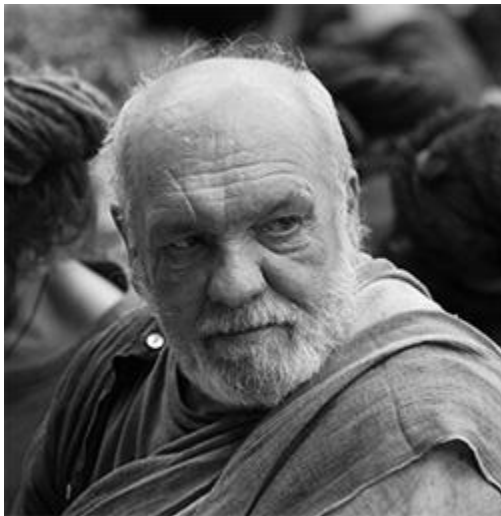
The everyday practice of dzogchen is simply to develop a complete carefree acceptance, an openness to all situations without limit. We should realize openness as the playground of our emotions and relate to people without artificiality, manipulation or strategy. We should experience everything totally, never withdrawing into ourselves as a marmot hides in its hole. This practice releases tremendous energy which is usually constricted by the process of maintaining fixed reference points. Referentiality is the process by which we retreat from the direct experience of everyday life. Being present in the moment may initially trigger fear. But by welcoming the sensation of fear with complete openness, we cut through the barriers created by habitual emotional patterns. When we engage in the practice of discovering space, we develop the feeling of opening ourselves completely to the entire universe. We should open ourselves with absolute simplicity and nakedness of mind. This is the powerful and ordinary practice of dropping the mask of self-protection. We shouldn't make a division in our meditation between perception and the field of perception. We shouldn't become like a cat watching a mouse. We should realize that the

purpose of meditation is not to go "deeply into ourselves" or withdraw from the world. Practice should be free and non-conceptual, unconstrained by introspection and concentration. Vast un-originated self-luminous wisdom space is the ground of being - the beginning and the end of confusion. The presence of awareness in the primordial state has no bias toward enlightenment or non-enlightenment. This ground of being which is known as pure or original mind is the source from which all phenomena arise. It is known as the great mother, as the womb of potentiality in which all things arise and dissolve in natural self-perfection and absolute spontaneity. Then all aspects of phenomena are completely clear and lucid. The whole universe is open and unobstructed - everything is mutually interpenetrating. Seeing all things as naked, clear and free from obscurations, there is nothing to attain or realize. The nature of phenomena appears naturally and is naturally present in time-transcending awareness. Everything is naturally perfect just as it is. All phenomena appear in their uniqueness as part of the continually changing pattern. These patterns are vibrant with meaning and significance at every moment; yet there is no significance to attach to such meanings beyond the moment in which they present themselves. This is the dance of the five elements in which matter is a symbol of energy and energy a symbol of emptiness. We are a symbol of our own enlightenment. With no effort or practice whatsoever, liberation or enlightenment is already here. The everyday practice of dzogchen is just everyday life itself. Since the undeveloped state does not exist, there is no need to behave in any special way or attempt to attain anything above and beyond what you actually are. There should be no feeling of striving to reach some "amazing goal" or "advanced state." To strive for such a state is a neurosis which only conditions us and serves to obstruct the free flow of Mind. We should also avoid thinking of ourselves as worthless persons - we are naturally free and unconditioned. We are intrinsically enlightened and lack nothing. When engaging in meditation practice, we should feel it to be as natural as eating, breathing and defecating. It should not become a specialized or formal event, bloated with seriousness and solemnity. We should realize that meditation transcends effort, practice, aims, goals and the duality of liberation and non-liberation. Meditation is always ideal; there is no need to correct anything. Since everything that arises is simply the play of mind as such, there is no unsatisfactory meditation and no need to judge thoughts as good or bad. Therefore, we should simply sit. Simply stay in your own place, in your own condition just as it is. Forgetting self-conscious feelings, we do not have to think "I am meditating." Our practice should be without effort, without strain, without attempts to control or force and without trying to become "peaceful." If we find that we are disturbing ourselves in any of these ways, we stop meditating and simply rest or relax for a while. Then we resume our meditation. If we have "interesting experiences" either during or after meditation, we should avoid making anything special of them. To spend time thinking about experiences is simply a distraction and an attempt to become unnatural. These experiences are simply signs of practice and should be regarded as transient events. We should not attempt to re-experience them because to do so only serves to distort the natural spontaneity of mind. All phenomena are completely new and fresh, absolutely unique and entirely free from all concepts of past, present and future. They are experienced in timelessness. The continual stream of new discovery, revelation and inspiration which arises at every moment is the manifestation of our clarity. We should learn to see everyday life as a mandala - the luminous fringes of experience which radiate spontaneously from the empty nature of our being. The aspects of our mandala are the day-to-day objects of our life experience moving in the dance or play of the universe. By this symbolism the inner teacher reveals the profound and ultimate significance of being. Therefore, we should be

natural and spontaneous, accepting and learning from everything. This enables us to see the ironic and amusing side of events that usually irritate us. In meditation we can see through the illusion of past, present and future - our experience becomes the continuity of nowness. The past is only an unreliable memory held in the present. The future is only a projection of our present conceptions. The present itself vanishes as soon as we try to grasp it. So why bother with attempting to establish an illusion of solid ground? We should free ourselves from our past memories and preconceptions of meditation. Each moment of meditation is completely unique and full of potentiality. In such moments, we will be incapable of judging our meditation in terms of past experience, dry theory or hollow rhetoric. Simply plunging directly into meditation in the moment now, with our whole being, free from hesitation, boredom or excitement, is enlightenment.

KEITH DOWMAN

Michael White



Keith Dowman (b. 1945) hitch-hiked from his home in England to India in 1966. He lived in northern India until 1973 when he moved to Kathmandu, Nepal where he lived for the next 40 years. He made contact early on with the Tibetan lamas who were living in exile in India and Nepal and learned Tibetan. He published his first book of translations of Tibetan texts in 1970. In 1985 when the Chinese opened the border of Tibet Keith was one of the first Westerners to get a travel visa and spent three months traveling around central Tibet. He has returned to Tibet nearly every year since. He has published over 25 books, his best known books are Skydancer and Masters of Mahamudra. In 1990 he started teaching in the West and has maintained a busy travel schedule doing up to 20

retreats and seminars in Europe, America and Mexico each year. He has specialized in translations of Dzogchen texts and has been teaching the basic principles of Dzogchen philosophy and meditation worldwide. In 2010 he moved from Kathmandu to Tepotzlan, a small indigenous village in central Mexico. The village is located inside the caldera of an ancient volcano. His biography, titled Skydancing, will be published in 2021. What follows is an extract.

In early August 1967 Keith Dowman and his companion Marilyn who he called 'California Dreaming' made their way to Dharamshala. The next morning they went to the Dalai Lama's compound to ask for an interview. They announced they were there to see the Dalai Lama and learned that, even then, you don't just walk in and see the Dalai Lama. In order to get the next appointment they would have to wait three or four days. Not being sure of their schedule or where they would be staying or when they were leaving they were reluctant to make an appointment for three or four days later.

The next day as they were walking up the mountain from Lower Dharamshala with their packs on their backs a Jeep pulled up beside them and the driver rolled down the window. They heard an unmistakable American accent offer them a ride. They climbed in the back and introduced

themselves and learned they had been picked up by David Padwa who was touring northern India along with Richard Alpert. After the introductions, Padwa offered to take them to a Tibetan restaurant.

Keith and Marilyn were especially excited to meet up with Richard Alpert. When they had been traveling overland across Turkey and toward India, they had been reading Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert's book, *The Psychedelic Experience*. They had been fascinated with Leary and Alpert's comparison of the sensations of an LSD trip to the experiences described in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. David had made a previous trip to India. He had attended a business conference in Tokyo and after the conference he had a month vacation so he went to India. He was guided on this first visit to India by a friend from Harvard who was also friends with Richard Albert. When Padwa returned to Cambridge he met with Alpert and told him about his experiences. Richard had been wanting to visit India so they planned to travel there together. David Padwa had sold a company he founded to Xerox and made a small fortune so he had the time and money for another adventure. They spent three months on the road and thoroughly enjoyed their travels. At one point in their journey they ended up in Dharamshala where the Jeep stripped some gears and they were stuck in town for several days. While they were waiting for repairs they made an appointment with the Dalai Lama and, since they couldn't go anywhere anyhow, they had the time to wait for a few days until they had their appointment.

Keith conveyed the spiritual landscape of India while they drank the hot beer through bamboo straws. Alpert told them in detail about losing his job at Harvard as a result of his drug experiments. He consequently arrived in India with a large quantity of pharmaceutical LSD and was anxious to pass it around to Indian yogis and sadhus to see how they reacted. He pulled out a large medicine bottle filled with white and purple pills. They were on their way to recruit the Dalai Lama into their plan of salvation for the world through the experience of lysergic acid. They finished their long lunch and conversation and left the restaurant.

Their appointment with His Holiness was the next day. Richard generously invited Keith and Marilyn to come along and they eagerly agreed. At ten the next morning they all arrived at the Dalai Lama's fenced-in compound. A burly Tibetan guard frisked them to make sure no one was carrying a weapon. They were on guard in case of attempts at political assassination. The group was ushered across the lawn of the lodge of the former Viceroy, which the government of India had given to the ex-head of the Tibetan state. They stopped in front of a set of open French doors. Beside the doors a small monk stood with his palms folded in respect. They entered an empty reception room and the monk who greeted them stepped in behind them. He sat down on the principal seat and invited them to be seated. It was the Dalai Lama himself, the perfection of a monk, humble and self-effacing. Marilyn and Keith felt a bit uncomfortable but His Holiness quickly put everyone at ease. He was a very gentle man with a soft-spoken humble voice, and a ready smile. They sat on couches across from His Holiness, who was accompanied by an interpreter. He understood their English but used his translators to render his Tibetan responses.

After a few minutes of conversation about travel, Alpert asked His Holiness if he had ever heard of LSD. He responded that he'd heard about it and thought there might be some similarities with the experience of some states of meditation. The Dalai Lama listened intently to Richard Alpert's paean in praise of the qualities of LSD and accepted the gift of sufficient LSD for at least one trip,

promising that he would consider it. Several days after Marilyn and Keith left the area, they heard on the grapevine, that a Gelugpa geshe had taken the “inje medicine” and found it “interesting”.

As they conversed, Albert was fascinated by His Holiness’ responses and pushed him about the similarities between LSD and meditation. The Dalai Lama explained that there are five different states of mind associated with meditation. Alpert was silent. The Dalai Lama continued in fast-paced melodic Tibetan. He said taking the American medicine will not bring you to the highest level of consciousness, only meditation can achieve the highest level. The Dalai Lama encouraged them to learn meditation and gave the standard Tibetan response that there are no shortcuts to enlightenment. He ventured that drugs do not help with meditation but more likely could hinder meditation and distract meditators. David was more on a Buddhist path than Richard and the Dalai Lama told him what to study and recommended texts he should read. Marilyn and Keith stayed quiet since they were guests and let Richard do most of the talking, as he was intent on telling the Dalai Lama about the attributes of LSD. The visit lasted about forty-five minutes.

The next day David and Richard were ready to travel to a nearby town and dropped Keith and Marilyn off at the train station. This initial visit to India was the beginning of the path that Richard Alpert took in the direction of the guru Neem Karoli Baba, under whose teachings he was to take the name Ram Dass. Richard had generously given Keith and Marilyn a sample of the acid that he had brought with him, along with some extraordinary STP. Alpert distributed these gifts unstintingly throughout his pilgrimage in India and they were certainly the best psychedelics that Keith and Marilyn ever experienced. David and Richard had taken a mule excursion off the trails in Kashmir. They recommended that Keith and Marilyn go there next and told them about a pilgrimage to a special sacred cave. David even anted up some cash to help with expenses.

