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Some major characters connected with Mr Bennett
and the Fourth Way

Back row left to right: Naomi and Paul Anderson.
Suleyman Dede, Madam Popoff, Pierre Elliott
Front: Edith Wallace, Vivien Elliott

DIVERSITY AND UNITY

Anthony Blake

Philosophy may not neglect the multifariousness of the world — the fairies dance, and Christ is nailed to the cross.

Nothing can be omitted, experience drunk and experience sober, experience sleeping and experience waking, experience drowsy and experience wide-awake, experience self-conscious and experience self-forgetful, experience intellectual and experience physical, experience religious and experience sceptical, experience anxious and

experience care-free, experience anticipatory and experience retrospective, experience happy and experience grieving, experience dominated by emotion and experience under self-restraint, experience in the light and experience in the dark, experience normal and experience abnormal. [Whitehead, *Process and Reality*]

Our organization's name *DuVersity* implies *diversity*, the U in the name then signifying *unity*. It was originally derived from Bennett's description of what he called the *monad* - basic wholeness - as *diversity in unity and unity in diversity*. Incidentally, the letters DU in the name makes reference to his magnum opus *The Dramatic Universe*.

Diversity is most commonly recognised these days as a reference implying multicultural society where no racial, sexual or cultural group is favoured above any other. But it has very wide and fundamental meanings, including how people's brains process reality. This makes us look behind culture to a deeper level. It has come into play, for example, in the theory that there are different kinds of intelligence and not simply higher or lower levels of the same thing. Although now widely criticised, it shares in the idea based on neurophysiology of different ways of processing reality, such as in the idea that autistic people are not inferior in relation to normal people but can be taken to be superior in certain contexts (as Oliver Sachs has documented in many of his books).

Bearing Difference

Diversity has affinities with difference. Though we can designate a difference in neutral terms, it will tend to be overlaid by a judgement of value. If we describe a difference, the description will usually tend to resonate with what is considered good or bad, better or worse. This obviously applies in the realm of sexual politics where any difference between men and women has, it seems, to be made a judgement of their relative value. It is much the case that women had been accorded an inferior place in society throughout history, because they were *placed* in an inferior position where they are *treated as inferior*. The belief that women are in some way inferior persisted into the 19th century and even recent times. In the 17th century it was even widely believed that women, like animals, had no souls. Such an attitude permeated monotheistic religions in which the belief was that women should be dependent on men in religious matters, so priests had to be men, assuming they were nearer to God!. God was seen in the image of males. It is only in recent times and particularly in western society, that the mainstream population is shaking free of such attitudes. Those changes were first emergent in revolutionary spiritual groups such as that of the Shakers who considered God to be both male and female.

The tendency to bring a judgement of value into pairings such as man and woman is deeply rooted and can even be detected in such supposedly neutral pairings as hot and cold. One of the terms will be taken to be natural or good and the other the converse. Thus for example cold is a negation, the absence of heat just as poor is treated as a negation of rich - poor often treated as morally lacking because they are poor. There appears to be a background feeling which rejects the idea of poverty as being natural for people and believes it to be the result of some moral deficit!

The prevalence of emotional overtones of good and bad is almost universal. It is not too crude to summarise it as assuming that, in a difference, one of the paired terms must be bad, leading in the extreme to hatred and violence. And difference, in the extreme attitude, is itself taken as bad. Even the number two was often to mean, from ancient times, something sick or evil because it broke the unity of God, the One.

In some studies of indigenous groups dealing with conflicts and issues in their communities it has been observed that they engage in extensive dialogue of a type that gradually *eliminates* their sense of difference: it can be said that in traditional societies differences are diffused to support mutual conformity. Such conformity can assist acting in unison but it is, of course, concomitant with intensifying difference with other groups, the *others*. The exceptional degree of cooperation evidenced in human groupings is correlated with hatred and fear towards any other grouping.

Dissolving away differences serves stability but blocks creativity.

It appears that only in fairly recent times has the idea of difference *as a virtue* been propagated amongst people. Even though there is still widespread antagonism toward immigrants, evidence supports the view that societies are energised for innovation by encountering and embracing foreign influences, or elements of other cultures. This can go very deep and some people embrace contradiction as a key to creativity. The Russian system of innovation TRIZ calls upon us to entertain and deepen the contradictions involved in technological systems as something beyond old ideas of problem-solving, because it looks into the arising of problems in the first place. The system even explicitly avoids starting from any evident 'problem' and encourages people to look into the undefined wholeness of a situation (which would be the *monad* or one term system in Bennett's systematics).

In simple terms, difference produces tension, and emotion, a challenge that calls upon us to resolve in some way. But it would be careless to treat resolution in terms of simply making the difference go away! We can cite Gregory Bateson who defined information as 'a difference that makes a difference'. We learn from difference and hardly at all from conformity. But, you can only learn from difference if we are *able to bear it*. It seems that many people cannot bear difference in the sense that the experience of it is externalised and turned into hate. Bearing contradictory emotions was considered by Madame Ouspensky as a measure of being. It was a feature of human existence that was particularly noted in the fourth way, in counterpart to the words of TS Eliot: "humankind cannot bear too much reality".

Buffers

It is widely known that Gurdjieff taught that we are not singular entities but a changing multitude. When he announced this, it was revolutionary for most people but is now a common assumption in mainstream psychology. It is even taken to be obvious these days though people still cling to the idea of having a permanent self!

Years ago, in my teens, I realised how much error was due to forms of language such as the personal pronouns: I, You, We and so on. I now would still claim that having the singular form for 'I' makes us think it is singular. 'We' as a plural gives a totally different feel.

Gurdjieff, in particular, spoke of the way in which different identities or 'I's' are actually kept apart from each other in us, such that we can act and think in contradictory ways. He called the barriers between identities 'buffers', this word signifying how they prevent any contact between them that might cause us pain. He said that if buffers break down we can suffer greatly. At the same time, it is necessary that they are removed in order for us to transform and become whole. This, he associated with *conscience*, equating it with *feeling all that one feel all at once*.

“Conscience is a state in which a man feels all at once everything that he in general feels, or can feel. And as everyone has within him thousands of contradictory feelings which vary from a deeply hidden realization of his own nothingness and fears of all kinds to the most stupid kind of self-conceit, self-confidence, self-satisfaction, and self-praise, to feel all this together would not only be painful but literally unbearable.

“If a man whose entire inner world is composed of contradictions were suddenly to feel all these contradictions simultaneously within himself, if he were to feel all at once that he loves everything he hates and hates everything he loves, that he lies when he tells the truth and that he tells the truth when he lies; and if he could feel the shame and horror of it all, this would be the state which is called ‘conscience.’ A man cannot live in this state; he must either destroy contradictions or destroy conscience. He cannot destroy conscience, but if he cannot destroy it he can put it to sleep, that is, he can separate by impenetrable barriers one feeling of self from another, never see them together, never feel their incompatibility, the absurdity of one existing alongside another.

“But fortunately for man, that is, for his peace and for his sleep, this state of conscience is very rare. From early childhood ‘buffers’ begin to grow and strengthen in him, taking from him the possibility of seeing his inner contradictions and therefore, for him, there is no danger whatever of a sudden awakening. Awakening is possible only for those who seek it and want it, for those who are ready to struggle with themselves and work on themselves for a very long time and very persistently in order to attain it. For this it is necessary to destroy ‘buffers,’ that is, to go out to meet all those inner sufferings which are connected with the sensations of contradictions. Moreover the destruction of ‘buffers’ in itself requires very long work and a man must agree to this work realizing that the result of his work will be every possible discomfort and suffering from the awakening of his conscience.

“But conscience is the fire which alone can fuse all the powders in the glass retort which was mentioned before and create the unity which a man lacks in that state in which he begins to study himself.

Meaning Space

Excursion into the significant difference could range even wider but we need to address some of the basic properties of our experience of difference. Speaking of emotion we make it personal, but there is an intellectual, logical and impersonal face to it stemming from the *possible* structures of meaning that derive from difference. It is not all the same thing. It is a complex job to unravel the possibilities entailed by difference and most of our efforts have been just to scratch the surface of them.

The sociologist of philosophy Randall Collins made a study of various periods of history in which diverse views came into play – for example, around the time of the Buddha in India - *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*. He concluded that the similarities and differences between various emergent strands conspired to create a structure usually of several alternatives which ‘filled’ the available ‘meaning space’. A reviewer of the book summarised its basic thesis as follows:

Among the main elements of the 'theory of intellectual change' of the subtitle of the book is the 'law of small numbers' which operates in a 'limited attention space'. This law stipulates that there can never be just one preeminent philosophical position which dominates the attention space - all positions need to define themselves in relation to rivals. On the other hand, there can rarely be more than six positions which are serious contenders, and this is because only a few positions can remain visible as they are carried over generations by means of making alliances. A further element of the theory are thus the intellectual networks, horizontal alliances between schools of thought and vertical ones between teachers and pupils which stretch over generations. The waxing and waning popularity of factions within these networks is only partly explained, according to Collins, by the material conditions of their organizational bases which have traditionally been invoked in the sociology of knowledge. Instead, they are mainly determined by the internal structural conditions of the field: ideas only get to the centre of the attention space by lining themselves up alongside dominant positions and pushing them further - or by opposing dominant positions in opportune conditions.

The description evokes a vista of a sort of basic systematics - meaning deriving from small number combinations of independent elements. It is important to recognise the reality of there being a *limited* space of meaning. It is this limitation that enables structure.

Is it possible to embrace 'all possibilities'?

One of Bennett's slogans was *integration without rejection*. On the surface, this could be taken as a pious fantasy: who can integrate all possible attitudes to government for example; don't we in the end want to reject obscene or insane views? Some of us will have experienced being in a group when someone felt to be 'obnoxious' appears. Do we throw him or her out, or do we tolerate them no matter how much we suffer for it?

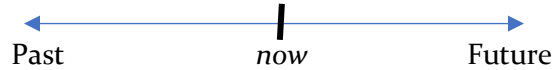
Representation

Just as an illustration here I deviate into making a representation of the striving to create unity in difference. It is important to emphasise that this is just a representation that we are making. As such it draws on media, such as graphics or poetry. There can be no pure representation! This means that every representation involves a context that stems from the nature of the representation itself and is subject to its limitations and constraints. But, representation does not only distort or adorn; it also has the possibility of revealing new things. Putting an idea into different media can help us see different aspects of the idea. I am raising here the possibility that we do not know what an idea is and it is only when the idea is represented that we can *see* it at all. But, let us look at the example I have created.

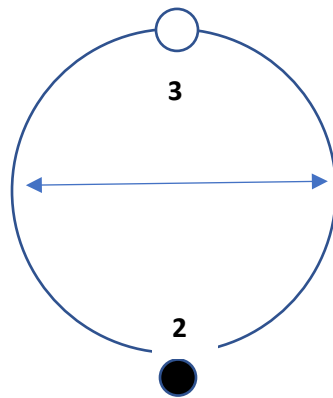
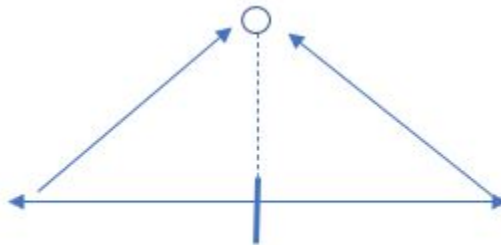


It is based on looking at the difference in terms of the scale spectrum or continuum of more or less. There is a primitive picture of the continuum defined by two extremes with a line between them. We can think of an obvious physical example such as hot and cold or of a more intriguing case such as past and future. We can have the thought: where in this continuum do we pass from one extreme or pole to the other? Remember that we are representing the difference as a line. Once we have a line in view, though, we can entertain the idea of a midpoint of passing from one side to the other. In the case of time, we know there is a common notion of *now* where, supposedly, the

past turns into the future. If you represent time in this way it is usually then concluded that the now has no thickness, or is a kind of nothing. A feature of the picture we have is that there appears to be nothing between the one side and the other. This emphasises the kind of interpretation of difference sometimes expressed as either/or, in the strong sense that there is no other alternative.