At Pahalgam, the base camp for their trek, they connected with a guide, a Muslim who hired out his mules and let them sleep in his canvas tents. They trekked for four days back into the high mountains. They were at 17,000 feet and felt like they were sitting in the clouds. Far above them, on the other side of a glacial field, they glimpsed their destination: the Amarnath cave, a well-known pilgrimage destination for followers of Shiva. The cave is associated with Sri Amarnath, a manifestation or emanation of Shiva. In the cave there was a massive ice lingam representing Shiva. On the pilgrimage path through the sacred mountains the weather was often severe and, in any year, several of the thousands of Hindu pilgrims from the plains die in falls over the edge of the path, within or without their palanquins.

Once Keith and Marilyn arrived in the vicinity of the cave they chose this spectacular location to take the LSD they had gotten from Richard Alpert. During this trip Keith reported that “Buddhfields of altered awareness” appeared during a period of sunshine between showers of rain. Being at 17,000 feet above sea level gave Keith and Marilyn a very special buzz. During the height of the trip they both saw the monkey face of Hanuman in the cliffs of a distant mountain.

As they approached the mouth of the cave it appeared like the entrance to a gigantic cathedral. Deep inside was a chamber with an ice stalagmite that was worshiped as the lingam of Shiva. It waxed and waned with the seasons, growing during the rainy season, waning during the dry months. While, at that time, the cave was popular as a pilgrimage destination, in recent years the number of pilgrims has greatly increased until now up to 400,000 people come to visit during the

rainy months. The naturally-occurring lingam created out of ice in the depths of a cave was a rare, if not singular, phenomenon. The lingam reaches a height of over six feet.

Inside the cave a continuous line of pilgrims were chanting “Hara Hara Maha Dev” and “Om Nama Shivaya”. The chants reverberated off the interior walls of the cave, the air was thick with incense, and the floor of the cave was covered with flower petals and coins. As Keith and Marilyn approached the lingam they joined in the chants and moved forward in wonder and awe, swept along by the energy of the crowd. The inner chamber was filled with a wild spirit of devotional frenzy as people celebrated having arrived at this special spot where they experienced the Shiva lingam in person.

Keith and Marilyn stayed in the cave for over an hour, finding places to stand out of the main path where they could observe the pilgrims arriving and leaving in a steady stream. They found a small side chamber that was steeped in silence, broken only by the hum of the mantras echoing off the walls as the pilgrims streamed by. The ancient walls of the cave stood silent like some warehouse where time was stored. The whole place felt alive with energy. It was as if they were inside the body of the earth and could feel the life force of the earth itself. There was a vibratory sense that made the rocks feel alive; the cave walls lost their solidity and were instead an extension of all life, a manifestation of the pure translucent energy of the earth, of the cosmos, the same as their own flesh and blood. Their eyes became the eyes of the earth, the eyes of the universe seeing itself from the inside out. They felt the consolation of the continuum of all life, the life force of the cave, the life force of their bodies, the life force of the other pilgrims, the life force of the very air, all a great continuum, its silent solace reaching across time and space, concentrated, distilled there where countless generations of pilgrims had come to experience the numinous wonder of the earth itself.

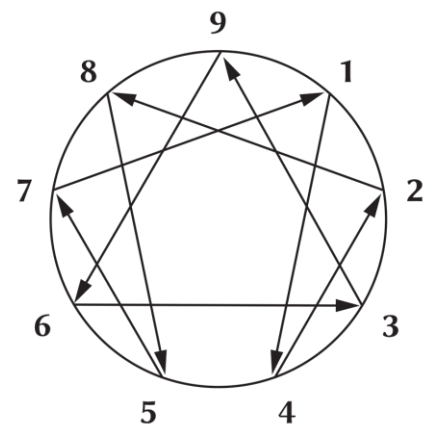
In their altered state the cave had a dream-like mythic quality too powerful, too deliberate to be ignored. The mythic ambiance within the cave transcended the normal range of thought and experience. It captured something inherent in the human spirit, something that reached into the shared spirit of the earth that gave birth to human nature, something beyond the duality of subject and object, something that rendered a deep melodious concentrated insight into the oneness of all consciousness. They were filled with a dizzying revelation of the mystery of being itself, and felt a haunting illumination unbound by time or mental categories, as if they were participants in a great mystery play. Finally their eyes met and they knew it was time to leave. When they came out they were standing in front of a flower-covered hillside. They retraced their steps across the glacier and rode the mules down the mountain trails.

THE SPINNING PATTERN

a short essay and poem on the enneagram by Anthony Blake

Quotes are from T. S. Eliot's Four Quartets

From 0 to 1 the material is gathered into a 'world' but without form. From 1 to 2, the world is divided and choices are made. Across the hazard of 3, the process comes into actualization.



From 4 to 5, the work is forged and meaning is made. Across the dramatic uncertainty of 5 a decision is made that offers the work up to greater intelligence.

From 7 to 8 the work is resolved into a form that can take its place in a greater whole. From 8 to 9 it is completed and realized.

In my end is my beginning.

From 1 to 4, courage. From 4 to 2, discrimination. From 2 to 8, vision. From 8 to 5, awakening. From 5 to 7, sacrifice. From 7 to 1, remembrance.

We must be still and still moving, into a deeper communion, into a deeper union.

From 0 to 3, **I am**. From 3 to 6, **I wish**. From 6 to 9, **I can**.

And all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.

Out of the dreaming time, a thought flickers into life.

Assuming myself, I stride forward.

Uncertain where to go, I find a breeze that carries me.

Deposited on a mountain slope, I begin to climb and reach a summit where the view makes me ecstatic.

But, darkness falls and I am left alone.

In the new dawn, I find myself on a verdant plain

The sun shafts through the clouds and guides me to a hill.

Standing there, I see the dream that brought me here. Anthony Blake

MEMBERS OF ONE BODY

J. G. Bennett

Theme talk and meeting Sherborne 1972

What do you understand by "We are members of one body"? This is an easy phrase and in some ways one can have an intellectual feeling there's one mankind or one life or one community, and we're all members of it, but how far can one see this as a reality?

When I was preparing this theme in myself, I really tried to put myself in the position of my own hand, and ask myself really what does it feel for a hand to be a member of this body. Supposing my hand could be conscious of itself, if it had a kind of awareness that I have of the whole of myself, how would it feel to be in that position of being a hand?

This is an exercise that enables one, perhaps, to see what we're after here, but we have to start from the assumption we take this literally, that we literally are all member of one body. Perhaps we're members of more than one body. My fingers are members of my hand and my hand is a member of this body as a whole. There are societies within societies, bodies within bodies. But what is the meaning of the word *membership* here, not just belonging to in the way one is a member of a club, one certainly doesn't mean that when we say *members of one body*.

Where does this become real? At what point does one actually feel the reality of that relationship? What is the real awareness and attitude of a member - let's take again the hand in relation to the body - and the body in relation to the hand?

How necessary my hand is to me. I must take care of it, that is from the side of my body. How even more necessary is my body to the hand, because it will die without it. Can I get any feeling at all that this means something? Can we possibly get this feeling we should die if we were dismembered? You can see what a gap there is between this sort of abstract notion of being members of one body and in fact being able to live in this way.

I will explain to you why I came to this theme, or how it came about, better to say. I was very much concerned with the question here of worship of feeling that something ought to come into it now that we've learned certain things, that we should set ourselves to be more consciously aware not only individually but collectively, of what it means to be related in a two way movement with the divine.

I could see that I couldn't come to speak about this unless we made some first step so that one would understand that we've got to reach something where it is not a matter of apartness, not a matter of being related to some separate entity other than us and at the same time it's not being related to ourselves. When I was really at my wits end, as I say it kept me really awake at night, to see how to come to this, it came to me only this morning. Then I went for a walk in order to get it clear for myself why it had come that way, that if you can see for yourself at least something of what it means to say, "members of one body," then we can approach something further without it's being so subjective and so artificial as it is, so often.

This is not true of the physical organism. It is in the nature of our physical body is to be separate, it is enclosed within its own skin, it lives within its own atmosphere, it maintains its independence in its environment. This is the state of incarnation. This is what it means to be embodied. It is a state of separateness which is the condition of our existence in this form.

But, this body is not the whole of us and there is within this body a finer body and a finer mode. There is where the difficulty begins to come for us. To accept that as we go in depth into ourselves, separateness gives way to connectiveness and connectiveness gives way to union and union gives way to one. This is the path towards union which we all profess to wish to follow. One must look at where it leads us to begin to face that it will not lead us to a state of spiritual separateness similar to our bodily separateness. The state of spiritual separateness or spiritual isolation from other beings is the state of the "hasnamuss" (one who falsely expresses wisdom so skillfully as to delude himself and others).

But have we faced it? Have we really looked at it, what it would mean to us to say, "We are members of one body?"

The question is, "how is one able to approach this otherwise than through thought?" We have this advantage of being here together and participating in a common undertaking. We have seen, from time to time, that it is possible to have a taste of something of this kind, that we can act in consort, not from some external constraint, but from an inner vision, from the acceptance of that vision.

There is a stronger phrase, stronger though really synonymous, that is, "the communion of Saints." The reason why it is stronger is that it makes it really clear that what is spoken about is not a membership of some physical or visible body, but that unity which comes when there are people that are transformed and have become Saints.

But, this doesn't mean that "members of one body" has meaning, is a true saying, only for those who are transformed. The difference is simply that those who are transformed are directly aware of it. The Zen master to whom the pupil says, "what a wonderful thing it is that we're all Buddha," responds, "it's still more wonderful that you don't even know it."

It is possible to see this in glimpses in small situations when people are working together. Not in the abstract, not as a great philosophical or theological revelation. But, to see if you can sometimes directly recognize in yourself what it means that people can work together in such a way that they actually know, at least for a time, that they are, "members of one body."

If you can see this there will be many things you will be able to tell us on Friday that may well help us all to go a step further in understanding this. It is one of those formulas where the formula itself becomes so often a screen that prevents you from seeing what it stands for. And in this case, this is a serious loss because we need to see what this stands for.

What follows are students' responses and Bennett's comments at the end of one week of self observation on this theme:

Students:

"Anytime we are all together, for example this afternoon when we were talking about Sherborne going on as a community, there were times when I could really feel in the room that we were all one and that we could go on that way."

"I was in an Art class. We were doing an exercise on the green color. We all split up and went off to try to paint the green, not to paint something, Even tho we weren't in the room together it still felt as if we were all working and seeing the same thing."

"There is a feeling of security in the Work. A feeling that I will be able to take with me when I leave."

"No one has to compete with each other, each has a role to play."

JGB: Yes this is one illustration of this saying, "we're all members of one body," that is the saying "one hand washes the other." It's quite a good thing to meditate on a simple saying of that sort. The two hands have very different functions. Usually in most people one is active and the other is passive, but they need one another when it comes to washing.

So far we've had several elements in the understanding of this theme. One element is the awareness of sharing experience, this we-are-all-in-the-same-boat awareness. Quite true when one of you said this and gave several instances of feeling this. This is one of the characteristics of being members of one body, that if one gets into the boat, the others have to also.

Another is the example you gave at the beginning which is of awareness of a beginning of group consciousness. We have had here together, a number of times, clear awareness of what group consciousness means. How different it is from a group emotion, or a crowd emotion. And, that is true. The other one comes from your last observation, but also what others said, and that is, "we need one another." The members of a body need one another.

Students:

"Walking to edge of front lawn feeling of wholeness with nature."

"The feeling of being close and one, when experiencing cold and hunger. Discomfort brings out this feeling."

"A feeling of wanting to take everything in."

JGB: What you've described is the opening of a door, but in order to have what's on the other side of the door, you have to do something. Several people have described this kind of experience, of seeing in the way nature works together some picture of the way people can be together, and even how we are together. But we have to learn how to go from this kind of vague and passing vision, which is quite a true vision, it's not made up, and you've spoken quite sincerely, you've not added

anything of your own to it, but there is something more. We have to learn how to bring out of such moments an act of contemplation, by which we can see.

It is not difficult for people to have the primary vision and that is not something that one sees just with one's eyes, there is an inner vision. An awareness that we are looking at things in a different way that something is being presented to us, that is evidence that there is something there, but all this corresponds to what I call "a door opening." We have to learn the art of going in through the door.

Student: "The fact that the Work is what makes this unity possible. It is quite an astonishing thing. Where would we be without it. Just a sense of journey."

JGB: Let me take this first thing that you've said about body and how the work gives the unity. There is a question that we should ask ourselves if you hear "members of one body," but whose body are we members of? What is this body of which we are members? If I speak about my body, I know what I mean in it. By that I mean this instrument through which I can manifest. Through which I can act in my environment. Through which my environment can act on me. If I were a disembodied spirit, might be talking away here, but very few of you would probably know it. (laughter)

So if I say that I am able to manifest to you because there is this body here, one could ask oneself that question, "what is able to manifest because there is a body of which we are members." And if we could answer that then we could say whose body it was. I suppose that the nearest thing that one could come to an answer to that is to say it is the body of the Work, and it is through that body that we and that Work are able to manifest.

Student: My exeat to the city was terrifying seeing hundreds of sleeping *machines*, unaware of themselves. I felt that was not the way we were meant to be. I looked all day to see one person who was awake. A long haired guy with a back pack. I couldn't believe how phony people are.

JGB: When people smile it is some comfort. What makes one suffer is to go into a big city and see people with so little happiness in them. So strained. Can you connect that with our theme?

Student: "I could see how completely opposite people have gone, yet I could feel we really are members of one body. We are members of one body."

JGB: You see this phrase says members of one body, it doesn't say parts of one's body. To be a member of something you have to be, first of all what you are. If my hand hadn't a definite form and function, recognizable as to what it is, a hand, it couldn't be a member of my body. And, in order for us to be members of one body, we have first of all to be ourselves and that brings us back to what we've been talking about in our classes about, "the cataclysm not according to law," and peoples loss of identity that they are not able to be themselves. You see it in one way or another. At the same time it is very hard to hold on to it, very hard to come to the point where you see as clearly as it's possible that it is quite true that nearly the whole of mankind has lost its identity.

And that therefore we, all of us, have to live an unnatural life dependent upon external supports. So, when these external supports are not immediately available then we just look like puppets with the strings loose. This you see at the moment and then afterwards forget it again.

Students:

"I feel it strongest in a movements class (group participation in *sacred* gymnastics to special music)."

"I couldn't enter into it except with my head. I know its true and I could feel it when everyone was laughing, in a special way, at someone crying, expressing their understanding and unity."

"Working in the garden when the shock of *stopping everything* caused me to remember myself.

"Recognizing the importance of all even though not present. Seems like we're an unformed body but have source of power that is extendable yet when it is concentrated there is more."

"Everyone becoming silent without reason while dining."

"In drama what was important was the play giving out energies to those that were playing."

"Saying goodbye to someone to whom attached, feeling connections would still be there despite distance and time."

"I have two questions. When you say we, who is we? Can you be in the work without knowing about it? There are no Africans or Negroes here, what is going to happen to them?"

JGB: One would think you hadn't been to any of the talks we've had recently. I said first of all that there are many ways and that I distinguished between what I called the way of objective morality where people don't know, they only know what is right and they try to do it. There is no need for more than that in order to be in the stream of life. But, there are some people who get bitten by a particular bug. That bug when it bites you, means that you become dissatisfied with the way things are going and you have a need which becomes urgent to do more and then there comes the possibility of what we call accelerated transformation and in that there are many, many possible paths to be followed but they have something in common that the person then knows that he's after something. He feels himself obliged to do more and extra. But it doesn't mean that only those people can belong to the stream of life. I surely made that as clear as I possibly could.

And, I gave an example of people that I'd seen in the Eastern Transval, a Bhusotto tribe, and in all my life's experience they are the happiest people I have ever seen, because they were able to be themselves without this identity having been stolen away by our culture. Compared with the people we see in our cities and so on, they were human beings, whereas all the people in our cities are just walking animals.

But when you talk about Africans, mind you, "the cataclysm not according to law" has descended on Africa in the course of one century after they had been for many, many centuries more or less free from it.

This way of talking as if the Work is something exclusive and special is so entirely contrary to everything that I've tried to say. The other side of the picture is that many people who believe that they are working and are in the work and they are getting somewhere are deceiving themselves, because they've made no attempt to be themselves, they've done it all by imitation. You should know better than to talk that kind of nonsense.

There's one simple kind of thing that hasn't been said—except just indirectly by Lynn—in that she has a new sense of security which replaces the sense of need for external security by the feeling that we are members of one body, even if one doesn't see what this means. I refer now to the simple truth that we need one another and that if we try to exist separately, isolating ourselves from other people, something very important, perhaps the most important thing in us, dies.

We need one another in every way, from the need that child has of its mother. There is between the child and its mother—one body even after they've separated and the child is born. There is a mother-child body because they need one another and they are members of one another. The whole process from birth to adult life is a process of liberating ourselves from the small body that begins with mother and child and then the body of the family to become members of a larger body. But as I said before about somebody's comment in order to be *that*, we have to be ourselves. It is only by being ourselves that we can make the contribution that is the reality of being members of one body.

The reality of it is not in having a shared experience, even of reading one another's thoughts but if it comes to the point that Cheryl's example who said it, of being in need of something and finding that somebody else without knowing how got it in their hands to give it to you, many of us have seen this kind of thing, that is being "members of one body."

Someone said something very right before he started talking nonsense, that when something exists between people it is not destroyed by space and time, by space and time separation, or by wearing away and decay. A living body is a self renewing body, a body that is able to be nourished, and above all a body in which all the members need one another and sustain one another.

This, "one hand washes another" is the picture of this structure of this mode of being; not like a material thing that is put together from the outside, but something has grown through this mutual completion. If you study embryology and study the way in which the child is formed, the fetus forms, you see the strange way in which the different systems come into being by taking over one another's work, until an organ is ready to take over its own work. You get a picture of what is meant by "members of one body."

Membership of one body is in doing, in the way we live. Only secondary is it in sharing of experience. One may say the sharing of experience is a way in which the one body is able to realize itself. But, what is primary is that each member become what is possible for itself, fulfilling its own meaning and purpose, becoming itself. By so doing the diversity of members are able to receive what they need, and respond to what is possible by "members of one body."

RAMBLING THOUGHTS ON ART

Anthony Blake

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Black Spot
Kandinsky 1921

What the greatest minds have ultimately sought from art is knowledge, a true or 'metaphysical' knowledge, capable of reaching beyond the external appearance of phenomena in order to lead us to their intimate essence. How can painting bring about this ultimate revelation? We already have an inkling that it is not by giving us something to see or by representing the ultimate essence of a thing to us; instead, we identify with it through the initiation ritual of art, to the extent that this ritual draws its own

possibility from and is tied to the structure of Being. What, then, is the nature of Being implied by painting and to which painting gives us access, making us contemporary with the Absolute and, in a certain sense, staking a claim to it?

Seeing the Invisible, Michel Henry, p. 3

I think of art as based on 'crafted perceptions'. There are perceptions we can have that are moving and inspiring, such as that of a sunset or birdsong or the face of a beloved, but it is when we attribute perceptions to human artifice that we speak of art. The various sources of artistic perception such as actual sights, pallets of colour, instruments of vision, experiences and stories and so on undergo a transformation. This has focus or direction, it is a distillation, bringing up to an ideal of perfection that, though it may echo what can come to us in life, has a permanency that makes it miraculous.

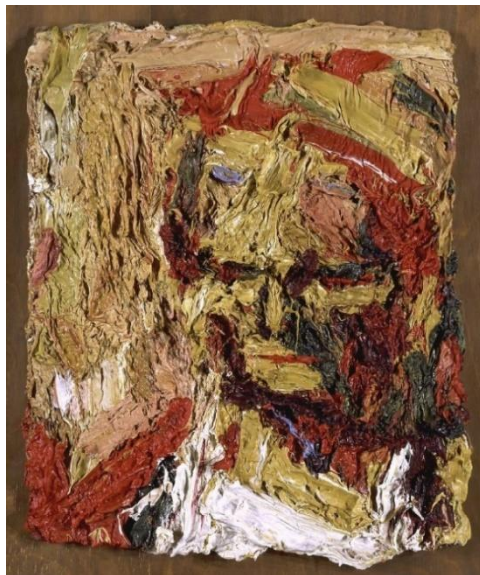
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?

O, none, unless this miracle have might,

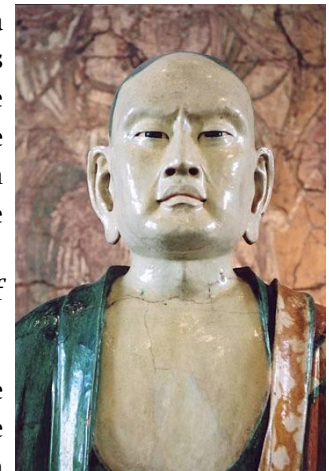
That in black ink my love may still shine bright

Shakespeare, *Sonnet 65*.

Encounter with art can open our eyes and ears, guide us to see and hear more even in what comes to us from the natural world. It educates us in what to see, how to hear, to see what we feel and sense what we think. Portraits by da Vinci, Rembrandt, Auerbach help us to see people in a deeper way.



We also show an example of a portrait from eastern culture. This is an *Arahat* or *Lohan* of Chinese Buddhism. Sadly, we did not have the time or scope to include eastern art in our essay, even though we were searching for an objectivity in art, or a rationale for the claim of eternity.



One obvious feature of the creative perception proper to art is that we are enabled to dwell upon a perception, to have a kind of experience life by itself does not bring. When we stand before a Van Gogh,

approaching near to it, moving our gaze across it, sensing the materials of which it is made it is exactly as if we are given a chance to look into perception itself. It is up to us what we see or hear but we are in conversation with an independent witness or seer. The artist is guardian of an inner perception and helps us to see. At the very least, the artist is saying, 'I have seen this. And how I have seen this is here in this work'. What is shown has the taste of eternity.



Many people are drawn to imagine special powers of telepathy and clairvoyance, but it is hard to see how any such gifts could ever surpass what an artist does. The artist has seized upon something, has discovered something, has made manifest something that entailed labour and sacrifice. Out of the limitations of time and space something has been brought into existence that binds the inner and outer worlds of human perception, that unites sensation and meaning.



The agelessness of art is nowhere better exemplified than in standing before examples of fashioned in the ice age 30,000 or more years ago. Some people have felt that in this palaeolithic art we witness the very birth of beauty itself.

It is permissible to say that art is always revelation of a kind; it has to bring into awareness something that changes the nature of awareness itself. There is reasonable theory that as painting in the Middle Ages changed, one of the things that appeared was that people were giving value to the natural landscape as something of significance in its own right. Paintings of the Madonna start with her in an enclosed room. Then the windows open and vistas can be seen through them. Eventually, she sits in an open field. In like spirit the Dutch school of Vermeer made the everyday domestic scene a sublime reality comparable to representations of miracles and saints. And the very act and materials of painting became worthy of note in the 20th century.

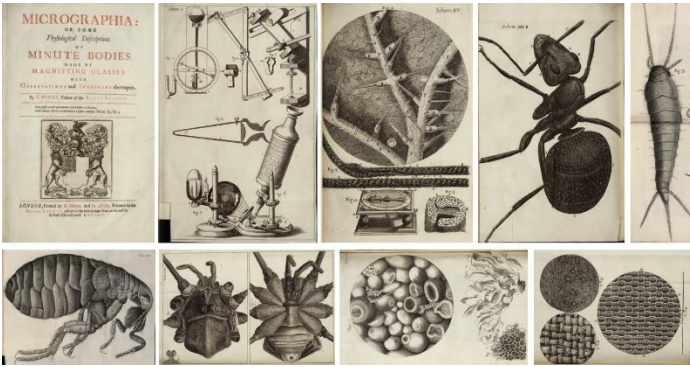


Jackson Pollock
Blue Poles

It is rewarding to consider different kinds of art, though categories are, one says, made to be broken. In relation to painting an interesting view is to distinguish the virtues of:

1. Verisimilitude of representation
2. Impressions of perception

3. Going beyond appearances



1 has always been a friend of science.