We have been looking at the line as representing a difference, concentrating on the disjunction or divide between the two poles. But what if we put our attention on their unity? Cultures abound with concepts of the unity of opposites. Here's a sketch of what we are talking about.



This we then, in the next diagram, expand further to bring the two points of separation on the one hand and unity on the other into a common overall picture. We have labelled the two points at the top and the bottom (of a circle) in a special way. The bottom point is called 2 so that it may represent the divide of the two.* The top one is labelled 3 because it represents the unity of the two poles. Now we can make radical jumps of interpretation. The bottom point can be taken to represent the utter difference between God and creation, fundamental in monotheistic theology. Then, of course, the top point is the Trinity: its nature expressed as $3 = 1$.

A sophisticated form of understanding the 'midpoint' can be found in the book *The Janus Point* by Julian Barbour.

At the end of Chapter 1 I said that two kinds of Janus points can exist. By establishing a comparison with the examples of the first kind considered up to now, we now know what those of the second kind look like. The difference is substantial. Janus has undergone a triple change. He is no longer at an arbitrary point in shape space; he now stands on the summit of the shape potential. That's the most significant change.

Next, he is not a back-to-back god looking out in opposite directions onto a single solution that passes continuously through him. In the book up to now his locus on any solution was special, but it was not a terminus for either half-solution; they passed smoothly and without ambiguity through him. Now there are whole families of half-solutions on each side, splaying out from each of the eigendirections; that's the second change. The third change has just been stated: mathematical research has failed to find any way in which a solution curve that reaches Janus in a total collision from one side can be continued in a uniquely determined way through to his other side. The only mathematically well-defined continuation that exists joins the two halves of each eigendirection. The Newtonian trajectories that peel off from the two faces of Janus cannot be linked together. However, time-reversal symmetry is still respected for the initial directions and for the two sets of infinitely many half-solutions. As Boltzmann required, the two directions of time have 'equal rights', though not in the way he imagined. Janus is a god of beginnings, not just of one on each side but of many.

In more formal terms the diagram we have evolved echoes that of what is called *Ring Composition* a way of expressing complex meaning used for thousands of years but only really known to a minority. But we need to focus on the essence or method implicit in becoming conscious of what happens with representation.

One. Represent the given idea in some form.

Two. Read or interpret the picture.

Three. Alter the representation accordingly.

Four. Read the picture again.

The method has correspondence with an approach in psychoanalytical theory in which the discourse between therapist and client is fostered by:

1. free association – one thing leads to another - *writing*
2. amplification – forms known in culture give further meaning - *reading*

These comments on representation and method are made to emphasise two things:

1. There are *many possibilities* for understanding an idea (which brings us back to the principle of diversity) and these are developed by having various ways of representation. Whereas, in common practice there is little or no awareness of what is possible, only fixations of belief.

2. Emotions are involved because they factor in to what degree we are *able* to bring together in one view divergent and conflicting views.

These two concerns lead us to express the following ideas: finding out many possible meanings of an idea, and having a way to achieve these various possibilities in oneself or in a group. Such ideas are oriented towards change. It may well be that the issue of change concerns a major social intellectual difference.

Multimentalism

We turn to a remarkable man of the early 20th century, Wilfred Trotter. He was at one time the most renowned surgeon in Britain, but also wrote and lectured on what he called 'herd instinct'

(*Instincts of the Herd in Peace and War*, 1916). He was one of the first psychologists to recognise the autonomous character of large group behaviour and the importance of understanding it. One of his major ideas was that the general population could be divided into two kinds of mentality: *resistives* who were fixed in their view of things and *sensitives* who are open to new influences and information and willing to change.

In general, the resistives are in the majority. They tend to be politically right wing but not exclusively. The sensitives can vary widely in their affiliations. An interesting comparison can be made between Trotter's ideas and those of Gurdjieff. In his magnum opus, *Beelzebub's Tales*, his character Beelzebub talks about two kinds of reason or mentality: the reason of knowing, and the reason of understanding.

"In order that this difference should stand out more clearly, I shall again take as an example the ordinary Reason of your favorites.

"If one makes an analogy between this as they themselves call it 'conscious Reason' of theirs which is completely fixed in contemporary beings, and that Reason of three-brained beings in general who breed on other planets of our Great Megalocosmos, then the former which they have in them might be called the 'Reason-of-knowing' and the latter the 'Reason-of-understanding.'

"The conscious Reason-of-understanding, which in general it is proper for three-brained beings to have, is a 'something' which blends with their common presence, and therefore information of every kind perceived with this Reason becomes forever their inseparable part.

"The information perceived with this Reason, or results obtained thanks to being-contemplation of the totality of formerly perceived information – however a being himself may change and whatever changes may proceed in the spheres around him – will be forever a part of his essence.

"And as for that Reason which for most of your contemporary favorites has become habitual and which I called the Reason-of-knowing, every kind of new impression perceived through this Reason, and likewise every kind of intentionally or simply automatically obtained result from formerly perceived impressions is only a temporary part of the being, and might result in them exclusively only in certain surrounding circumstances, and on the definite condition that the information which constitutes all his foundation and entirety should without fail be from time to time so to say 'freshened' or 'repeated'; otherwise these formerly perceived impressions change of themselves, or even entirely, so to say, 'evaporate' out of the common presence of the three-brained being.

"Although in respect of the Sacred Triamazikamno the process of the arising of both kinds of being-Reason flows equally, yet the fulfilling factors for the actualization of its three separate holy forces are different. Namely, for the formation of the Reason-of-knowing the formerly perceived contradictory impressions crystallized in any one of the three-localizations which three-brained beings have, serve as the affirming and denying factors and the new impressions proceeding from without serve in this case as the third factor.

"And for the Reason-of-understanding these factors are as follows: the first, that is the 'sacred-affirming,' is the newly perceived impressions of any localization which has at the given moment what is called 'the-center-of-gravity-functioning'; the second or 'sacred-denying' is the corresponding data present in another of his localizations; and the third factor is what is called the 'being-Autokolizikners,' or as they otherwise call it 'Hoodazbabognari,' the sense of which name signifies, 'the results of the persevering actualizing of the striving towards the manifestation of one's own individuality.' [BT p. 1166 chapter 46 'Form and Sequence']

The passage illuminates differences between resistives and sensitives. In other places, Gurdjieff points out that people have to be free of their *internal* slavery in order to be able to be open to *external* forces. In general, as resistives we operate in ways to abolish the impact of new information. Gurdjieff now warns that being open to the world does not distinguish between the good and the bad. So the condition of sensitives is one of much greater vulnerability than that of the resistives.

The filtrations and barriers employed by the resistive strain can become so complete that people are locked into a view of the world that can border on the insane. But, after all, Gurdjieff claimed that man 'sees reality reflected in his attention upside-down'. The dominant emotion is that of hate. Hate arises as a response to a confrontation with something manifesting another reality. The sheer fact of there being a view point quite different from one's own is disturbing and in a deeper way threatening. Fear and hate go together.

Our discussion of diversity has largely revolved around the issue of whether it is accepted and embraced, or rejected and denied. In the rejective or resistive mode one tends to find a combination of conformity in belonging to a group and antagonism and rejection of those in other groups. Resistives will often claim independence of thought while exhibiting the most closed and conformist behaviours. Here we anticipate the idea that diversity encourages individuality in the sense of creativity and imagination rather than in extremist views based on rejection of others.

A big factor in the management, experience and possibilities of diversity is *having a voice*. It is surely obvious that many people, or groups of people, rarely have a voice in what we may call the public forum. As any student of history can attest, we barely know anything of the minds of ordinary people centuries ago, because they rarely had access to and means of utilising modes of communication. The space of the public forum was occupied by male authorities called by Gurdjieff 'power-possessing beings'.

Concerning the element of diversity associated with gender, it has often been remarked that, in groups, has been a tendency for men to dominate over women. For example it was long assumed in social discourse that women had 'no head for politics' et cetera and were excluded from such kinds of discourse. This reached absurd heights in the denial of women to have a voice in scientific matters, such as when extraordinary mathematical physicist Emmy Noether was denied teaching in the University. In brief, men were not prepared to be told things by women.

We have drawn upon the idea of a public forum. 'Public' means that in principle it is something accessible to all. 'Forum', that there is a place wherein a multiplicity of voices can be heard. The bringing together of multiple voices implies the vicissitudes of politics as well as the functions of media. We have to consider the place or space. How multiple voices are contained is subject to quite contrary tendencies. One is as the *space of contention* wherein people vie to occupy the meaning space available to the exclusion of others. The other is the space of cooperation –

sometimes called *hyperspace* – which is aligned with enabling all the voices to be expressed and heard and open to creative fusion.

The story of the Chinese cultural Revolution is salutary. Ostensibly the authorities, in 1956, encouraged an open forum in which criticism of the established communist hierarchy was allowed: “Let a hundred flowers bloom, and a hundred schools of thought contend.” The movement gathered momentum until there was a spate of ideas deviating from the orthodoxy. The authorities reacted by imprisoning and persecuting their critics, a process that led to massive censorship and repression. Perhaps as many as ten million people were killed. Traditional culture was trashed.



Allowing diversity is a hazardous matter. The elements of a diversity can be in conflict with each other. This is evident in multicultural societies when the values of one sector are opposed to those of another. For example, what is satire for one set of people is blasphemy for another. Practices such as female circumcision are backed by religious traditions for some people but are criminal acts for others.

Dialogue

Group analyst Patrick de Mare drew attention to the way in which groups were framed and developed the idea that there were three basic kinds of group – small, median and large – each of which was suited to or tended to express different modalities. The small or family group of several people tended to be hierarchical and emotional. De Mare pointed out that even in professional organisations espousing liberal and democratic values the usual operating group was a small one and functioned in much the same way as any other small group such as a family. The large group – say with hundreds or more members – would tend towards schisms and politics. The number of people involved would so much exceed the capacities of individuals that they would break into conflicting subgroups. A typical experience of an individual in a large group is one of fear and alienation.

The median or ‘middle-size’ group, according to de Mare, had an optimum size of 15-20 people. Its properties derived to a large extent from the physical parameters. De Mare advocated an egalitarian seating arrangement in a circle, making it possible for everyone to see and hear each other. There were a number of important features, the most important being that its members were *on a level*, that there was a *psychological* as well as a physical equality. According to de Mare, such

a median group will tend to foster thinking and what he calls 'outsight' into the formation of culture. This would draw on the two variables of *adequate diversity* and *containment*.

In practice, the operation of a median group depends on its members *suspending habitual modes of interaction and reaction*. This involves a highly important principle that actually underpins and presages much of what is called fourth way practices. This principle can be expressed as follows (which we foreshadowed in our diagram and discussion above): suspend duality and invoke triality or threeness.

In de Mare's picture of the median group he sees that people contained together will bring out frustrations as they block each other's immediate fulfilment. Ordinary discourse has evolved to establish buffers and means of discharge to avoid confrontation with the differences that will frustrate habitual desires (such as 'expressing oneself'). This he refers to as *hate* and he makes no bones about it. It is this hate that *can be transformed into new meaning*. The ideal form of this new meaning he calls *koinonia* or 'impersonal fellowship'. De Mare implies that this is the message of the *New Testament*. It means to go beyond the limits of relationships founded on family and kinship to the underlying sameness of humanity.

The action of containment is rather like the bringing of volatile elements together. Gurdjieff uses an image of powders being fused together in a crucible or retort.

"Let us imagine a vessel or a retort filled with various metallic powders. The powders are not in any way connected with each other and every accidental change in the position of the retort changes the relative position of the powders. If the retort be shaken or tapped with the finger, then the powder which was at the top may appear at the bottom or in the middle, while the one which was at the bottom may appear at the top. There is nothing permanent in the position of the powders and under such conditions there can be nothing permanent. This is an exact picture of our psychic life. Each succeeding moment, new influences may change the position of the powder which is on the top and put in its place another which is absolutely its opposite. Science calls this state of the powders the state of mechanical mixture. The essential characteristic of the interrelation of the powders to one another in this kind of mixture is the instability of these interrelations and their variability.

"It is impossible to stabilize the interrelation of powders in a state of mechanical mixture. But the powders may be fused; the nature of the powders makes this possible. To do this a special kind of fire must be lighted under the retort which, by heating and melting the powders, finally fuses them together. Fused in this way the powders will be in the state of a chemical compound. And now they can no longer be separated by those simple methods which separated and made them change places when they were in a state of mechanical mixture. The contents of the retort have become indivisible, 'individual.' This is a picture of the formation of the second body. The fire by means of which fusion is attained is produced by 'friction,' which in its turn is produced in man by the struggle between 'yes' and 'no.' If a man gives way to all his desires, or panders to them, there will be no inner struggle in him, no 'friction,' no fire. But if, for the sake of attaining a definite aim, he struggles with desires that hinder him, he will then create a fire which will gradually transform his inner world into a single whole.

It is pertinent to add here that much was made at one time of an idea called 'the second conscious shock' entailing the 'transformation of negative emotions'. I find it remarkable that this more or less expresses what de Mare was after. The title of his first book was *Koinonia: From Hate, through Dialogue, to Culture in the Larger Group*. His vision of the possible outcome of dialogue was indeed a *culture* based on embracing diversity. By embracing social realities, he went beyond the confines of individual psychology. He took the operational unit not as the individual person but as the group or society.

Containment

The heart is cooking a pot of food for you. Be patient until it is cooked. Rumi

As we have intimated, the dialogue group can be likened to a hermetic container or simply a cooking pot! It is an artifice. Containment enables a build up of intensity, as we see with a gas in terms of pressure and temperature. But there is also an aspect in which *what is excluded* is important. A powerful example of this is what is called a *Faraday Cage*. Such a device is made out of some kind of wire mesh or metal enclosure that traps electromagnetic radiation into its surface and excludes it from the interior. This enables delicate experiments which would be otherwise impossible if subject to environmental radiation.

Containment is given great emphasis in the conduct of groups. It has connotations of safety but, most importantly, capacity to hold together experiences of contradiction and conflict. Sometimes it is said that the conductor or facilitator of the group contains the group within his or her own presence. This is an obscure but important aspect of group experience. It implies an influence that does not come from 'doing' anything. It is what is precisely indicated in formulations from the 'fourth way' such as Madam Ouspensky's 'being is what you can bear'. The simple act of sustaining experience of differences without reaction by the person cast in the role of container can really make a difference.



This can have profound social and historical effects. We turn now to the case of former Yugoslavia as it was under the governance of Marshall Tito. The main leader of partisan resistance to the Nazis, he was a communist and assumed power after the war in various roles. His extraordinary achievement was to develop a form of communism that did not follow the Soviet model under Stalin. He created a widely influential alternative involving what were called 'non-aligned' states, a true 'third force' that was hated by both Russia and the USA both of which took their power from forces of division. Tito ruled a federation of several states and autonomous regions involving three different religions. He developed a system called *poly-centrism* which embraced diversity and gave the various sectors of Yugoslavia considerable autonomy. Tito's rule was criticised as based on a 'cult of personality' but this pejorative label ignored the fact that he was able to embody in himself a 'unity in diversity' and *by this* the whole country was able to contain its divisive forces. When Tito died, much collapsed and was lost. Milosevic asserted Serbian power and stirred up ethnic hatred. The country disintegrated into hate. Present day Burma (Myanmar) suffers being made of 15 different ethnic groups giving the military junta an excuse to maintain power and derail democracy. The persecution and murder of Muslims is a typical outcome, not prevented by the democratic figure of Aung San Suu Kyi.

In a talk Mr Bennett gave in the 60s he linked the names of Tito and Churchill as leaders who both embodied 'spiritual' forces, playing a pivotal role on the world stage at critical moments. Ordinary discussions of history rarely include influences that come from the *being* of people.

We can give an abstract but helpful definition of being as *degree of inner togetherness*. People can talk about the influence of the presence of special people in what are called 'spiritual circles' but rarely outside of that. Still, from time to time, people will remark on the beneficial effect of someone 'just by being there' on the welfare of a group and its work.

In connection with containment we should add the practice of *suspension*. It might be called 'the wisdom of the pause'. In the domain of phenomenology Husserl introduced the technical term *epoche* (bracketing) meaning something like 'suspension of judgment'. We can relate this to psychological factors that arise in dialogue. Usually, when people talk *together*, they are prone to *reactions*. Reactions can lead to arguments and blocking each other, striving for dominance and so on. If reactions are suspended, their energy can be then available for a transformational process. That is to say: a reaction that usually tends to divisive *behaviour* can be suspended and its energy transformed into an *insight*.

In early Gurdjieff teaching referred to as 'the second conscious shock – transformation of negative emotions'. This was in fact, so I believe, the essential content of what Gurdjieff called 'self-observation' and even 'not expressing negative emotions'. Containment is not blocking or suppression. It entails a *full experiencing* of what is becoming manifest and no judgment of good and bad.

Adequate Variety

The law of adequate variety, first enunciated by Ross Ashby, became known as the first law of cybernetics. It says that to control a system of a certain amount of variety requires the same degree of variety. In contrast, people everywhere largely attempt to understand and control complex situations in terms of a very limited variety. This is particularly true of politicians and populist regimes. We can see this limited approach manifest in managing ecosystems. An interesting thought is that we face similar issues in *managing ourselves!* The thoughts we have are so ill-formed, insubstantial and superficial that they are ineffective and part of the problem. This was a major theme in the conversations between Krishnamurti and David Bohm titled *The Ending of Time*.

As far as managing the complexity of bio-systems goes the creators of the Biosphere 2 experiment went against the grain by fully embracing variety in their construction, including the unpredictability of humans. Only now, after decades, are there signs of more people appreciating what they were after.

The idea of *variety* has emerged in recent times as an antidote to *reductionism*. A strong tendency a few centuries ago was to regard everything material as reducible to very simplistic properties. An extreme example was Descartes, who wanted to regard all that was material as simply *extension*: there was to be just this one primary property, all else secondary properties deriving from mind. People were prone to say for example that there is no such thing as 'red' only electromagnetic vibrations. All that was interesting such as colour was relegated to some ambiguous domain of subjective reality or 'illusion'.

William James, a foremost American psychologist who wrote the extraordinary study called *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and colleague of the greatest American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce, was an advocate of *pluralism*. In crude terms it means to believe that there are several realities. It expresses itself in philosophy and society. About religion, the British philosopher and partner of Bertrand Russell, Whitehead, wrote:

Every age produces people with clear logical intellects, and with the most praiseworthy grip of the importance of some sphere of human experience, who have elaborated, or inherited, a scheme of thought which exactly fits those experiences which claim their interest. Such people are apt resolutely to ignore, or to explain away, all evidence which confuses their scheme with contradictory instances. What they cannot fit in is for them nonsense. An unflinching determination to take the whole evidence into account is the only method of preservation against the fluctuating extremes of fashionable opinion. This advice seems so easy, and is in fact so difficult to follow.

On science, a commentator put it:

In his earlier philosophy of science, Whitehead revolted against the bifurcation of nature into the worlds of primary and secondary qualities, and he promoted the harmonization of the abstractions of mathematical physics with those of Hume's sensationalist empiricism, as well as the inclusion of more concrete intuitions offered by our perception—our intuitions of causality, extension, cogredience, congruence, color, sound, smell, etc. Closely linked to this completion of the scientific scheme of thought, Whitehead developed a new scientific ontology and a new theory of perception. His scientific ontology is one of internally related events (instead of merely externally related bits of matter). His theory of perception (cf. *Symbolism: its Meaning and Effect*) holds that our perception is always perception in the mixed mode of symbolic reference, which usually involves a symbolic reference of what is given in the pure mode of presentational immediacy to what is given in the pure mode of causal efficacy.

Whitehead was certainly one of the inspirations for what became Bennett's *Dramatic Universe*. His range was immense. But I want to make reference to the great contemporary of Isaac Newton, Gottlieb Leibniz. This German philosopher was a rival to Newton in claiming the invention of differential calculus but also produced a world view in stark contrast to his English rival. One of his most well known sayings was the enigmatic *this is the best of all possible worlds*, a sentiment mocked by Voltaire in his satire *Candide*.

The physicist Julian Barbour (who wrote a challenging book called *The Ending of Time*) admired Leibniz and argued that his 'best' concerned *amount of variety*. He has consistently argued that the universe is 'built' to *increase variety* and *not* run down into what was called 'heat death'. He writes:

Leibnitz is widely held to have argued that we live in the best of all possible worlds. Voltaire made great fun of this idea in *Candide*, depicting him as the ever-optimistic Pangloss. However, if one reads the *Monadology* carefully, one finds that the principle Leibniz took to be the one that brings the experienced world into existence (rather than some other possible world) is not so much a maximization of goodness, but is much

more closely related to the principle of individuation that is the foundation of his philosophy. According to this principle, individuals are distinguished by variety. The very essence of being is variety. What one means by “good” is notoriously difficult to define. How can one maximize something one cannot define? In contrast, something that can be defined and maximized is variety. Moreover, it is clear to me that this is the deeper meaning of Leibniz’s scheme, for in paragraphs 57 and 58 of the *Monadology* we read:

And just as the same town, when looked at from different sides, appears quite different and is, as it were, multiplied in perspective, so also it happens that because of the infinite number of simple substances [monads], it is as if there were as many different universes, which are however but different perspectives of a single universe in accordance with the different points of view of the monads. And this is the means of obtaining as much variety as possible, but with the greatest order possible; that is to say, it is the means of obtaining as much perfection as possible.

Leibniz’s monadology has much in common with traditional images such as *Indra’s Net*, in which every element reflects the whole. In what are sometimes called ‘monadic sets’ each element contains all of the elements *except itself*! Such representations dissolve the categories of whole and part. And it is important to recognise the emphasis on *perception*.

Noise and Ultimate Meditation

One of the many intriguing emergent ideas in recent times has been in recognising the significance of what was previously regarded as *noise*. Two examples stand out. The first occurs in what is called ‘junk DNA’: about 80 % of genetic material appears to have no function but this maybe because we do not yet understand what its functions might be.

. . . research advances in the last decade also suggest “junk DNA” might just be misunderstood genetic material. Scientists have now linked various non-coding sequences to various biological processes and even human diseases. For instance, researchers believe these sequences are behind the development of the uterus and also of our opposable thumbs. A study published in *Annals of Oncology* last year showed that a non-coding DNA segment acts like a volume knob for gene expression, ultimately influencing the development of breast and prostate cancer. And a study in *Nature Genetics* this year found mutations outside of gene-coding regions can cause autism.