Hooke's *Micrographia* 1665



Leonardo study of water turbulence c. after 1508

2. has echoed the concerns of phenomenology.

3 has expressed metaphysical ideas such as those of Theosophy. Kandinsky, Mondrian and Klint are prime examples.



Claude Monet *Rouen Cathedral*

Concerning (1) science and art have continued to acknowledge each other, the extraction and depiction of visual data itself having a long history from Paleolithic times to the spellbinding Hilma auf Klint 'Painting the Unseen' images we have today of distant galaxies and even black holes. (2) of course, includes what is called 'Impressionism', which includes the attempt to capture what we *actually* see instead of what we presume to see.



Hilma auf Klint 'Painting the Unseen'

(2) focuses on perception itself, while (1) focuses on what we can see or be helped to see. Almost always there is some holding hands with science, that is, discovery about the world and ourselves. Concerning (3) we have the example of the brand of art rising round the beginning of the 20th century devoted to an understanding of the 'fourth dimension'.

The esoteric views of Gurdjieff have rather obscured matters especially in regard of his pronouncements on 'objective art'. He argued that the true artist knows exactly what he is doing to convey an impression and seems to equate such an impression with a kind of knowledge. He



Duchamp

makes no concession to the level of participation of the audience, asserting that such art would create the same impression in everyone – a strange and extravagant claim! People have looked for exemplifications of objective art in ancient times. Contrary to this I have followed the idea of universal understanding to consider something like the song *Summertime* (composed by Gershwin in the 30s) as most truly representative of objectivity, on the grounds that it has engendered no less than 25,000 different versions and is known throughout the world.

But one aspect of Gurdjieff's teachings is highly relevant and insightful. This concerns the remarkable conception of transformation that he gave based on the idea of three 'being foods': food and drink per se, air in all its subtleties and, most importantly, *impressions*. The three foods can undergo various stages of transformation, eventually to be made into finer or inner bodies. The third being food of impressions, however, can only develop if the individual concerned is *conscious* of them when he or she receives them. Sometimes Gurdjieff speaks in this context of that special condition he called *self remembering* saying that this is something that most people imagine they already have but in fact rarely do.

Linking this to our musings on art, it would seem that a genuine work would involve an awareness on the part of the artist of what awareness gives to the impression he seeks to convey. In the seeing of the painting, for example, would be the consciousness of how the scene is being seen and this, in its turn, has the presence of the viewer, the seer, contained therein.

Our view supposes that the total perception includes a viewer and that all that we are calling genuine art addresses the human possibilities of any viewer. In a word, they can be called 'objective' in the sense that they are *possible* for anyone.

Reflecting on the role of the viewer we can say it is a feature of art that spectators or listeners will be paying special attention in a way that is rarely found in everyday life. People will pause before a painting, stay quiet during a concert, repeat the experience many times, consult commentaries and guides. This is not to say that such disciplines are not to be found in relation to the natural world. We are thinking here of what is called the 'naturalist's trance' as practice for example by E. O. Wilson (*Biophilia*, when attention is carefully held within a frame before some biological unfolding). The aim is to come to see something that otherwise would not be seen. The inherent properties of this process are, as I have alluded to in my book on dialogue, akin to phenomenology which requires – in *epoche* – the suspension of habitual seeing so that new ones can emerge. The reference to phenomenology is to suggest that the seeing of a work of art can require the transition from a previously established kind of perception to a new one. Such a transition I would identify with what is called colloquially in the fourth way *waking up*. This notion revolves around the attitude that for the most part we are asleep and perceive like robots.

To see the perception offered in the work of art is to open a door towards seeing perception in new ways or having new perceptions. In the discourse of the fourth way the term 'shock' is sometimes used to signify some impulse brought about in us that challenges our conditioning and can enable the transition into a more creative kind of seeing. What could be the point of spending time on art otherwise? It can seem there is a barrier between us and the work of art that may or may not be breached or overcome, but through which we might 'tunnel' (to use term from quantum physics) to get within the work instead of vainly reacting to its impression upon us. John Bennett argued

that art brings us near the perception of eternity, to which we are ordinarily blind. William Blake would have agreed:

A Poet, a Painter, a Musician, an Architect; the man or woman who is not one of these is not a Christian. You must leave fathers and mothers and houses and lands if they stand in the way of Art. The Eternal Body of Man is the Imagination; that is God Himself, the Divine Body, [Hebrew] Jesus; we are His Members. It manifests itself in His Works of Art: In Eternity all is Vision!



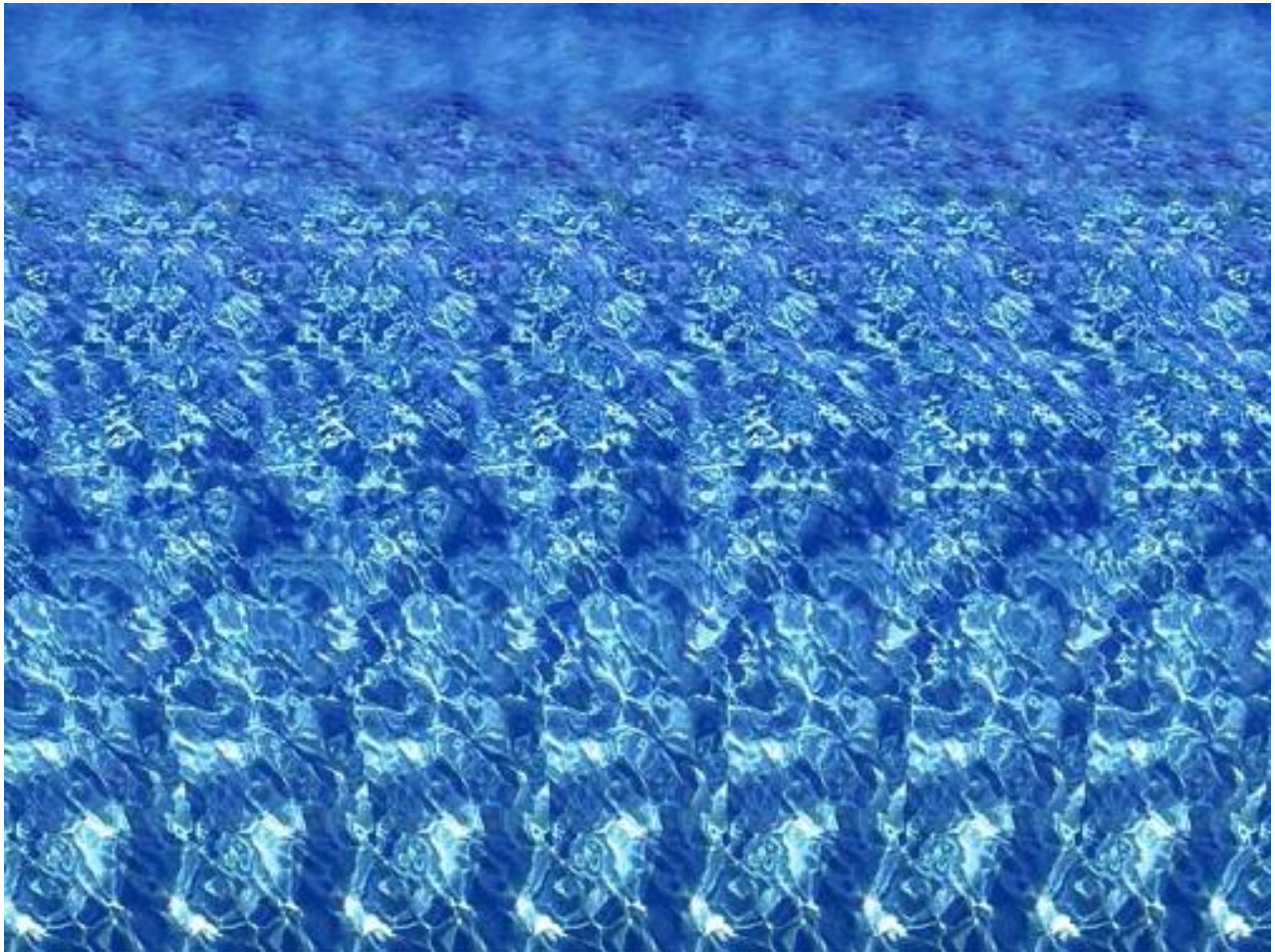
Bennett's own reflections often centered on the painting by Van Gogh of the *Bridge at Arles*. Rarely has an 'eternal moment in time' been so wonderfully captured. One feels like entering into the image for ever! One finds oneself standing by the river watching the women washing their clothes in eternity. The visible bridge is a symbol of the 'inner bridge' between worlds. It's as 'objective' as one can make it! It is revelation.

But, what of the *perceptions* I have spoken of in relation to art? Can there be significantly new perceptions? There is a complexity involved that has to do with the usual fixation of the idea of 'impressions' with *sense* impressions. Can we speak of emotional and intellectual impressions? We cannot help but invoke Gurdjieff again, in his consistent doctrine of the normative nature of man as composed of *three centers*. We probably think of art as pertaining to the emotional center and

science to the intellectual center. But it is also common to associate emotion with colour and intellect with form.

The most important feature of centers we want to speak of is that, the higher the *level* of energy or consciousness involved, the more the centers can 'understand each other' (note that we need to suspend the usual way of talking in which only our supposed 'I' is capable of understanding). In crude terms, this means that a sensation can become a feeling and a feeling a thought and then a thought a sensation and so on. But only in some kind of wholeness of experience. In this sense, Beethoven's claim that 'music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy' rings true. And we cannot understand anything without the physical senses.

References to wholeness can be vague. We can, perhaps, illustrate what it means by considering the contrast between an existential arrangement of elements in which they are variously separated and their essential unity in which they coincide. This is shown in texts and in particular in forms of writing such as 'ring composition' where there is an obvious linear order of things which we follow in what we call 'reading' and another order which is usually barely conscious but can be cultivated. The coming together of what were initially two independent and separate elements creates something new.

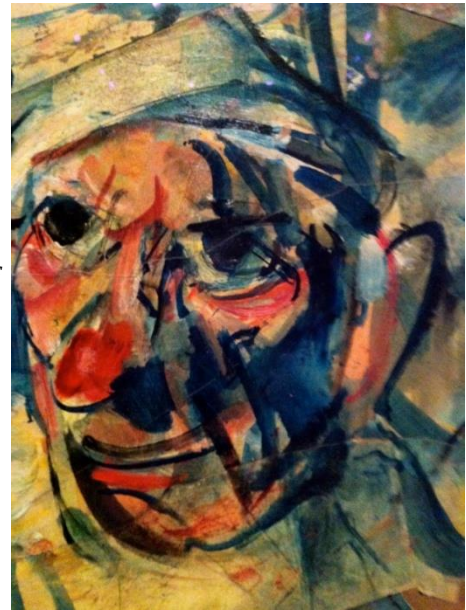


I think that this is excellently illustrated by what are called ‘auto-stereograms’. An example is shown above. If one stares at the image with a certain defocussing of the eyes a *three-dimensional* object appears. Somehow the left eye picks up one set of elements and the right eye another. When it first happens, it can be quite startling and people who cannot produce the effect sometimes accuse those who can of lying and artifice.

But can we find an example that properly belongs to the world of art. Yes, indeed. The physicist David Bohm provides us with a powerful anecdote.

I should perhaps [mention] here that my first reactions to modern art were almost entirely negative. However, in some respects, I have changed my mind. For example, with regard to Rouault, I first felt that his pictures were very discouraging and depressing. Gradually, I began to see them in a new light. In particular, last year in London, I saw a picture of his, *The Old Clown* ...

At first, it seemed to be rather a mixed up set of patches of colour. But gradually, it began to take shape. In particular two patches struck my eye, one in the face of the clown and another outside him, which seemed to complement the first. My eye began to move back and forth from one patch to the other, a pulsation was established, and suddenly it ceased, to give way to a remarkable new steady vision which I can best describe as seen in a new dimension. It was not so much that the clown became visible in three dimensions, this was true but only a minor point.