Our Cells Are Filled With ‘Junk DNA’ — Here’s Why We Need It, Daniel Bastardo Blanco, Discovery, August 13, 2019

Similarly, some neuroscientists now believe that the ‘noise’ in our brain waves – aperiodic variations – are necessary for our functioning between arousal and inhibition. An article says:

Lendner and her colleagues found that in the aperiodic noise of test subjects’ EEGs, the high-frequency activity dropped off faster during REM sleep than when they were awake. In other words, the slope of the power spectrum was steeper. In their paper, Lendner and her co-authors argue that aperiodic signals can serve as a unique signature to measure a person’s state of consciousness. A new objective marker like this could help to improve the practice of anesthesia and treatments for coma patients.

Brain's 'Background Noise' May Hold Clues to Persistent Mysteries, Quanta Magazine, Elizabeth Landau

It has even be found that *adding noise* to a weak signal can help its detection:

Adding noise to enhance a weak signal is a sensing phenomenon common in the animal world but unusual in humanmade sensors. Now Penn State researchers have added a small amount of background noise to enhance very weak signals in a light source too dim to sense.

In contrast to most sensors, for which noise is a problem that should be suppressed, they found that adding just the right amount of background noise can actually increase a signal too weak for sensing by normal sensors, to a level that can reach detectability.

"This phenomenon is something that is frequently seen in nature," says Saptarshi Das, an assistant professor of engineering science and mechanics.

'To make a better sensor, just add noise'. Science News. Date: September 3, 2020

We can extend this vista to include the importance of 'marginal' people in society. It is only in recent years that any attention has been given to disadvantaged people, since economies have grown to allow for supporting them. What has yet to emerge is according to them a significant role in the wellbeing of societies. How can this varied group of people, often classified as 'dependents', benefit society? Is there a parallel between them and the newly discovered possibility that what was called 'junk DNA' has a purpose?

It is significant that a major part of the dependents is made up of *children*. A well-known question challenging our assumptions about utility and value was, 'What use is a baby?' Most people would accept as obvious the importance of children for a society's future even though this runs into difficulties because of xenophobia and hatred of immigrants, who tend to have larger families. Deeper questions arise when we consider the role of the aged part of the population, which draws on resources for its welfare with no apparent economic gain.

Then there are the disabled, physically or mentally. It is possible that some benefits for the general population stem from the medical and scientific research that goes into alleviating disabilities and helping disadvantaged people. The medical reference leads us to point out that only in recent times has there been recognition of the fact that different groups of people respond differently to medications. It was the custom to do tests largely on men and ignore women in the development of medicines and treatments. Similarly, differences between ethnic groups have only recently been considered important in medical practice.

The range of marginal groups might be vast and radically diverse. There are addicts, conspiracy theorists, trauma victims, esotericists, billionaires etc. and, we might even include criminals or the insane as categories. Diversity itself must be diverse.

Since ancient times, attempts have been made to articulate an 'all-inclusive' representation of society. Even the caste system of India represents an attempt to do this, however crude it seems. In his dialogues, Plato discussed the structure of various cities and how they in various degrees managed to find a place for diverse elements of society (including 'tyrants' for example). The musicologist Ernest McClain has shown how these discussions were based on the mathematical forms the octave could take (*The Pythagorean Plato*).

It is said that on average we cannot deal with more than 150 people in a 'personal way', that is, get to know them as individuals. Our brain capacity cannot manage more than that. This is the existential basis of tribal structures. Let us not forget the big effect that the 'us and them' mentality has on us.

As we have emphasised it is not common or easy for people to embrace diversity. We often feel our very identity might be threatened. We do not know very much about *how* to embrace diversity, how to hold it together in ourselves. It is easier to denounce those who are different as stupid, backward, unclean, evil and so on. The core of this is the widespread attitude that 'I am right'. It was most interesting to me that the Cambodian monk popularly known as 'Bhante' used to say: 'All are right. No one is wrong'. He made it central to his meditation, which leads me to speculate that a very deep practice could be made of visualising the diversity of the world and even reality itself, *without any rejection*. There may be cultural, social, neurological, physiological and even physical barriers to achieving this.

What we see here is not a story like that. We see a story that's full of unresolved tensions and people upset with each other. The music is exceedingly harmonious, but the process of making it could not be described as harmonious. There is something interesting in that. I think partly it is a result of striving for such extreme levels of performance.

As opposed to the reflexes that minimize the variation in processes, one of the truisms of innovation is that innovators create variation because they're striving for novelty. There are a lot of different strategies to create variation. One of them might be some degree of turmoil in the group. Throughout the case, we see Paul trying on different leadership hats. A lot of them don't fit, in his estimation. It's remarkable how much doesn't work given the superb quality of what emerges musically. One of the lessons you could draw from the case is that a really ugly process can produce great results sometimes. *High Note: Managing the Medici String Quartet* by Martha Lagace

CODA: Sensory Richness

The sum of human wisdom is not contained in any one language, and no single language is capable of expressing all forms and degrees of human comprehension. Genius... is the capacity to see ten things where the ordinary man sees one. (Ezra Pound)

The world of food and cuisine well illustrates the significance of diversity. Different ethnic groups can be distinguished by their diet and menus. Also of interest is how *taste* can be refined and cultivated. Some people are able to distinguish ten or more times different flavours as most others. This is also true for sensations of sight and sound.

No sooner have you grabbed hold of it than myth opens out into a fan of a thousand segments. Here the variant is the origin. Everything that happens, happens this way, or that way, or this other way. And in each of these diverging stories all the others are reflected, all brush by us like folds of the same cloth. If, out of some perversity of tradition, only one version of some mythical event has come down to us, it is like a body without a shadow, and we must do our best to trace out that invisible shadow in our minds" Roberto *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*, Roberto Calasso (p.147/148).

Counter Culture Coffee Taster's Flavor Wheel



Legominism and the Three Worlds

Richard Heath



Altaic shaman's drum depicting the cosmos

The general ordering of the cosmos throughout history was phenomenological, following the very apparent division between the sky and the earth, with the living principle between called a "middle earth". A summation of its symbolism was placed within Dante's trilogy The Divine Comedy; of an inferno, purgatory and paradise which were the three worlds of the geocentric experience. But how does it come about that the phenomenological was translated into ancient literature, buildings or, as Gurdjieff names these, legominisms in the literal sense of being made of meaning-making and the naming of things - a power given to Adam but not the angels.

Legominisms

Legominism was a term created by Gurdjieff to mean "an intentional artifice transmitting important knowledge to future generations able to grasp its significance".

In *Beelzebub's Tales*, Gurdjieff presented the ancient world as a tragic story where human beings were incapable of retaining attempts "from above" to restore their understanding, of why the world existed and their purpose within it. Finally, those remaining humans who still understood something, decided to create legominisms: These would act to contain the forms of understanding within objects, dances, games, calendars, buildings, etc., or any cultural artifact which would contain a higher truth whilst serving an outer cultural value. Being valued, it would be used and reproduced, and remain in use until such a time as someone in the future might again understand the inner truth behind its design.

The idea of legominisms gave a likely explanation for the mysteries of the ancient world, as to why higher knowledge was implicitly present within our oldest traditions. Made of a combination of iconic, literary and numerical references, legominisms have left a large and consistent "implex² of meaning", designed to be actualised through the making of special efforts. One sees this playing out in *Beelzebub's Tales* and especially in *Meetings with Remarkable Men* with its seekers after truth, and Gurdjieff's peculiar propensities to gather ancient data and visit special peoples and places, now largely lost due to modernization.

Legoministic narratives were acted out within the stage of the triple world, of lives lived in which a protagonist is **transformed** by a journey. In Bennett's worldview, systematic structures having exactly seven terms are transformational, and a different "systemic attribute" can be seen in the "dynamism" of three terms, as in the "three worlds" and the "seven planets" and notes of a "musical

¹ J.G. Bennett in *Creation*, chapter 3.2.

² that is short for an "implicit complex" of meanings.

octave". As one enters the world of the legominism, numbers and words have new usage according to the possible levels of meaning and understanding.

The Act of Meaning

A system of three **terms** Bennett called a **Triad** but a triad is also a whole thing – a further **Monad** describing the **context** for the three active forces. Systematic groups such as triads are about *how we understand* whilst a legominism is a cultural object, a monad *to be understood*. The three worlds were a literary and oral worldview one needs to understand the purpose of as a geocentric model of the earthly experience.

The meaning of something, as a whole and as its various contents, must be made of words, interacting in a numeric structuring of terms. **Meaning** like Understanding is a term, but subtly different. Bennett placed Meaning in a triad relative to three **frameworks**, the world of what is **possible** (in Eternity), the **act** of choosing one possibility (an actualisation within Time), in order to **make** Meaning (ableness-to-be meaningful)³. These frameworks were seen as three time-like **dimensions** of Eternity, Time and Hyparxis, each a necessary precursor for the type of world we live in.

The three terms of a triad are unlike each other, occurring in order as: first, second and third forces; the most fundamental⁴ usage being Affirming (force 1), Denying (force 2) and Reconciling (force 3). The above triad of Meaning then takes this order: Possibilities are affirming while Time is a denying force and making meaning is inherently reconciling; noticing how words and numbers are interpenetrating within a legominism about making meaning.

A prime example is when we choose words to be actualised as speech, from imagining what to say. In imagination, they are only possible articulations. When words and numerical structuring become an articulation, they enter the stream of Time, plucked from “the reed bed” of personal imagination, brought down into the lower world of Time: but to what effect? Like the monkeys trying to type Shakespeare, the world would fill with more nonsense than sense and besides, how would one know what was Shakespeare? Here Bennett gives the necessary third force for the triad of Meaning, the ability-to-be (termed Hyparxis) for words to become meaningful in an actual world of Middle Earth. This is why literary critic, Northrop Frye saw poetry to be the natural language of cosmology, because poetry serves to protect the gods from direct rationality⁵.

Bennett and Legominism Bennett's dove motif, flying between an upper and a lower world, prefigured how the “ability-to-be” would provide a reconciling force within the Creation, enabling human beings to fulfil their intended role within a dramatic universe.

Bennett and Legominism

In Bennett's vision of the Dramatic Universe, Middle Earth is redeemed by new Acts of Meaning.

Bennett's **framework** conditions emerged from the foundations of the three worlds, the framework dimensions from which a world like ours was at all possible. From this approach, Bennett's *Dramatic Universe* went on to explore the meaning of 1. *Natural Philosophy* (framework), 2 *Moral Philosophy* (triads), 3 *Man and his Nature* (**structures of will**) and 4 *History* (the **present moment**), using ever new techniques and refined grasp of framework. In every case, as in

³ *The Dramatic Universe* volume 1, page 166: “As elements in a triad, potentiality must be affirming and actualization the denying force ... The reconciliation of potential and actual results from the property ‘ableness-to-be’ ... The more one is oneself, the more one is able to actualize without losing contact with potentiality.”

⁴ of six permutations, within world creation as per Gurdjieff's worlds 6, 12, 24, 48, and 96 triads

⁵ Roberto Calasso, *Literature of the Gods*, chapter 7, “Meters are the Cattle of the Gods”.

Gurdjieff's cosmology of Will, meaning was being made within a western tradition begun by Gurdjieff.