The major point is that there seemed to be a flow or a current in which the whole being of the clown poured outward to reveal itself, all his feelings, thoughts and emotions etc., and a counter-flow in which the outside (including the viewer) was drawn into him, to emerge again in the outward flow. It was a very striking experience for me, one that I shall always remember. Whether the artist intended the picture to be seen in this way, I don't know of course, I would be interested in knowing whether it struck anyone else in this way.

– David Bohm, *Bohm–Biederman Correspondence, Vol 1: Creativity and Science*. Edited by Paavo Pylkkanen

I once had chance to talk with him about this experience of his and he expressed the idea that he had understood space differently because of it. The painting, the artist and the viewer are a trinity of meaning making. The other trinity of sensation, feeling and thought concerns the nature of the experience. Colour, space and line enable the crafting of perceptions, as Kandinsky taught in such seminal works as *Point and Line to Plane*.

A little girl was in a drawing lesson. [The teacher] said, “What are you drawing?” And the girl said, “I’m drawing a picture of God.” And the teacher said, “But nobody knows what God looks like.” And the girl said, “They will in a minute.”

Sir Ken Robinson, “[How Schools Kill Creativity](#)”

Review of Denis Saurat, *Death and the Dreamer*

Carole Cusack: *Literature & Aesthetics*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 2019, pp. 176-177.

Death and the Dreamer, with drawings by Edward Bawden (Brush Creek, TN: DuVersity Publications, 2019 [1946]); pp. ii + 93; ISBN 978-1-9164833-2-3.

Denis Saurat (1890-1958) was an Anglo-French scholar and writer who jointly held the positions of Professor of French at Kings College, University of London and Head of the French Institute in London. He is remembered now as one of the first commentators on the teachings of G.I. Gurdjieff, though he was not himself a follower of the Fourth Way. One of Gurdjieff's pupils, the publisher C.S. Nott (1887-1978), became a friend of Saurat's after publishing *The Three Conventions: Metaphysical Dialogues, Principia Metaphysica, and Commentary* (1926).

Death and the Dreamer was originally published in 1946 in English; the French edition appeared the next year. The book is a collection of five short texts that Saurat assures the reader are true in every detail (p. ii). The themes are death, time, dreams, and the end of the world. The first text, Peasant Fears, takes place in 1936 in Toulouse, and involves conversations between a mother and her son one week after her husband (and his father) had died. Customs such as viewing the corpse are discussed alongside superstitions or beliefs about the supernatural (the dead being outside in the dark during the night, the desire of dead spouses to return to their beloved, living partners), along with information about life during World War II and practical matters like going to market. The reader is drawn along by Saurat's surreal tone and the unexpected shifts in the action. The story ends with some dreams of the characters, and the contemplation of life after death, whether by reincarnation or some other means. Saurat reminds the reader that 'Without suffering and death one learns nothing' (p. 27). The second text, The Heart's Nightmares, opens a year after the death of the father, in November 1937. The mother and son dream of the father injured, and in a second dream he appears to them cured. A little over a year later, during a visit by the son to the mother who has been unwell, they dream that although he is dead, the father is threatened by a stranger who wishes to kill him in dreams. In February 1939 the father's body is perceived to be flying atop of the church clock in the village, and the son takes his mother to London for medical care. The third text is The Life-Time of Christ in which Saurat meets seven individuals. He is told by an elderly canon, a theologian in northern France, that the world was created exactly nine months before the birth of Jesus Christ (p. 37). The point of this meditation seems to be that Christ cannot be placed in time, and the fact of his birth means that is the only real present. Saurat enigmatically states: Our knowledge of BC is only our knowledge of AD flung backwards into an absence of Christ (p. 41). Six further interlocutors, an official, an anti-clerical peasant (p. 4), an ivory seller, a professor, an old king and an enemy (p. 68) all tell him of strange events and experiences which connect them direct to the life of Christ. The fourth text, High Dreams, begins with the German army in a forest in 1942 and quickly shifts into what might be a UFO visitation, in which a man from the stone hut that is described is taken up by a purple beam. The second vignette is a young man judged by three women of varying degrees of sympathy and severity which ends in him finding a bride. The final two brief sections deal with children running up a staircase and insects. The final story is titled The Bomb and tells of a soldier injured by a bomb in the war, and his time in the Princess Beatrice hospital receiving treatment for his injuries. It is difficult to convey the impact of this strange, short book; the origin of the tales in dreams is clear from the sharp shifts of viewpoint and subject matter,

and the surreal images that Saurat paints in worlds. It should appeal to readers interested in modernist literature, near-death experiences and the interpretation of dreams, and the Gurdjieff tradition. This reprinting by DuVersity Publications* is thus very welcome. Carole M. Cusack
University of Sydney

*We are still negotiating with Amazon about distributing the book. But copies are available by writing to Anthony Blake

ON READING ALOUD AND RECORDING MR GURDJIEFF'S WRITINGS

An interview by Gregory Dominato of Anthony Blake on this subject can be accessed at IdiotPlayers (www.idiotplayers.org)

Most things happened mostly by momentum and my readings of the last two series of writings by Gurdjieff are probably no exception. Though, after completing the First Series, I was considering his next two books as possible candidates for my ministrations, amongst others such as Rene Daumal's *Mount Analogue*, it was a chance remark by someone thanking me for the Beelzebub readings that impelled me to make a start and see where it led me. Of course, there is the edict, as pronounced somewhere by Gurdjieff himself, "better not to start; but, if start, better finish". I had long been attracted to the idea of the Second Series, with its travelogues and portraits of "remarkable men" and I looked forward to it also as a relief from the intensive demands of sustaining the paragraph sentences of Beelzebub, which would tax any mortal, I feel, not least because the punctuation adds to the torture of reading it aloud. Here I must add that there are two main axes of challenge in reading Gurdjieff at his most expansive; one of them is simply finding ways to breathe as some sentence goes on perhaps forasmuch as a whole page, the punctuation not adequate enough for this, or I might say, only something an underwater swimmer with highly developed lungs could manage, the other being the challenge of meaning, even at the basic level of recognizing and conveying the interrelationships of the plethora of clauses Gurdjieff intertwines, as if making a tapestry. But I remember well, on reading my very first chapter "The Arousing of Thought" the feeling for a kind of musically-notated script behind the words, a pattern of its meaning, capable of guiding the reading.

The shift of struggle from *Beelzebub* to *Meetings* is appealing but Gurdjieff of course is still provocative and sets the reader up with the diatribe of a wise Persian directed against Western literature which turns out, in fact, to consist of stories about journalists in Azerbaijan and with some unlikely tale of superior journalists in ancient Babylon. *Meetings* also has a sting in its tail, in the infamous last chapter "The Material Question" which not only contains the amusing story about manufacturing corsets but also a harrowing account of Gurdjieff's financial disasters, placed in the context of human conflict and suffering in the region he was brought up in, the chapter ending with the collapse of his proposed business in antiques in New York because of the crash on Wall Street. Gurdjieff certainly knows how to work the emotions of the reader, in this being true to his expressed conviction that understanding without feeling is misunderstanding (let alone the automatic instinct I will get to later). I've felt myself moved, infuriated, depressed, excited in equal measures. Much of his portraiture of people is pious in the extreme, so that one has to weep over the account

of his father and his desire for his grave to be found and marked with a special inscription, or anonymously attending the Mass arranged for the soul of Dean Borsh.

As to the form of the writing, Gurdjieff himself tells the reader, in the chapter on professor Skridlov, that he is going to write in a certain way - of course it has to be an ancient and not a modern way - called "making images without words" a peculiar phrase not least because he goes on to paint word pictures of scenes on the river Amu Darya, and then resumes his usual flow. The clue, of course, is to thinking images, or "mentation by form" and some people such as Henderson have attested to the action of such thinking being awakened by reading Meetings in particular, but all of Gurdjieff's books offer images endowed with feeling that work "of themselves" in one's mind, but not the surface mind of linear attention but Gurdjieff's famous "subconsciousness" deeper down still but capable I suppose of informing us somehow.

I'm wanting now to speak of the action of reading aloud. Though I have done a lot of it in my time, in these series of recordings I have discovered new intensities of feeling-sensing, there at the very heart of the action. Most people will have experienced the special quality of actually hearing their own voice in the moment of speaking and, in many groups, it has been adopted as an exercise in self observation and the like; usually, such an exercise is useful for only a limited time because there is strong automatically regulating mechanisms for reducing what in physics is called "free energy" which in the nomenclature of spiritually minded people might be called "higher states". I do not know whether Gurdjieff of himself has dealt specifically with this mechanism anywhere in his writings or recorded talks, but I can attest to its pernicious sway and how it serves to close down the special or higher to re-establish dull normality. In this case, namely in the reading aloud from Meetings, I felt nearly overcome by the intensity of the "self reverberating" experience of my own voice not least because it was clear to me that "I", the person thinking and attending, was not the same as the "speaker" and I had no idea where my voice was coming from. As this experience was arising in me, I had still to maintain the execution of the task and every mental association ensuing from the intense experience in my own speaking would inevitably result in errors which had then to be gone over and corrected. It came to me, over just this phenomena, that I was experiencing just what is in essence the core of "doing movements" - that is the Gurdjieff movements which enjoin us to combine several distinct actions and amplify a kind of self awareness that is almost the opposite to the usual kind of self reaction. At the same time, I became aware of my breathing and, that, strangely, the demands being exerted on me were resulting in an improvement and deepening of my breathing, such that my total sense of what is called "well-being" or "health" seemed to indicate improvement. This of course resonated with the comments made by Gurdjieff on how he managed to restore his physical health; so that I had the experience of reading about something that was, in some way, happening to me right then and there. It is important to emphasize that in the core of all these various experiencing is was a sense that "nobody was doing it" and thus I came face-to-face with the absolute enigma of doing. I also had at the back of my mind Idries Shah's acerbic remark, "one is not interested in the experiences of a pencil getting sharpened, only that the pencil is sharp and can do the job".

What did my various interesting experiences amount to besides giving me material for what I suppose, Gurdjieff would call "logical being confrontation"-and please notice that all such confrontations and corresponding mentation start exclusively only by the impact of an inescapable actually experienced contradiction - which has in part resulted in these notes? Well, one general point is that this input of sound, sense, breath, etc in the pursuit of meaning brought home the

essential role of the automatic instinctive component of understanding; simply put, unless it is in the workings of the body it does not count for anything. In a way deeper than conscience, the seemingly mechanical, bodily, chemical, etc functioning of my organism is integral to my understanding. As I am wont often to say: the contemporary prescription of a divide between software, roughly "mental", and hardware, roughly "physical", is false. It is a typical case of how a convenient divide or twofold classification can obscure what is most important for us and needs to be addressed in terms of three-foldness.

Enough of that "mere theory" as it were, which will tend to be either ignored or believed in, neither of which is desirable. The Third Series proved even more harrowing than the first two. What in God's name is it about? The very first words "I am" thunder off the page and I remembered that over the years I, actually, in some way foresaw and anticipated the time when I would have the effrontery to pronounce these words of Gurdjieff, necessarily then acting as if they were my own. The whole opening scene is dramatic: Gurdjieff lying wounded and near death in some oasis near the Gobi Desert involved in a moment of intense self reflection that, it appears through its recurrence later on, to question the very essence of his teaching as he had then formulated it, namely that work on oneself necessarily entailed "intentional suffering". The Prologue is a masterwork of confession in the classical sense of revealing the workings and question of "I". Gurdjieff's abandonment of the method of intentional suffering and taking up using the results of unintentional suffering, in his case on account of his wife and mother both with terminal illnesses, marked an extraordinary volte face and I think only Bennett has consistently drawn attention to Gurdjieff's moves away from "artificial" to "natural" ways of working.

What follows is extraordinary in the sense that, as Gurdjieff himself says most readers would just not grasp the point of what he is doing in describing the absurdities of his encounters with Orage's group in New York; which seems to exhibit simply a basic dialectical technique for energizing such a group - get them set up, dismiss them, re-admit them - but he manages to warn about the dangers of prolonged self observation, producing as he says "candidates for lunatic asylum" and creates a message of a total teaching with no less than 24 divisions only in which can there be a balanced development. He also introduces two inner exercises, the only time such things were described by him in his writings.

But I'm straying into the content of the books, which is not my business, since I'm here concerned with my experience of reading Gurdjieff's books rather than daring to presume I can interpret what they "really mean". One thing that sticks in my mind is the relentless contrast between Gurdjieff's claims for his powers - for example telepathy, curing illness, making money, etc - on the one hand and facing disasters of all kinds on the other. Every advance he makes is annihilated by some adversity, including of course the terrible thing of having to watch his beloved wife died because he, Gurdjieff, at one-time capable of curing her, could no longer because of his depleted state due to his motorcar accident.

In very vivid way, Gurdjieff summed up the whole thing in the episode of the cayenne pepper when, driven to hysterics by Orage's philosophizing he says he inadvertently dumped the whole pot of cayenne pepper into the dish he was preparing for himself and the people with him in his apartment, which fiery dish they were then forced to eat, lacking any other food due to the absence of funds at that point. This, of course, reminds one of the episode of the Transcaucasian Kurd

forcing himself to eat the red peppers he has spent his last kopeks on that occurs in the first chapter of Beelzebub.

This bizarre and even farcical image is balanced by the sweetly mysterious portrait of his mother walking towards him accompanied by two peacocks, a dog and a cat which, he says, always came with her on her walks; and the scene of his mother and wife leaning towards each other behind him, as he sat working on the bench, and whispering together in their made-up language. One just has to feel them, and not interpret them. But they draw attention to the form of mentation Gurdjieff seems to be advocating and I have been trying to see what has been going on me as a result of the images I have read into myself.

It seems so subjective to talk about; because I have to bring into the picture as it were particular impressions that belong to me. Just this afternoon, weeks after making the recordings, I was sat in my garden and picking up on the feeling that, in spite of his endless boasts of superhuman toil, powers and sufferings he speaks human. I mean that he is telling my story and yours. He had been sitting in his garden worrying about how to pay the mortgage just as I have done and was doing. Then it came over me that I was him, lying wounded in 'purgatory' between the hell of the desert and the heaven of the oasis, though there was neither of these physically present; it was that the very air carried the moment of experience, the air having the form of experience that was the same: in the Third Series, does he not cry out, "What is this sameness? Why sameness?"

What next then for this upstart reader of Gurdjieff's "sacred texts"? Well, there remains the enigma of "the Herald of Coming Good". In the Third Series he urges people not to read it and says he tried to withdraw and destroy every copy, yet in another place he refers to it concerning the *Tzvarnoharno* or the special energy that is akin, so I believe, to *havareno* in Pahlawi (according to John Bennett), *daimon* in Greek and *genius* in Latin; though, typically, inverted in usage by G to mean that which people project onto 'remarkable men'. So I am tempted, since I have gone the "whole hog", to include the postage, in this case "Herald" and commit the alchemical transgression of tangling with the "recalcitrant fourth". At least, it is even shorter than "Life is Real"!

Review of "Gurdjieff: Making a New World"

Bennett, John G. *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*. 1992 ed., Bennett Books, 1992.

Peter Bassett

Gurdjieff: Making a New World is a fascinating book about G.I. Gurdjieff's *Search Phase* of his life driven by his efforts to answer his burning *Question*, and his *Transmission* to the West of information and methods aimed at enabling mankind to awaken to the reality of the cosmic processes it lives within and the accompanying responsibilities that it must discharge as part of its function within the cosmic system. Bennett brings his own depth of search and emerging understanding to bear on what Gurdjieff transmitted.

As a young man, the core *Question* that Gurdjieff asked was as follows: "***What is the sense and significance of life on the earth in general and of human life in particular?***". This is a very fundamental question that is very rarely asked in such clear terms. An answer to the question, "what do I exist for?" is asked by many people at some time. Much less frequently however, do people ask what life on earth is for. Gurdjieff, starting at a very young age, carried out extensive searches in a quest for answers to these questions which led him to multiple sources of ancient knowledge.

Bennett argues that Gurdjieff discovered, or perhaps more accurately was permitted to discover, an ancient brotherhood called the Sarmoun, who possessed very important knowledge which had a profound bearing on the future of humanity. This brotherhood was concerned with long time periods in the life of humanity and periodically injected ideas and energy into it to help mankind evolve through critical periods. Bennett argues that Gurdjieff acted as a vehicle for the transmission of ideas and methods in forms that could become accessible to mankind to help it to navigate through the current period – one marked by the decay of the old world and its value systems and, as the title *Making a New World* suggests, to participate in creating a new world and set of values.

Bennett concludes that the Sarmoun Brotherhood preserved a form of Zoroastrianism that, for thousands of years, was lost by mainstream religions. This belief system taught that life on earth and mankind is endowed with intelligence and created to cooperate with higher intelligences in a struggle of creation to realize higher purpose. Man is a helper in this larger cosmic process. This belief system was lost to view by humanity from religious and philosophical beliefs, doctrines, and discussions, and with it, the question of why life exists on earth.

Bennett argues that the Sarmoun Brotherhood further preserved an understanding of the laws that operate in the cosmos and that Gurdjieff translated these ideas and transmitted them in his book, *Beelzebub's Tales to his Grandson*. Gurdjieff asserts that “in all probability, there exists in the world some law of the reciprocal maintenance of everything existing. Obviously, our lives serve also for maintaining something great or small in the world.” This idea which Gurdjieff calls *the Trogoautoegocrat* (I eat to hold myself together) is the doctrine of reciprocal maintenance, meaning, that the universe is structured in such a way that every class of existences or beings produces energies or substances that are required for maintaining the existence of other classes. Each *specific essence class* feeds on the class below and is food for the class above. This scheme is very well described in the **Diagram of Everything Living** which Bennett elaborates on in an Annex of his book. The larger purpose of the scheme of essence classes lies in how the structure of essence classes results in a *whole system* that hangs together through the intricate relationships that it is built upon. Man is not the purpose of the whole system. Man occupies a specific niche and needs to fulfill the work required by that niche. Man's purpose relative to the whole, is to contribute specific energies required by the solar system for balance and equilibrium.

I have been reading *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*, not as a “look back” 100 years to what Gurdjieff was doing a century ago but rather as a potential source of crucial information for the present day. I have asked myself whether the ideas Gurdjieff transmitted, and which Bennett further translates in ways that make them accessible to the western mind, are relevant and maybe critical to our world today in 2020. This is especially so as it relates to the planetary ecological crisis being caused by the nature of man's current relationship with the biosphere. I have found that the scheme described in the *Diagram of Everything Living* is a fascinating potential representation for a cosmic ecology. It is leading me towards a shift in perception whereby I am beginning to feel myself as a part of a larger cosmic system, instead of as an isolated individual looking at it from the outside. I believe this kind of shift in perspective is possibly the cusp of a new value system where we feel a responsibility for the living biosphere and sense ourselves as “within” the film of life that covers this planet.

I have been impacted by Bennett's articulation of a new value system that Gurdjieff has transmitted. It presents an understanding of how the world works and explores and defines our role in it. I find that these key ideas present a larger view of *ecology* that extends beyond our planet

to the whole cosmos. Our purpose is connected with much larger purposes. If we can reposition ourselves within the much larger system in which we live and understand our own role, we can potentially fulfill our purpose and even earn a permanent place in the cosmos. For those who feel a burning need to answer the question, “what are we here for?” and even, “why is the earth here?”, this book is a very rewarding read. The title of this book tells it all. We are faced with an enormous task, namely, to “make a new world”.

In various passages of the book, Bennett describes how mankind has become lost and how important it is that mankind embark on the journey to realize its larger purpose:

[...] we are now passing through a critical transition that demands that this knowledge be made available to those who can use it, as an obligation that overrides personal considerations. The doctrine “God created man for himself and the world for man” though specifically Christian, is common ground for all religions. It has been taken into atheistic materialism by omitting the references to God and thereby losing even the implication that man is responsible to God for what he does with “his world”. This doctrine, harmless in its origin, has become the bane of mankind. It is the chief cause of man’s irresponsible attitude toward nature and his selfish insistence upon his own welfare to the exclusion of all else.

Bennett also says:

Gurdjieff was impelled by a sense of urgency; far in advance of his generation, **he recognized that humanity would play the key part, for better or for worse, in determining the future balance of the biosphere.**

In several passages in Beelzebub’s Tales, Gurdjieff makes it clear that **care for one’s remote descendants is one of the obligations of a man who has attained “objective reason”.**

I have found that, in our present time, we are sorely lacking a sense of responsibility for the living biosphere and for the future of humanity and yet these values are demanded of us for our own survival and for the wellbeing of the biosphere. Our collective destruction of the biosphere violates the laws that govern our destiny and guide us in the fulfillment of our larger purpose. When we do it, we pay. We need to understand the larger system we exist within and what it demands of us. And we need to respond to those demands. Gurdjieff resolved to introduce mankind to a new way of thinking and to a renewed understanding of the cosmic purpose at a time when it is paramount for our survival.

Bennett postulates that Gurdjieff was involved in the:

injection into the world, of new ideas that are at first accepted by only small groups but they gradually begin to spread partly by the force of the ideas themselves and partly by the strength conveyed by the transformation of the people who are responsible for spreading them. The transition from a small esoteric group to a wider adoption is made possible **because there is a certain kind of energy at work.** This energy is required to be concentrated. Gurdjieff understood this very well. It is inherent in his approach to the problem of human history that there is an invisible action of higher energies that makes the work of evolution possible. Gurdjieff in Beelzebub’s Tales says that, the role of man on earth is to be an apparatus for the

transformation of energy, that certain energies that man has to produce are required for cosmic purposes and that those who understand how these energies are produced are the ones who truly fulfill the purpose of human life.

A core understanding that has emerged within me from this book, is the dawning of the concept that we are small but significant participants in enormous cosmic processes and that man is made for the world, not the other way around. If we can grasp that we actually serve a *cosmic function* in the world by contributing specific energies, and that our purpose here relates to this contribution, then there is hope that we might actually see the reality of what the *sense and significance of life on earth is and in particular of the life of man*.

I will leave you with a final quotation from Bennett's *Gurdjieff: Making a New World*. This profound work has stirred within me a drive to deepen my understanding of the ideas Gurdjieff has transmitted through Bennett, and has strengthened my belief that mankind is capable of realizing its potential and contributing positively to the making of a new world.

Gurdjieff shows us how and why our personal well-being no less than our prospect of achieving "real-being" depends on the way we serve all life on earth. Gurdjieff tells us clearly that our personal salvation, the welfare of mankind and the evolution of the earth and solar system are intimately linked together in the universal transformation upon which the maintenance of the world depends. The key to understanding human life is given by the doctrine of reciprocal maintenance. Man belongs to the highest class of living beings, but he is non-existent in the world of universal essences until he liberates himself from the conditioning of his animal existence. The only way to redeem the situation is by a total realignment of our attitude toward nature. Most of all it calls for a fundamental change in values that will consist in putting nature first and man second. This is a bitter medicine to swallow but unless we take it, we will perish. There is a little time left but not much.

UNFOLDMENT OF MEANING IN STORY

Anthony Blake

Content and Structure

There are various modalities of story making such as 'giving account', 'providing impressions', 'history' and many others including the recognized forms of myth and biography. This is also to imply that the *basic elements* making up the *content* of story can be of various kinds – such as events, memories, impressions, images and so on. In some measure, the elements of any given type of story are similar to each other in kind so that they can easily fit together. Though not impossible, it is rare that a novel for example will include mathematics or diagrams, though they can be 'wrapped up' in the narrative so that they fit.

Another aspect of story is its *structure*. Part of this structure is sequence, because all forms of story involve a succession of elements, one after another. Although story must have some kind of sequence, it need not follow any simplistic chronology. Indeed, the *less factual* it is, the less likely it will be that it is structured according to any obvious time-frame. Devices such as 'life-maps' tend, on the other hand, to anchor the story in actual events tied to a chronological sequence. This is highly developed in *genosociograms* where a family tree is diagrammed and attributes of the family members and critical dates are annotated.