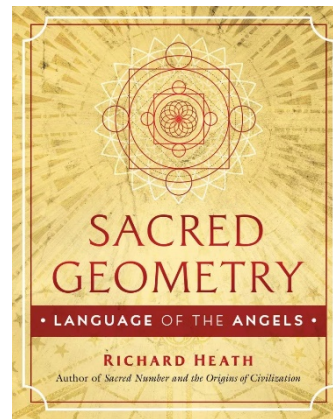
Bennett was a born philosopher, mathematician, linguist and scientist who did not write in the style of *Beelzebub's Tales*, yet still requiring special efforts from the reader to understand; not to hide but to await moments of understanding in the future. As he explained, the monad that wants to understand must raise its necessity to understand:

In grasping a monad, an act is required that goes beyond knowing. This act makes a connection between two real structures – one is the understanding monad with the will to understand and the other is the presented monad with its will to be understood. DU III, 16-17.

The ancient stream, of sacred and profane mysteries (coincidences, legominisms and sacred numbers), is now mixing with a contemporary stream of work studying how one can understand them. This confluence is an invitation to make meaning with the methods provided, to actualise again the ancient legominisms created for a future middle earth.



Photo: Robin Heath



*Richard Heath's latest work on understanding ancient legominisms is called **Sacred Geometry: Language of the Angels**, Inner Traditions, 2021; as a full colour, richly illustrated hardback. Its story traverses the earliest developments of numerate astronomy in the megalithic period, thus extending human history back into the prehistorical period. A number of geometrical legominisms are explored as expressing the Universal Will of Creation, before turning to the last 2,500-year movement towards the Cosmic Individuality, posited by J G Bennett as the potential human beings have, to express the reconciling force.*

WILLIAM BLAKE'S FOURFOLD VISION

Michael White



In his book *Jerusalem* Blake writes: "I must create a system, or be enslaved by another man's. I will not reason and compare: my business is to create." Blake's prophetic and illuminated works create a detailed language that encodes a system for understanding human nature. When you first encounter his books, it is like entering a labyrinth and you are bound to feel lost and confused. His prophetic books are comparable to Homer or Dante or the authors of the Rig Veda. Blake invents new names to describe what we are as human beings and then shows us the dynamics between the parts in a great psychodrama of grand historical proportions. Just as Gurdjieff created a new language embedded in a mythic tale of cosmic proportions in his *Beelzebub's Tales* so Blake felt compelled to illustrate his insights in a great myth of scriptural dimensions. Blake was inventing a symbolic system that plumbed the depths of the human psyche and gave us a new, innovative and creative approach to understanding human nature.

Blake was born in 1757 and died at the age of seventy in 1827. He was an artistic prodigy and a visionary from childhood. He reports that he saw the face of god at age four and angels in the trees before the age of ten. Blake was visited by Milton and Shakespeare along with the prophets of the old testament. Self-educated, he read the great philosophical and political writers of the day including Burke and Locke and Bacon and reacted strongly against them, saying "I felt the same contempt and abhorrence then that I do now. They mock inspiration and vision, inspiration and vision was then, and is now and I hope will always remain, my element and my eternal dwelling place."

Blake's mother, Catherine, attended a Moravian church that espoused an erotized spirituality that was carried down in Blake's poetry. Catherine was first married to Thomas Armitage and together they were members of the Fetter Lane Moravian church and were caught up in its psychoerotic mysticism. Since Blake's mysticism espouses sexual liberation it is interesting to learn that his family had been involved in a strange cult of Christianity that had a theology of sacramental sex. In 1750 Catherine and Thomas were members along with several of the Blake family including the brother of James Blake who became the second husband of Catherine upon the death of her first husband.

The Moravian church was led at that time by a German named Count Zinzendorf who created a syncretic blend of Christian mysticism and Kabbalism. He studied the "Prophetic Education" of the "Sophia Mysticism" and used a Kabbalistic chariot of vision that included communication with angels and a spiritualized sexuality. They believed sexual intercourse was the gateway to the divine and the bliss of intercourse was the experience of the presence of the supernatural. Zinzendorf called it the "Religion of the Heart" and combined his eroticized mysticism with a bizarre fascination with the wounds and suffering of Jesus. They believed that Jesus' wound that he received when he was on the cross when he was stabbed through the side with a spear had special redemptive significance. He advocated visualizing and sharing in Jesus' suffering. However, they erotized the wound and saw it as a vulva that changed Jesus from a male to a female. They called it the side hole and had hymns about it and made devotional cards showing people entering the side hole and

being bathed in blood. In Hymn 2281 they said, "I wish myself entirely inside./ Ah, my little side hole!/ Thou art my little soul/ Yes the dearest little place;/ Side shrine!/ Body and soul passes into thee." In another hymn they called it, "Dearest... Sweetest... Most beloved Side Hole." This outrageous wound piety led them to believe that when they died they became one with Jesus by entering his body through his wounds.

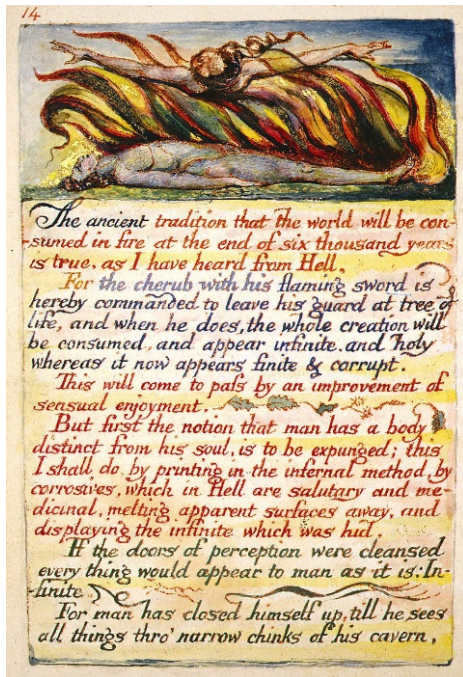
Zinzendorf's Christian cult believed when you experienced sexual arousal you were in the presence of the divine. As a consequence, they advocated a sacramental sex which was, apparently, limited to husbands and wives, although rumors abounded about homosexual and extramarital relations. They were totally frank and had "love feasts" which lasted all night and included a sort of spirit possession with much "sighing, groaning and whimpering". Their worship included a "holy joining" in sexual union that portrayed the womb as the Tabernacle of God and the act of entering the tabernacle brought you into the presence of the divine. Here the sex organs are the visionary point of contact with God. Once these ideas became known to a broader public it caused quite a controversy and Zenzendorf, who had relocated to London, was forced to leave.

In the Moravian church marriage was determined by lot and they believed that by leaving it to chance they were allowing the will of god to determine the outcome. In some places they formed communes where men and women lived apart in separate "choirs" and there was a bedmaster and a special chamber where couples were booked in by the hour to have sex, but only once a week. From 1743 to 1750 was what they called the "Sifting Time" when the most radical and outrageous of their practices proliferated. During this time they sent missionaries all over the world. They were industrious and created successful businesses in the communities where they settled. By 1770 the Sifting Time was long gone and they seriously toned down their erotic practices and wound piety. While Blake had no connection to the Fetter Lane Moravian church, he certainly advocated for a liberated sexuality which is most clearly displayed in his book *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*. Blake proposed an old testament morality with more than one sexual partner and espoused that he had no jealousy if his wife shared her charms with others. Saying in a poem titled "In a Myrtle Shade", "Why should I be bound to thee...Love, free Love, cannot be bound."

He published his first book of poetry at age twenty-six. The next year he purchased a copper-plate rolling press and opened a small business as a commercial engraver. Married in 1782 his wife worked in the business with him. While making a meager living as a commercial printer he invented a new form of printing which he dubbed "Illuminated Printing". The first book of his own illuminated poetry was *The Songs of Innocence* published in 1789. In his illuminated poetry he wrote the poetry, engraved it on a page surrounded by original artwork and then printed and hand colored each page, binding it into a book. In order to create this text he had to engrave the text and design backwards with a reverse slant on the copper plates.

In the early spring of 1790, he produced *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. It was a reaction to the mystic Emanuel Swedenborg and the New Jerusalem Church that was founded to teach Swedenborg's theology. Swedenborg, a Swedish theologian, relocated to London and died there in 1772. Blake's mother may have known Swedenborg who attended Moravian services at Fetter Lane. The times of their attendance overlaps so it is likely that, while William never met Swedenborg, his mother had some acquaintance with him. Swedenborg's writings were quickly translated into English and a church devoted to his teachings sprang up in 1783. In 1789 William and his wife both

signed on as members of the New Jerusalem Church. Blake's circle of friends was all drawn to this new theosophy. Blake learned that Swedenborg had a prophecy that in 1757 a "new Heaven was formed". This was, of course, the year of Blake's birth and resonated strongly with him.



Blake owned and annotated several volumes of Swedenborg's writing as quickly as they were available. Swedenborg's visionary experiences put him in contact with the denizens of both heaven and hell. In one of his visions he had conversations with Newton who he found in heaven discussing physics with the angels. In this work Newton told Swedenborg there was no such thing as a pure vacuum, that all of space was filled with divine energy and that the "Actuality of Mind" fills all things. This idea, very close to the popular idea of panpsychism, is current in our own time. That is, that consciousness is not only a property of the human mind but is inherent in all matter. For example, the plants exhibit consciousness when they turn toward the sun, and the chemical bonding of elements like oxygen and hydrogen to form water is an elementary form of consciousness. Max Planck the famous physicist said " I regard Consciousness as fundamental. I regard Matter as derived from Consciousness."

One of the books by Swedenborg that Blake studied was *A Treatise concerning Heaven and Hell, and of the Wonderful Things therein*. Having seen angels himself Blake was inclined to accept Swedenborg's visions but upon detailed study reacted against the dualism he found inherent in Swedenborg's beliefs. This reaction against Swedenborg was the inspiration for Blake's book *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, which as the name implies overcomes the dualism of Swedenborg's vision of the separation of heaven and hell. Swedenborg used the literary trope of "Memorable Relations" in his works which Blake transformed into his "Memorable Fancies" in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. This was the only known association of Blake with an organized religion and it didn't last long. He was a member in 1789 but by the next year he was repudiating Swedenborg in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* which is his most explicit statement of his own doctrines subverting Swedenborg's dualism of good and evil.

Blake was such an iconoclast that he would never fit into any organized religion or political party. His brief flirtation with the New Jerusalem church left him disillusioned. The recognition that he had committed himself to another's religion led him to write *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. He had been caught up with a person he now saw as a false prophet and reacted deeply in response. *Marriage* is a highly indignant parody against falsehood in all forms and drives the reader into the highest realms of inspiration and mystery.

In the same year Blake was writing *The Marriage* he was enlarging his circle of friends with many of the most radical thinkers in London including Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft and the artist Henry Fuseli. Their revolutionary ideas were in direct contradiction to much that was taught by the New Jerusalem church. In 1789 the Bastille fell and the French revolution excited much attention in London and Blake was seen wearing the red hat that symbolized the revolution which he saw, in conjunction with the American revolution, as the dawn of a new millennium.

It was a revolutionary time and the powers that be in England were wary of the revolutionary forces that were playing out in France and America and feared for their own authority. The lines were drawn, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote *Vindication of the Rights of Man* and Thomas Paine published *Rights of Man*. By 1792 Thomas Paine was forced to leave England under cover of darkness and there are hints that Blake had a hand in his escape. That summer a Royal Proclamation appeared banning all “seditious writing” going after both the authors and printers. Blake, who was a known sympathizer with revolutionary causes, could not afford to have his name associated with the text of *Marriage* which he published without attribution. Blake eventually was brought to trial for confronting a soldier who wandered into his yard. Blake escorted him off the property proclaiming, “Damn the King and all his soldiers”. This was enough to get him charged with high treason. It was only by the help of a number of influential friends that he escaped prison time.

Blake was revolutionary in every way. He was politically, sexually, economically and aesthetically revolutionary. His poem “Auguries of Innocence” is a statement of his politics insisting on the right to life and freedom without qualification:

A Robin Red breast in a Cage
Puts all Heaven in a Rage.
A dog starv'd at his Master's Gate
Predicts the ruin of the State.
Each outcry of the hunted Hare
A fibre from the Brain does tear.

Each couplet is an illustration of the esoteric politics that claims as long as any one person is imprisoned none of us are free, it is the ultimate call for justice that includes all creatures and turns revenge on its head, it is truth to power to any oppressor.

Revolutionary in every way he called for an unrepressed, uninhibited, non-possessive sexuality. In a poem from one of his notebooks titled *The Everlasting Gospel* he wrote:

That they may call a shame and Sin
Loves Temple that God dwelleth in
And hide in secret hidden Shrine
The Naked Human Form Divine
And render that a Lawless thing
On which the Soul Expands its wing.

This clearly picks up on the theme that the sexual organs and sexual arousal are the conduit for access to the divine. The “Temple that God dwelleth in” is the sex organs both male and female spelled out as the “Naked Human Form Divine” and the “secret hidden Shrine”. While standard morality condemns sexuality as a lawless thing and calls it “a shame and Sin”, in Blake’s poetic vision sexuality is the very thing that allows the imagination to “Expand its wing”. Thus, sexual arousal is the creative energy of inspiration and when you are experiencing that charged tingling sensation of sensual awakening, for Blake, you are one with the transcendental vitality of the universe and the well-springs of all art.

He was also economically revolutionary saying, “Christianity is Art and not money, money is its curse.” And in the same text, *The Laocoon*, “Where any view of Money exists, Art cannot be carried on but War only.” Finally, he was artistically revolutionary, inventing a new art form bringing

together drawing, engraving, painting and poetry and exalting the imagination. He clearly conflated art and religion, this is expressed in the aphorism he wrote in *The Laocoon* saying, "A Poet, a Painter, a Musician, an Architect: the Man Or Woman who is not one of these is not a Christian". And again, "Prayer is the study of Art" and "The Whole Business of Man is the Arts".

The Marriage of Heaven and Hell was written in the spring of 1790, only nine copies are known to exist, each hand colored over the course of thirty years, so each unique. A satiric visionary masterpiece combining prose, parody, narrative, song and verse; it is intriguing and rewarding, thought provoking and outrageous, probing and difficult, complex and subtle, wide-ranging and multi-layered, mocking and questioning. It is the work of a visionary prophet, fully formed, outrageous and challenging.

Marriage is Blake's most explicit statement of his philosophical stance. He was through and through a philosopher and a poet and a prophet creating a unique and innovative visionary scripture. The title is a play on Swedenborg's book *Heaven and Hell*. It is a book that brings together all the contrarities; good and evil, heaven and hell, poetry and prose, love and hate, energy and reason, angels and devils, male and female. This is Blake's most accessible work mainly due to the



section titled "Proverbs of Hell". In this Memorial Fancy he, like Dante, is given a tour of hell and records the "Proverbs of Hell". These seventy aphorisms are the most striking statement of Blake's philosophy and are a handbook of esoteric wisdom. The book actually has six sections or chapters. Each chapter begins and ends with a colored illustration and between these illuminated paintings there is an argument, a refutation and a Memorial Fancy. The last chapter is titled a "Song of Liberty", proclaiming the ultimate freedom of the imagination. To its first readers it was a puzzle that left them mystified. The first critics, while admiring *Marriage*, could not see any structure in the text. Much admired, it was little understood.

The Fourth Way tradition sees human nature with three main aspects: intellect, emotion and activity. All three are habituated and acted out based on our established patterns of behavior. Breaking free of this, waking up from it, is recognition that there is higher intelligence, higher emotion and higher activity. Blake's "Proverb's of Hell" are examples of higher types of understanding and behavior.

Higher Intelligence is characterized by integration without rejection and self-observation and non-identification. It is centered in the present moment, it is non-linear, non-literal and unitive. If judgments are called for, higher intelligence judges from the perspective of eternity, not from the point of view of a single individual's wishes or desires. When you experience higher intelligence:

Opposition is true Friendship.

and

The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock, but of wisdom: no clock can measure.

Higher Emotion is non-judgmental and non-reactive. It experiences no guilt and no shame. This is emotional intelligence that is not compelled to react to every situation. It unplugs the negative

emotions of hatred, anger, jealousy and sadness. Higher emotions have self-awareness of your emotional states as you experience them. However, you are not driven by your emotions to feel a certain way, instead you experience equanimity and empathy and can accept things without taking the bait to react. If you can experience higher emotion:

The soul of sweet delight, can never be defil'd.

and

The most sublime act is to set another before you.

Higher Activity is characterized by spontaneity and compassion. Higher activity takes into account those around you, and not just those immediately around you, even the future generations. With higher activity you are automatically compassionate in that you can no more do harm to another person than you could do harm to yourself. Your standard of activity has shifted from the motives and desires that normally drive your behavior to standards that are broader and higher, that take into account all people. When you experience higher activity:

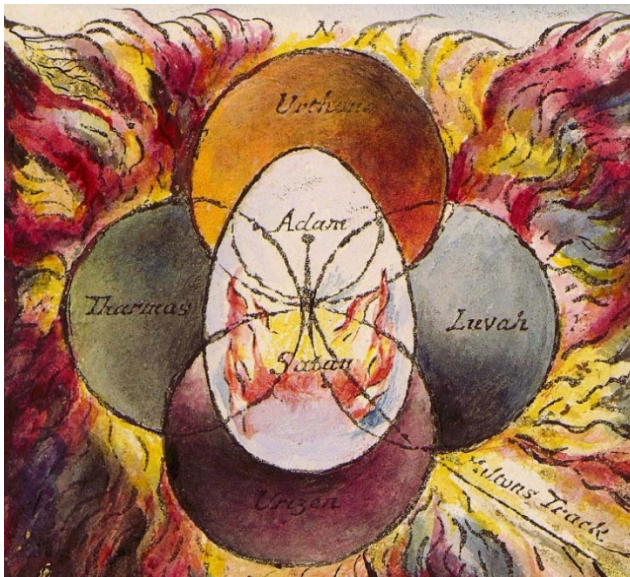
He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence.

and

Sooner murder an infant in the cradle than nurse unacted desires.

When you are experience these higher states you act spontaneously, you don't "nurse unacted desires", there is no holding back but you do so out of a motivation that is for the benefit of all

people. Your thinking, your emotions and your actions are done from the point of view of basic, common, shared human nature rather than each person's individual human nature. This shift in perspective, from our own point of view to the perspective of the good of all people, of all things, of the earth as a whole, opens the door to the higher states.



Blake, of course, has a slightly different way of understanding human nature. He had a fourfold vision of humanity. In Blake's vision we have intellect, emotion, instinct and imagination. In his prophetic books he personified each of these aspects and called them The Four Zoas.

Luvah	Heart	Emotion	Bliss
Tharmas	Solar plexus	Instinct	Sex
Urizen	Head	Intellect	Reason
Uthona	Psyche	Imagination	Spirit

Blake's illuminated books create a great mythopoetic system set in prophet prose. The most explicit of these prophetic works is call *The Four Zoas* but there were many prophetic works such as *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, *The Book of Thel*, *Book of Urizen*, *The Song of Los* and *America: A Prophecy*. The four Zoas appear and reappear in different books along with a host of other character. The story of the relationship of the four forces plays out in the evolution of humanity. The ideal is to have all four aspects in harmony and working together. But down through the ages different forces characterized different ages when one or another of the aspects of our nature came to be dominant. In our age, reason becomes dominate and is at war with the rest of the forces.

Just as Blake purported that our nature has four primary components, he also proposed that we develop Fourfold Vision. He described this in one of his poems saying:

Now I a fourfold vision see,
A fourfold vision is given to me:
'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight
And threefold in soft Beulah's night
And twofold always, may God us keep
From single vision and Newton's sleep!

This poem has three rhyming couplets which express, in very condensed form, the essence of Blake's vision. In the last couplet single vision is when you can only see the world one way, when you are locked into an interpretation of reality and believe that it is the one and only literal truth. This is the curse of fundamentalism and orthodoxy where you believe that your way is the right way and anyone who disagrees is wrong. In single vision you are in a bubble, or a box and can't see anything outside it. Newton's sleep is the sleep of reason when things are seen through the lens of science and math. Newton represents the triumph of materialism where we end up at war with nature. Single vision is the outer meaning of the world. Newton is represented in a famous painting



by Blake where he sits looking down with a compass in his hand measuring the world and laying it out in mathematical precision.

Blake abhors single vision since it only sees the world one way. Blake urges us to be "twofold always" and to see things in more than one way. This is symbolic vision that recognizes that things are multi-dimensional and have layers of meaning, one leading to another. Twofold vision gives another layer of meaning to the universe. Twofold vision accepts both rather than being in an either/or dynamic. Seeing in a twofold way is to see that one

thing can be a symbol of another. Twofold vision is poetic vision.

Three-fold vision is called "soft Beulah's night". Three-fold vision sees that all things are interconnected. The inhabitants of Beulah protect liberty and freedom. In Beulah's night the contrarities exist simultaneously. It is the development of what the poet Keats called Negative Capability, where you can allow two things that are contrary to exist as a continuum rather than as contrarities

The poet Gregory Corso said that when given a choice between two things, take both. Then contrarities exist without dispute. The threefold vision of Beulah is the inspiration for the arts. Here the union of the sexes is uninhibited and takes place in an ideal realm of acceptance without jealousy or guilt. It is the home of the muses who inspire all art and protect the liberty and freedom of all things. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* Blake says, "Without contraries is no progression. Attraction and repulsion, reason and energy, love and hate, are necessary to human existence." In Beulah's night contrarities exist simultaneously.



Then, in the first couplet, fourfold vision cleanses the doors of perception. One of the aphorisms in *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* states, "If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear as it is, infinite." When you see things in one way you are confined to the outer meaning. Seeing things two ways or, seeing that one thing can be a symbol of something else, reveals the inner meanings of things. Then, finding yet another dimension of symbolism, threefold vision recognizes the secret connectedness between all things. Finally, fourfold vision is complete oneness. This total integration is the ultimate vision of eternity, of infinity, of wholeness, of union, of ecstatic mystical liberation. This is the "sweet delight" of fourfold vision. Fourfold vision integrates reason, which we express in thought, with emotion, with intuition, with sexuality and finally with spirituality. Fourfold vision is the most inclusive point of view, it is the perspective of oneness, of total unity, where all separation is overcome. In his poem

"Auguries of Innocence" Blake indicates that with fourfold vision you can:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand.
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower.
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand.
And Eternity in an hour.

With fourfold vision all sense of self is transcended, and you relate to all things without judgement or prejudice. You are no longer reactive, you no longer have to defend any point of view, fourfold vision encompasses all perspectives, it is total non-judgmental acceptance in perfect mystic union with the universe. It is the realm of supreme delight, it is the place inside yourself that is the same with all other people, with all other things, with all of nature and the experience of it is bliss.