Persons

Implicit in the idea of story is that it is the story of a person, persons or community. This aspect is of foremost importance; it entails that enfolded in the story is an agent who is involved in what the story means. A story discloses a person; more exactly, a person who is telling a story about person(s) (who might be himself). In the event, there is a basic triad of persons, as shown here.

This aspect of a structure of persons as subjective nodes of meaning is significant for understanding that the *elements* of story are subjective and experiential in their meaning. Of course, we do have such things as ‘the story of the oceans’ or even ‘the story of the universe’ but it is interesting to note how much these become ‘the story of how we came to find out the story of . . .’. An extreme version of this was explored by the radically reductionist logical positivists, who went so far as to insist that all science must consist of actual measurements, but also include their point of origin, such as ‘this measurement made by X on this date and filed in cabinet Q’. This convoluted and strange approach is not so bizarre as it seems because it reflects the essential fact that every element in a story arises in someone’s experience as a version of some ‘event’, which moment of experience is itself an event. This is a subtle and universal pattern that should not be reduced to any formula and the triad we will show here is only shown by way of illustration.

This has implications for the *structure* of story. Besides the aspect of chronological sequence there is the bearing of the dynamic relationship of Moment, Memory and Meaning (we have replaced the term ‘event’ shown in the diagram with that of ‘moment’ for ease of remembrance). The meaning connection is independent of the chronological one. In *writing story* there is a thinking process that unfolds and articulates memories through a *structuring agency* of making meaning. These abstract concepts can be further explained in the following terms.

First, there are the elements of the story, the building blocks, the nodes, the episodes, etc. They must be of similar nature to each other because then they can be combined. Whatever the nature of these elements, we describe them as *molecules of meaning* to invoke the sense that they are in some degree complete in themselves while being capable of combining together to form ‘larger’ molecules with some further or extended or deeper meaning.

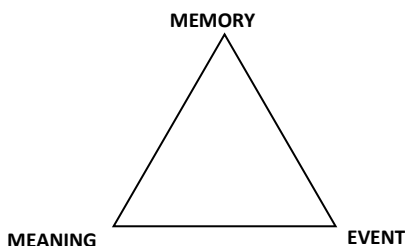
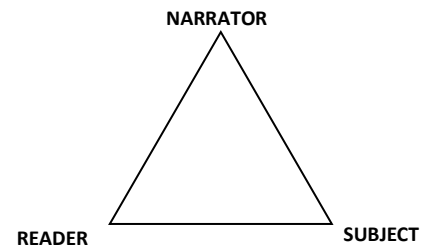
Second, there must be some way of proceeding from one molecule of meaning to another one. This is a link of association that *generates a series* of molecules.

Third, there must be some way of linking molecules together that is independent of their generated sequence. This is a *linkage of reflection*. This kind of linkage concerns the meanings of the story in terms of the structures larger than a connection of two molecules.

Fourth, there can be a *form of the whole*. Such serves as an ideal in which the molecules of meaning, their sequence and their reflective structure are brought into a unified completion.

Indeed, it is as a means or ‘reason’ of completion that the form of the whole has greatest effect.

Such a structure is evident in a traditional narrative where there would be, respectively, incidents (molecules), stories (associative linkages), chapters (reflection of meaning) and the book as a whole. However, it is also in the details of any story making.



Linkages of Meaningful Memory

The first three aspects described map onto the 3M triad of moment, memory and meaning in the following way:

Moment – some particular molecule of meaning

Memory – some other molecule evoked by the first

Meaning – some integrative linkage of these two molecules with others

An important example of the form of the whole is that of making a transformation from causality to teleology, or from contingency to destiny, and so on in a similar vein, including the mysterious transformation of space into time.

To exemplify the process, we take the molecules of meaning to involve three aspects: some actual event or ‘moment’ that is remembered; the feeling evoked by this memory, and the image it forms in the reflective mind. The remembered moment links the molecule to a specific of space and time. The image and feeling evoke another molecule. The three aspects map into the basic triad in this way:

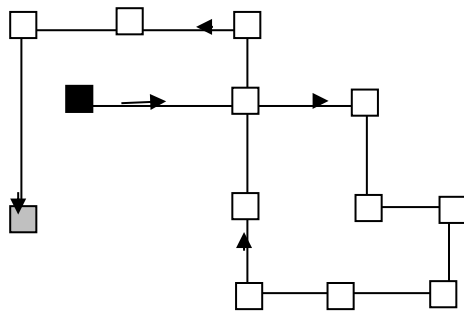
Moment – actual occasion

Memory – feeling associated with it

Meaning – image or interpretation of the remembered moment

The three elements come to connect together and *communicate* with each other, so that there can be a transformation of the order suggested by the concept of a ‘form of the whole’.

A significant feature of the evolution of meaning in the process – through such an ‘integrative linkage’ – is the way in which the linearity of the generative associative succession of molecules of meaning, which is tending to dissipate as some ‘drunkards walk’ (as it is known in physics) of random movement, becomes organized through recognizing a recurrence of thematic material. In abstract formal terms, this amounts to the line of molecules starting out as a succession in linear time but then becoming shaped into cycles or loops of meaning. A ‘loop’ is symbolic of reflection, or a literal returning back on itself of the flow of meaning.



In this diagram of a hypothetical case, the starting molecule is shown as a black square and the molecule last reached as a grey square. The initial line of association comes to ‘change direction’ in the various ways shown. This is a reflective process when reviewing how the molecules might be arranged, taking place after several molecules have been generated. The diagram suggests that in this case there were three or four such episodes of reflection. The fact that the initial and final molecules *do not* touch or coincide in the meaning space can then become an assertion or question pointing to some mode of ultimate resolution.

Example

In a particular case, the person first believed that the interval to be filled required not more memories but new resolves and future events; but then he saw that there *were* memories that made the whole complete and filled the gap. The first of these restored his faith in being helped, while the second reminded him of a task he had set himself in regard of his children that he had forgotten also and which now appeared as the key to his future.

The first molecule has been of a dream in which the person had been brought into a fellowship with two others, but then had to pick the phone to return back somewhere and depart. This had been felt as painful, as having to go back into isolation and pain. Thus, the sequence that unfolded was both a going back into painful memories and also a search for a way to return to the sense of fellowship and meaning.

The next 'molecule of story' was: "Is it to go back to consciousness? In the nursery school, when the teacher had her head chopped off and she was really dead, though it was just a nursery rhyme. I never recovered (my head?)" The question in the first sentence came from a feeling of despair described in the previous (starting) molecule which described a dream. The main three aspects are these:

- The event in the nursery school *moment*
- The feelings attached to this of death and loss *memory*
- The reflective interpretation as describing loss of self *meaning*

It is also important to say that the feelings acted as a bridge linking the event years ago with the present moment of remembrance and reflection. This molecule led to another: "My heart is broken. It is also this glade or opening in the woods, where sunlight came, illuminating, in the afternoon of parting and coming back, just the taste and sense of the impermanence of love." The three aspects are

- Seeing the illumination in the wood *moment*
- The taste of loss in beauty *memory*
- The impermanence of love *meaning*

The three aspects merge into each other but not entirely. The succeeding molecules generated along lines of remembering loss and fear, coming to a sequence involving kinds of meditation or reflective experience. It culminated in a remembrance of a vision of 'terrible beauty' in an awareness of saints and angels as something terribly inexorable. There the sequence stopped, leaving everything unresolved. It was on renewing the exercise that remembrance came of two other felt events which were, in fact, indications of hope and purpose.

Various patterns of arrangement were tried, similar to the one shown in the diagram earlier. The guiding feelings were of meaningful sequence but also of *changing direction*, which could be felt as 'having a new idea' or contacting a different vein of meaning. The person wanted to bring himself back to the starting point and felt that this was being resisted.

Every 'line' of succession can be compared to a 'self' and then the emergence of other directions as another 'self' whether of 'other' or of 'oneself' may not be decided. Hence the making of story concerning oneself is a practice of integration.

Inner Work

The actual physical practice of arranging the cards (the molecules) on a surface was felt to be important. The interpretation here is that *if* the molecules are truly meaningful for the person *then*

the arrangement of them is really working on how they are linked in the psyche. It is *inner work* and can show itself later when the person can see himself differently, or have a better idea of what to do.

This structural configuration elicits a meaning for a two-dimensional space, but it does not have to be explained or even conceptually known and identified at all. It can simply be felt as an integral part of the process. There will be the sense of association in time, linked with linearity and then, becoming apparent more and more as more and more molecules of meaning are generated and arranged, a sense of some other nature of organization coming into play or being revealed.

Structures similar to the ones discussed for story making are also to be found in exercises displaying the structure of arguments. The word 'argument' comes from the root *arg* meaning to shine and the essential sense of the word is *to make clear*. The structural process of story described here is a way of *revelation* by means of bringing out and putting together what has been forgotten and fragmented. In this sense, it is a *re-membering* of one's wholeness. Revealing the structure of argument is much the same thing because it is in the relations between the parts and the whole that reason is exercised.

Significance of the Molecule for Structure

The potential for structure derives from the structure of content, in the sense that it is from the *inner* structure of the molecules of moment-memory-meaning that all the linkages derive. Unless the inner structure has a certain degree of complexity the form of the story will be simply linear. It is, of course, the case that stories *are usually presented in simple linear order*. But the experiments in literature conducted during the twentieth century, from Joyce's novels to William Burroughs 'cut-ups' for example, have shown other ways. William Pensinger has argued that these experiments have really been about *reading*. This relates to our first triad of subjects or agents, in which the reader is seen as integral to the story. Even if the form of the story appears a linear narrative, it may require a non-linear 'reading' in reflection to understand it.

The molecules cited in the example exhibit a high degree of internal structure and the analysis of them in terms of the 3-M format is only an approximation. The aspect of 'meaning' that is tied in with reflection is obviously the key to making new kinds of connection with other molecules, which can be represented to some degree by deviations from the linear order. A key feature of reflection, however implicit, is the question: What was I seeking for in my starting point? Thus, one has to go back to the beginning through some path that makes sense of the beginning. The *Four Quartets* by T. S. Eliot is an expression of this theme. This can be given various general titles such as 'salvation' since there is often a sense of the beginning as expressing a 'fallen' state or crisis. But no one explicit form of this kind may be brought to consciousness and it may remain implicit.

The implicit is always richer in content than the explicit. Producing some visual structure of the kind that has been described does not reduce what is implicit but deepens the connection with it. The external forms of connection between the molecules is an expression of the internal forms of connection within each one of them. In this way, elements of experience *illuminate and interpret each other*. There is then no need to bring to bear some external form of interpretation. If one can see the meaning of any *one* element of experience, one can understand *all* elements of experience. However, in order to do this, one needs to explore *many* elements or molecules in relation to each other.

The character of the molecules thus assumes great significance, because they need to be somehow complete in themselves, rich enough to be a whole experience in their own right.

Hyperstructure

This new jargon term has arisen from the technique of *hypertext* as used in the Internet. In hypertext, items are linked out of sequence to other items, some in the same text and others in different texts. Hyperstructure also takes into account that the items may be very complex in their own right and even be expressed in different media (thus there is also the term 'hypermedia'). It is clear that the generative process that has been described is a form of hyperstructure. Its particular value is that it can be done using only the simplest of tools and without a computer. It has the additional value of making the *whole structure* somehow visible at a glance, which is rarely the case in hypertext.

Some explorations of hyperstructure have turned to *musical form* as a suitable form of expression. This emphasizes the supra-linearity of the approach, since it allows for 'harmonies' of molecules occurring together at the same time. Needless to say, this is far from easy to implement.

The generative approach to the unfoldment of meaning very much relies on establishing the kind of rich, inwardly structured and multi-agent type of molecule that has been discussed. It is because of this character that the approach can be made simple to effect. It is in the intimate relation of internal and external structure that meaning evolves.