TWILIGHT OF THE SELF

Antonio Benet

*My heart is solitary now
It finds no companionship anywhere
And no wish to find any.*

*My sole desire is You,
And You are always absent.*

*Can one love absence so intensely
That even Your presence
Seems like an intrusion?*

*I move around in aimless circles
Rituals and sacred symbols,
Once treasured sources of relating to You
Are meaningless to me now.*

*They communicate nothing of You,
Who are everything to me,
But for whom and from whom I feel no love,
No hope of fulfilment.*

THE AVERAGE MAN

Josh Denny

They call him the average man
Statistic in the sand, without plan
A mirror, cracked in its own reflection
standing in a pristine wasteland
The hand of Adam reaching for the remote control,
as electric tears fall over him, Angelic chorus
They call him the average man
What is his worth, his weight in soil
A freak of nature, one off show
No peer review of simple minded notions

*I am as one turned inside out,
And there is nothing there - not You, not
me,
Is this union, there is neither two in One,
Nor One without another.*

*I long to relate to everyone,
Yet lack the capacity to relate to anyone.*

*There is only your boundless presence
That treats me like a thing without a
heart,
Except perhaps a broken heart,*

*For the God I thought I knew
No longer exists.*

A mistake, the eye of Art turned green
They call him the average man
The tallest tale unspoken,
First edition Holy Book, never taken
from the shelf
A soliloquy, sitting up, alone in the
dark
Haunter of Love's chambers
Mona Lisa with scythe
They call him the average man
A glance at a watch, a cross-shaped
sacrifice
A stubbed toe, a world held aloft
A gaze into nowhere, the End of Times

PATHS TO EXPERIENCE

Michael White

INTRODUCTION

There are great esoteric traditions that have arisen and flourished in different times, in different places. Now in the modern world we have, alive and well, the Buddhist tradition, the Hindu tradition and the Sufis who have produced generation after generation of masters of their wisdom traditions. There is an old saying, "The proof is in the pudding." That is, a tradition has to "work", it has to have techniques or practices that can be passed along from one generation to another, and in each generation, if the practitioners are dedicated, they produced these enlightened masters, liberated beings, men and women, who point the way for the next generation. If a tradition wants to survive, to have continuity in the world, to last from generation to generation it must be able to produce these men and women who embody the principles of the tradition and live it as exemplars, who stand out as shining examples and, either in their teachings or simply by their lifestyles, provide the example that inspires the next generation. Institutions often form, monasteries and nunneries, ashrams, mountain top retreats, places where people can go for training, to study the great writings and do the practices. If the Fourth Way is to survive into the Twenty-first century and beyond it will have to be meet this test of time. It will not be enough that Gurdjieff came to the West and wrote his books, that is all well and good, and his books will stand as great works of literature, but unless there are techniques, means, ways that each generation can adopt and adapt that move us into higher intelligence, higher emotional states, enable us to do higher activities, it will not be anything except another interesting set of books. This is the test, this is the challenge.

THE EXERCISES

There is a huge gulf between the experience of hearing about something and the actual experience of that thing. For example, we can hear someone describing the sexual experience, we may study it scientifically, or we may read about it in books or see it depicted in art or cinema. But none of these are anything like the actual experience of having sex. This applies in many areas, in mystical experience we may hear people talk about oneness, or experiencing wholeness or being one with the universe, we may read the experiences of the saints or mystics of various religious orders but this is not at all like having the actual experience. This could be applied to experiences like playing a sport or driving a car or eating a certain kind of food. Our words are abstractions of experience that are an intimation of what something is but words can never convey the experience itself, they are two different things, words describe but paradoxically, the description is not the experience that is being described.

How do we apply this to the principle of higher intelligence, higher emotion and higher activities? We are enthralled when we have someone like Anthony who is articulate enough to speak sensibly about this kind of thing, it is like a cool breeze on a hot summer day, it is an intimation that these things are real, that they are experienceable, it conveys a flavor of it but again it is not the real thing itself. Hearing a lecture on sex is not like the experience of having sex, likewise hearing a sermon

on the kingdom of god is not going to give you an experience of divine ecstasy, and hearing a lecture on the Fourth Way ideals is not going to produce an experience of higher intelligence.

Unless there is a technique, a way, a means, a path, that actually creates this experience we are just talking. The ability to actually experience the real thing is the ultimate test, and in the Fourth Way, just as in Buddhism or Sufism or mystical Christianity unless there is something going on that produces individuals who have the actual experience and can express it in their life and in their behavior and in their thoughts and emotional expressions then it is just words and will run its course and play itself out as a “school of thought” or a genre of literature or even as a religion. We look at the founder, surely that person was a living example of someone who had a direct experience of this profound phenomenon. We have Gurdjieff and, in his wake, there was Ouspensky and there were others, particularly Mr. Bennett, but if we are not producing new examples in each generation then it is merely a mind game like a genre of literature that may be entertaining to read about but it is not anything that can be used in a practical sense to bring about the experience that is being intimated in the words of the teacher or in the life of the teachers who may be exemplars of the tradition.

How do we move from the description of something, something like higher intelligence, to the experience of it? Can it be done by learning the movements? Can it be experienced by doing the exercises? What is it that will move us from hearing about something to actually experiencing that thing? We can read a great recipe for an exotic dish or watch a chef prepare a delicious meal but until we actually taste the food we have not gained the experience.

When a great musician plays the piano we have a shared experience of his art, when we watch a classical dancer we have a shared experience of her art, we don't have to be the dancer or actually play the piano to share in the experience, experiencing the artistic effect produced by the artist provides us an experience, an intimation of their art. When a skilled actor acts out a scene from Shakespeare we experience his art and are transformed, we are moved out of our everyday experience of our self and go beyond the bounds of our individuality and experience a greater awareness, we intuit it directly. This is the magic of art, it captivates and transforms experience, there is an empathetic transformation that takes us beyond the boundaries of our everyday experience of our self, transcending the little self that we are all trapped inside, taking us to a higher awareness, a shared experience of a common humanity that is somehow expressed in the art.

The other direct way is the exercises, we are developing a series of exercises, Anthony takes us through these as part of every retreat. We can read Joseph Azize's book or do the research to see the exercises that Gurdjieff was assigning to the students in his circle. In other traditions we can sit with a Buddhist master and learn to meditate, we can go to the Sufi order and learn to spin, we can do yoga, we can pray in the Christian tradition, we can learn mantras and use a mala.

There seem to be two approaches to this higher awareness. In one, from time to time, people just arise, they have the talent for it and are direct expressions of it. Like Mozart or any great genius, they are the geniuses of the spirit of humanity, they have the natural talent for the experience of this common humanity and embody it in their words and actions. The other approach is the gradual approach where you have to do the work, where you need some technique, where you go to “school” and get specialized training. Here is where places like Claymont Court and Camp Caravan, organizations like DuVersity, are so important, or the various schools of Buddhism, the monasteries

and nunneries, the ashrams, which provide us training grounds where we can learn the various techniques that allow us to enter into these exalted experiences.

Art is an avenue to this, but there are also exercises that can be used to develop this. These are the esoteric practices that each school has developed. The Buddhist, the Hindu, the Sufi and the Indigenous people have all come up with very detailed means for coming to this objective or esoteric way of perceiving the world. This awakening doesn't come easy, there are powerful forces of acculturation and habituation that mitigate against it and there is great momentum to carry on with the usual mindset. To get out of it requires a kick, an awakening, an opening to a different view of the world, a new way of describing ourselves and our relationship to the world. DuVersity is building an online resource in the duversity.org webpage and at the duversity.online where there are recording of the events that include exercises and work that means this end.

NOTES FROM THE TRAIL

Jason Joslyn

Sun, Jan 24, 2021 at 12:09 AM

Hello All,

I just finished hiking a section of the Bartram Trail in northern Georgia and North Carolina, in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

I'm not particularly athletic, so it was extremely hard for me. I'm recuperating now.

I had our recent conversations and thoughts in mind along the way, and tried to write down my thoughts as they came to me, to share with you now that I'm back in range of phone signal.

It's just my own perspective and I hope I'm not "ranting" in an obnoxious way.

I really value having you all as wise friends to talk to about what is most important. I'm extremely blessed and even "lucky" in this respect.

If I assume a tone that is prescriptive or judgemental I hope you know that it's more like I'm sharing my own "workshopping" of ideas to attempt to understand more deeply. I really am a student not an expert on anything in particular. I intensely wish to understand more fully because I really do not know for sure yet.

Here's my notes from during my hike (desperate struggle) through the mountains:

What relevance do the ideas and techniques of Gurdjieff and all those he influenced, many of whom advanced the essential spirit of his intentions, have to us today, in a human social and environmental situation that has ticked forward many steps since the time in which they spoke so powerfully?

The "questions" that are universal in the Gurdjieff diaspora may all appear to be reducible to his own formulations, like: "what is the sense and significance of life on earth and human life in particular?".

Upon deeper engagement with the practical know-how legacy he informed, the individual and personal questions make a gestalt shift towards "how do I, personally, in my own life situation, with my own psychological material, approach this and make it work concretely?".

There is a basis for this outcome in Gurdjieff's own approach. He emphasized "technical" or "know How" in a practical sense as a constant thread, even amongst other material that set up the groundwork for "Why" taking specific actions is important, and "What" the "Terror of the Situation" is at hand for us now.

In short, Gurdjieff and Bennett lean heavily into the "how to be able to be" side. And then the "why we Must Be" is the value-oriented framework for this know-how.

It's nitty gritty hands+hearts+heads, and "Wish" detailed workshop material. No B.S. entertained.

In fact, it is quite possible to not have read anything about G or JGB's theoretical underpinnings and "get it" naturally from engaging in the praxis as they prolifically demonstrated and shared.

Then reading what they both write becomes a "subscript" to what you yourself has been experiencing through direct encounter during active engagement with the practices.

This makes it perpetually insufficient to speak or write "about the Work" as if from without. Because it's essence is of the nature of integration, no one modality of summarizing it can be sufficient on its own.

It really does require some form of multi modal engagement using all of each participants "plural minds" to convey completely without risking distortion or reification as "just being this one kind of thing".

We in this fresh lineage have a precious inherited process rolling forward here. It's so hard to convey, the receiver must engage so carefully and attentively for themselves, and those who have gotten concrete value from it must not ruin the essential substance of it through the means they choose to apply to share it.

It is integrated "knowledge", it is "understanding". It can not be traded lightly or easily. Even if we wished to do so. It is a very nuanced stream with tremendous forces within it.

I believe the most universal points of contact and potential transmission available are directly relevant to the practical know-how and the rationale for this know-how, the "Why" to empower the "How".

Everybody knows what G & JGB were talking about once it is pointed out for them properly. Everybody feels the nagging "nothingnesses" described. What isn't universal is the knowledge that *This is not the whole story!*. And that we each have a dimension of depth personally and together that has never even yet been tried.

Even after we may have been steeped in these "4th Way" ideas for decades, the sincere self application of the real essential purpose of the guiding ideas may still be a fresh revelation any given day. Speaking personally here, for sure.

The outer wrappings and trappings of the gold:

Very few will get the value of these powerful perspectives overall, at first pass because they are all expressed in obscure writings (one must be a "book nerd" of a particular esoteric or mystery fascination or "self help" bent), so bottleneck one is the natural selection by book consumption habits.

For those actively engaged in health (like yoga and meditation) pursuits, the case made for the "Why" of the 4th Way is Overwhelmingly Comprehensive. Meaning that the scope is so all

encompassing as presented in the available literature or active groups that it feels like a heavy "buy in" to an entire world view becomes an unanticipated bottleneck to further adoption or pursuit. It's comprehensive and that's its strength. And that's also hard for people. A gigantic pill to swallow or hot pepper. And when a part is presented piecemeal like Osho promoting the Movements, it's fraught with controversy and suspicion which has the effect of devaluing it to "newcomer perception". Like the whole genuine story must be too much somehow.

Then there is the general personality or character of the influence of Gurdjieff and in an importantly unique and different way, Bennett.

The most important material they each innovated, discovered, and shared is inevitably "flavored" by it being they themselves as fallible incomplete people of their own times who presented it.