The visual form that has been adopted provides nothing more than the *traces* of a movement of understanding and does not itself in any way 'explain' what it is. The 'reader' in question has been the story teller himself. To render the work accessible to another person is another matter. The discussion of the three-fold content of a molecule – as in the example – constitutes a partial solution to this problem. It amounts to a *commentary* on the visible content. This is where hyperstructure could make a contribution, by carrying such a commentary. However, it would remain the case that, given opportunity for the story teller to meet face to face with other people, he could vocally express a commentary on his work and even engage in interaction with the others. And, the very *form* that would support his expression would give his listeners a powerful aid to understanding. This combination of visual form with auditory commentary then exemplifies hypermedia at a basic level.

Summary - Global and Local

This system of unfolding meaning combines both *local* and *global* meanings, so that the one informs the other as the process is followed. Each MM has its own local character – what it means in itself and in its immediate 'local' connections. At the same time, we have awareness of 'global' properties – the shape of the MMs as a whole or at least partial whole. We can move attention back and forth between individual MMs, their immediate connections, parts of the whole nexus and the whole nexus. It is this interplay that renders the system a hyperstructure.

In basic LVT, these various levels are kept separate. The unfoldment of meaning in which the four levels are mutually influential is a more natural though more subtle process.

Though the method has not been tried out in a group situation, it is possible to hazard the idea that it might prove most effective in generating *new kinds* of insight. Different members of a group would have different approaches and focus on different levels, making for a creative synergy.

The way in which MMs form into shapes relates to *personal construct theory* because it will tend to follow the rules of associating two MMs together in contrast with a third, such as when a change of direction is made in the chain of associations.

ADDENDA

One: The Triangulation of Calasso

In his book *Literature and the Gods*, Robert Calasso has a description of the three-fold nature of writing that is completely in accordance with our *triangle of subjects*.

“Literature is never the product of a single subject. There are always at least three actors: the hand that writes, the voice that speaks, the god who watches over and compels. Not that they look very different: all three are young; all have thick, snaky hair. They might easily be taken for three manifestations of the same person. But that is hardly the point. What matters is the division into three self-sufficient beings. We could call them the I, the Self, and the Divine. A continuous process of triangulation is at work between them. Every sentence, every form, is a variation within that force field. Hence the ambiguity of literature: because its point of view is incessantly shifting between these three extremes, without warning us, and sometimes without warning the author.”

Two: Relevance to Collage Method

In the tissue paper collage technique (see *The Reading of Collage*) a person generates a series of collage images that he then ‘reads’ for significance to his concerns: he may write a story or poem, give the collages names and interpretations, and so on. He then presents this to the group. In this case, the visible form is reduced to just the series of collages as they were generated. The kind of non-linear linkages that have been discussed here are not shown, but develop out of the interpretation.

Some experiments have been done to allow for a re-arrangement of collages out of linear sequence as a means of displaying better the meaning they have for the person who made them. However, this requires having a means of display that enables this, such as a large surface on which collages can be fixed and moved in relation to each other. It also requires that the person has some sense of such a medium of expression.

It is important to note that putting the molecules – in this case collages – into a structure can be an integral part of *articulating* what they mean. It is simply the case that flexible visual display is not widely known or used. Many people find difficulty in handling explicit structure because they are not used to reflecting in this way. Making explicit structure is an art form in its own right and develops with practice.

Three: An Example

The sequence of molecules was:

1. Mes Ombres.

He picked up the phone to go back

Reflections on Abraham and The Matrix

2. Is it to go back to consciousness?

In the nursery school, when the teacher had her head chopped off and she was really dead, though it was just a nursery rhyme.

I never recovered (my head?)

3. My heart is broken.

It is also this glade or opening in the woods, where sunlight came, illuminating, in the afternoon of parting and coming back.

Just the taste and sense of the impermanence of love.

[Here a deviation of the line]

4. Now, I see the old man dragging his way across the yard carrying cans of film.

The film sending me into depression for days.

A black comedy.

5. And I had that time when spending a day or two as a student by myself writing, when I uttered out that 'Poison has to take away the poisons'

6. If I try to remember, it is the war. The boy comes out of the blitzed buildings. There was a panic I never felt save for the sound of air raid sirens, the drone of aircraft, deadly, across the sky.

7. I now see a figure, a child left by the wayside as people rush around. This is my arrested development. My self pity.

Someone take the child home.

[some new direction perhaps starting here]

8. The Moon, the alien sphere, shining, so visible and ergo so 'near', while I waited at the bus stop in Bristol.

9. I am in this monastery, smelling the polish. The bells go for Matins. The cold pre-dawn air is full of something.

[some convergence of lines appears about here]

10. It was the terror of Bach, the detached music of the plant, of the machinery of humanity, that drew beads of fear.

[a new direction begins]

11. 'Street meditation' – walking the streets of Bristol at night in thought and consciousness.

12. That walk in Bristol when I saw the saints and angels after conversation with Bohm.

That one has to obey.

[after an interval, came back to the exercise, after writing on reflection:

So, one creates 'artificial memories' by special methods, groupings, occasions to fill the gaps not filled by life – nothing yet given to do this of *coming across a place of another reality*

[But in fact, another memory emerged]

13. The wise ones. I saw them as true educators of the young and then everything would be changed.

[This was thought to be the end, but another memory came, but which had the character of being a decision made in the past for the future]

14. I must write that account of what happened to me for my children, so that they will have a chance to know.

It must be emphasized that the reflective 'reading' of the sequences of molecules led to a generation of further ones and that, hence, the process more and more fed back on itself to reach a culmination.

Four: Higher Intelligence

The term 'higher intelligence' means the aspect of mind that is characterized by *all of everything*: an all-inclusive state of mentation such that everything is seen in relation to everything, all at once. This extreme formulation can be qualified by a relativistic approach, since some modes are more inclusive than others, just as there are many degrees or kinds of 'infinity'. It is then problematic

how such a mind can interface with what we experience in daily life, living from moment to moment, which can be rightly seen as a state of fragmentation.

Two main ideas stand out and can be related to the discussion of unfolding meaning.

The first concerns 'molecules of meaning' seen as moments. These are characterized by a high degree of specificity. They are concrete occasions, but they also *enfold* in themselves many layers of meaning and so constitute *compressions* of information, such as to include information about information, for example. The idea can be illustrated by reference to reports made by novelists of having such moments from which they can derive whole books. A case in point is that J. K. Rawlings who says that seeing a young boy in a railway station gave her the complete basis for the whole sequence of seven books on the character Harry Potter.

The constitution of these moments of meaning involves the whole of ourselves and fuses thought, feeling and sensation. They have location in space-time and are thoroughly embodied (this will include the moment at which they appear in or to the mind). More, they seem to contain inner structure that can act as a *generator of meaning*. This inner structure is *intensive* because it is all 'rolled up' within the moment – rather, perhaps, as some physicists imagine that seven hidden dimensions are rolled up into particles. They can therefore be seen as the true paradigms at a deeper level than 'systems'; the latter being more spread out extensively into different parts. The character of depth of inner intensive structure and all-embracingness of inclusion that has here been associated with the character of molecules of meaning and the way they engage with each other actually constitutes all that is essential and real about systematics. The moments serve as active ingredients of mind in producing an organizing effect over diverse regions of knowledge and experience, even to the point of touching upon and/or encompassing *everything* that is of meaning.

This idea will not make sense if it is imagined that we experience in a simply linear fashion elements or fragments one after another, extensively. The difference could be pointed to by forming an analogy with the idea in religions of 'divine interventions' in human history. These special events or moments appear – at least to some – to alter the whole course of history and reveal human existence in a new light. That they are actual occasions is most strongly brought out in Christianity with its belief in Incarnation. The argument here is that a similar reality may occur for all of us during the course of our lives.

In some respects, such moments can be seen as the *only real experiences we ever have* and that the rest is so much repetition. Gurdjieff spoke of being economical with our experiences and this makes much sense when we consider 'experiences' to be of this special kind – something concrete, unique and yet all-encompassing. They could be considered as 'sacred' to us.

The notion of an economics of experience leads to the second idea: it is possible to *work* at enabling these experiences to *come together* for mutual enhancement and revelation. This idea arises because of the relativism of such experiences. Just 'how many' real experiences we have is most uncertain. There is *forgetting*. It is important then to consider making a present moment in which we work at bringing possible real experiences together. This has been exemplified in the discussion.

When work is done in this way, the discipline is to bring the moments together in a very active form of memory such that *the experiences are able to communicate with each other*. This means that it is most important to eschew any effort to categorize the moments or explain their connections. Categorization and connection are just those things that are most often done and it is not so easy to suspend them.

The sense that the moments *are already really* fitting together, blending with each other, informing each other and so on is a hint of higher intelligence. Gurdjieff's proposition was that

there were always working in us *higher centers* but for the most part this was divorced from our waking consciousness. The kind of exercise discussed in this paper is a way of aligning this waking consciousness with the workings of the higher centers, or of coming into communication with higher intelligence. Behind this notion is the belief that the higher intelligence – whether considered to be stemming from other agencies than ourselves or from within ourselves - is *trying to communicate with us*. Therefore, what is in effect is an act of co-operation or *synergy*.

As outlined, the method suggested calls upon us to sense and feel in ways that draw on the subconscious mind and intellectual concepts are only one small aspect of this integrative action. This produces a transformation of thinking so that it becomes something very different from that which we have become accustomed to. Though everything is connected to everything, this does not entail a ‘mindless’ amalgamation but a new kind of mind.

The process described is based in fact on what might be taking place all of itself. This already occurring process may be characterized as a kind of synchronicity, since what stands out is the way in which various impacts can coincide to fuse into a new or deeper vision of reality. Many people have had the experience of some theme of meaning emerging in some present moment such that different apparently unrelated molecules of meaning appear as ‘the same message’ in *their own present moment*. It is just as if they are following some inner logic of their own and we are simply serving to register some of their implications in our own terms. An article read, something someone says, an event on the news, an unbidden memory (often appearing mostly as a feeling) and many other sorts of things can provide the moments that carry with them an inner coherence and affinity that far exceeds anything we can think up.

The concept of hyperstructure is only a crude attempt to acknowledge the infinite depth of this integrative action. Bennett spoke of the principle of *integration without rejection* to try and alert us to this deep-seated phenomena. If we try to follow the principle in terms of what we know it rapidly comes to some impasse, because we are trying to constrain experience. Unless there are the authentic kinds of molecules of meaning or moments we are building castles on sand.

As was pointed out, in the type of exercise described here concerning hyperstructure what appears to be an exercise ‘just with words’ can become an actual work of integration that deals with our very substance. To a large extent, for most people, thinking has become divorced from concrete reality and the transition back into some more real function can appear as strange. It is truly strange in linking to higher intelligence, which will not conform to any conditioned view of what is meaningful.

***Harmonic Gymnastics and Somatics: A Genealogy of Ideas* by Kelly Mullan**

An extract from the Introduction

The physical culture movement of the 19th century has been connected to the birth of somatics (Johnson 1994a, 1995). While there were many physical culture systems in Europe and America, my focus here will be on one specific method, Harmonic Gymnastics, and its relationship to somatics. Our contemporary understanding of the word “gymnast” makes it difficult to comprehend “gymnastics” as it was known in the past. Within the physical culture movement, the word “gymnastics,” in general, was used for *any exercise, approach, or system of personal or physical cultivation*. Harmonic Gymnastics is best defined as “self-cultivation” of the whole being (body, mind, spirit) through a variety of experiential practices, and not through acrobatics.

Brief note on *Monkey Mind Robot Body* by Debbie Elliott

Jesai Jayhmes

Lucy and Jane are best friends whose science and research interests are at opposite ends of the spectrum. Lucy is absorbed in AI and robotics while Jane is at home in the jungle working with animals. Their relationship and ensuing adventures together take unexpected turns as we awaken with them in a future world where stark choices exist. You can upload your soul into a robot body and become immortal or choose to remain in the circle of organic life in your biological life form. No plot spoiler here. Read the book. It raises fundamental questions about consciousness, the soul, life, death and immortality. D J Elliott keeps us thoroughly engaged throughout. I'm looking forward to the movie.

THE SIX COSMIC TRIADS

Glyphs by Leslie Schwing