The closer they each got to eternal, essential, universal reality, the less it has to do with who they accidentally happened to be as people originally.

And that's the good stuff. The essential core they struck into like miners of a mother load of gems.

That's what I want to really make my own and understand and learn to apply.

Obviously it's pointless if I tried to superficially emulate other people's personalities, even if they are really compelling and cool ones.

I need to get to the core of what these charismatic, heroic and limited temporal beings before my own time really uncovered about Reality and how it addresses what I'm trying to do right now here in this social and Biospheric context at hand.

For example, the stark "cognitive dissonance" shock moments of walking through the streets and "seeing sleeping people" as Ouspensky reported, happens by natural random chance through many more people's eyes than know what to do with the influx of Conscious Energy.

Or the passionate concern for the Human role in the Biosphere being disastrously mismanaged and barely comprehended rarely learns of the ideas that G and JGB detailed about it all functioning together as an inwardly coherent whole being with either successful or failing health report cards, fully subject to the same hazards as any life form among countless many others throughout the universe. Hazardous and fallible, so precious.

The list could go on and on, but I am trying to point out that that core questions we strongly relate to "the Work" are more widely available in everyone's minds already than the "4th Way's" urgently helpful and practical material provided is reaching at present.

Maybe it IS because of the trappings and personality-cult wrappings of "how" it has been historically put forward. Gurdjieff himself was a character of a very specific niche, so was Bennett in his own way. But the ideas and practical know-how and the rationale for "Why" transcends all these temporal trappings. It's really, really good stuff.

What works, works. No matter where or who we each happen by chance to learn it from.

Maybe our task together at this stage is to strongly convey the essence of the know-how and the "why" of it as directly and concretely as possible, maybe through overt demonstration by example in various media, or personal connections that are private in nature.

With a focus on the fact that the "terror of the situation" and the "burning questions" are in fact urgent, personal, and extremely relevant to right now, and not about a nostalgic admiration for the niche appeal of the personal charismatic power of either Gurdjieff or Bennett.

Because the problems they invested their whole selves and Being into helping are urgently in our faces today.

And to distract attention away from "what is in their hands, offered to each of us" and to instead emulate them personally, including their dated attitudes towards gender, economic class, race, etc, is to *completely miss* what is actually urgently useful that they so painstakingly procured and cultivated for posterity, or for *us*.

"The Work" should be available to everyone on the merits of its relevance, applicability to concrete problems, and insightful depth of practical know-how. That is its value that transcends the immediately post G or JGB generations.

God and the World of Signs: Trinity, Evolution and the Metaphysical Semiotics of C. S Peirce, Andrew Robinson

Review by Anthony Blake

Recommended reading for an overview of the main ideas of the book: *Representation and Interpretation as the Basis of Participation in the Trinity*

<https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/6/3/1017/htm>

This is an exceptional book, beautifully written and closely reasoned. It brings to bear the light of the greatest American philosopher, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839 – 1914) on the mysteries of the Christian Trinity. For readers who are familiar with the ideas of the fourth way teacher and practitioner George I Gurdjieff it may come as a surprise. Followers of Gurdjieff might easily assume that an understanding of three-fold logic is peculiar to him. Knowledge and appreciation of Peirce has rapidly increased only in recent times. As one would expect, Andrew Robinson's book makes no mention of Gurdjieff and this reflects the widespread divorce of the two worlds of orthodoxy and esotericism. Yet, as we shall see, the two men are very close in their understanding of God and reality. This reviewer feels that what Robinson brings to light is truly esoteric in that it penetrates behind the surface of doctrines and centuries of discussion to grapple with the concrete meaning of the Trinity as the form of God, creating and informing the world and ourselves.

Peirce was, with William James, the main exemplar of pragmatism, a very American kind of philosophy. His range of study was immense, embracing what we can call philosophy of science, linguistics and logic. He advocated an ultimate metaphysics of astonishing generality that he expressed as *Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness*. From the very beginning of his book Robinson takes this to heart as the crux of understanding the Christian Trinity. More than that, he takes on Peirce's radical theory of signs and makes this the basis of his reflections on the inner content of the revealed Trinity. Yet, he is a committed Christian and a man of faith and totally embraces the basic tenets of the sacraments and the revelations of Scriptures.

Gurdjieff's three foldedness which he called a 'law' he expressed in terms of a set of three terms: affirming, denying and reconciling. It is not obvious at first how this formulation would correspond to Peirce's metaphysics nor to the Christian Trinity; how for example, would, in the Trinity of father, Son and Holy Ghost, the Son or Christ be correlated with denial? It turns out that Peirce's *trichotomy* as he called it makes perfect sense of Secondness as denial and the Son as its epitome.

Robinson is well versed in the history of the arising and development of the idea of the Trinity and its doctrinal conflicts. It must be emphasised that he is a theologian and not just a 'spiritual' person as many if not most people claim themselves to be today. Theology has always been an intellectually demanding kind of work. Early theologians were often the leading scientists of their day and certainly eschewed vagueness and emotionality. It was never a matter of systems of beliefs but demanded the most intensive reasonings. It may seem to most people today that calling theology a 'science' is absurd and in fact belongs with irrational delusions. However the claim of theology to being a science has been championed the 21st century by such people as John Bennett, one of Gurdjieff leading pupils and also by Tipler who regards it as authentic physics.

The mathematical physicist Peter Rowlands said that he felt himself amongst the community of mediaeval scholars who strove to express the 'unknown God'. It would take us too far from the main thread to go into the early years of struggle, inspiration and revelation surrounding the arising of the doctrine of the Trinity including the work of great mystics such as Meister Eckhart but I would like to say that the present-day rejection of active thinking in religion misses the close connection between the mystery of the Trinity and the highest kind of reasoning. It is precisely because the Trinity deals in the highest echelons of intelligence, in most general terms and, internally, therefore nearest to God that it can claim to be the king or is it Queen of all possible science. Gurdjieff might claim this for his 'law of three'.

Robinson himself takes us into the realm of evolutionary theory and considers what it might mean to consider evolution in terms of what he calls 'vestiges of the Trinity in creation'. In speaking of this he has developed a way of understanding how we humans might participate in the nature of God through signs or representations. He says, in the article cited at the beginning of this review: 'The fact that interpretations can take the form of thoughts, feelings or actions means that interpretation potentially engages a person's whole being, not just their intellect.' In doing so he is markedly in correspondence with the thinking of Gurdjieff, who constantly iterated the threefold way required for real understanding. Not only that, his whole exposition is based on the idea that by entering into representations of God as the Trinity, we grow nearer to Him. In other words, by the assimilation of His Word we acquire a soul, which Gurdjieff called a 'higher being body'. I hope one day to show that this is an integral part of the 'octave' of assimilating and transforming the third being food he simply called 'impressions'.

It was in the original version (unpublished, 1931) of *Beelzebub's Tales* that Gurdjieff expressed the idea that God as the 'theomertmalogos' or Word-God permeated all creation as the third force of every triad at every level. I believe this shows him grappling with the same issues as Robinson. It is important to take on board triadic thinking in all fields as a manifestation of the 'holiness' of the third force, or the Holy Ghost. Especially since, in all probability, Robinson has no knowledge of Gurdjieff's ideas.

Peirce's thinking in threes has come into general thought particularly in his theory of signs. He released people from the duality of sign and object just by introducing a third term he called the 'interpretant'. It is this that makes true conversation possible and meaningful. In the Gospels, the Holy Ghost descends on the Apostles so that they can 'speak in tongues' and bring the tidings of Christ to people of all nations and languages. True understanding is universal and Trinitarian.

I have hardly begun to do justice to this book and the only way I can make up for this is to quote a paragraph from the end in which he is visualising the contribution that Peirce could make to an ultimate conference on the Trinity, in which he refers to the philosopher as the New World Pragmatist.

The decisive contribution made by the New World Pragmatist was to bring to the table an alternative to the ontologies of essence and substance to which the theological debates were beginning to become tied. The Pragmatist brought from the New World a metaphysic of meaning; a metaphysical perspective in which word, image, and representation were understood to be fundamental ontological categories. In retrospect we can see that this contribution was the third key element in the recipe required for a coherent Trinitarian philosophy. As Zizioulas has pointed out, the first two of these ingredients were the Greek emphasis on fundamental ontology and the Hebrew understanding of personal freedom. If these had been the only two ingredients in the mix we may speculate - though it hardly bears thinking - that Trinitarian theology might have had difficulty in doing justice to the primary Christian conviction that the human person of Jesus of Nazareth was the incarnation of the eternal Word of the Father, the image of the invisible God. What the Pragmatist brought to the table was a sophisticated philosophy of signs, a semiotic theory in which, crucially, representation and interpretation were not held to be purely human constructs, but were seen to be deeply embedded in the whole order of creation.

Number Symbolism by Christopher Butler

Review by Anthony Blake.

Christopher Butler was a literary scholar who was renowned for his explanations of modernism and post-modernism. In number symbolism, however, his first book, he went back into the history of number symbolism and how it made its way into the literature of the Renaissance, fading almost from sight in modern times. His exposition of the once widespread use of numbers as symbols of meaning embracing classical mythology, the Bible, music and astronomy is lucid and penetrating. He clearly and carefully shows that there was a western tradition of finding of unity between all realms of knowledge through archetypes of number. After the early Greek creativity of Pythagoras and Plato, followed by the early Christians and Gnostics came a vision of the world that survived into the Renaissance.

In speaking of Elizabethan times he shows how poets were well versed in using numerical patterns based on all kinds of allusions, even the changing astronomical knowledge of the time which was embracing Copernican theory as well as biblical and pagan literature. For example the lines used in a poem could be exactly chosen to correspond the hours of darkness and light in the northern latitudes where the poets lived.

Butler shows how there was a kind of collusion between artists and scholars to support the belief that a system of numbers was a reflection of the mind of God or, in particular, the demiurge as described by Plato, representing the deep seated harmony of the world to which humans could aspire. Readers of Gurdjieff may well feel an echo of these ideas in his 'harmonious development of man'.

The numerical methods once used by poets were never described in their literature. Butler explains that this was because such methods were widely known about on the one hand, and did not need to be explained and, on the other hand they intended to give the reader a kind of work to do that would enhance their appreciation of the poetry. He cites from the work of several modern scholars who discovered 'hidden patterns' in poems and shows that they were intrinsic to their composition and not imposed by modern interpretation. He is at pains to point out that the numerical symbolism was in accordance with the meaning of the texts and intended by their authors.

What might be of great interest to the student of the fourth way is a striking resemblance between some of the ideas embodied in the tradition of number symbolism and Gurdjieff's exposition of what he called fundamental or cosmic laws. They may be more than interested in what the tradition of number symbolism says about the numbers three and seven! It is as if Gurdjieff must have assimilated much of this tradition and adapted it to his own purposes which were closely connected to story telling and psychological exercises. But Butler is clear that such thinking cannot be called scientific in any modern sense but may rather be looked at as aesthetical theory. Or, we might regard it as in a general sense 'inspirational'. Pythagoras's declaration that all is number has reverberated into modern times. Kepler, the genius forerunner of Newton though considered a number mystic proved himself a real scientist by relinquishing old ideas of numerical pattern and inventing his own in concordance with observations made contemporary with him.

One can say is that at one time theology, science and art were co-conspirators in forming a numerical system, but one particularly modelled after music. Pythagoras's explanation of musical structure as a model for the inner workings of the cosmos and also the moral heart of men was immensely influential. I can add that recent studies, not considered by Butler who starts his story with the Greeks, puts the use of musical metaphor back thousands of years. Ernest McClain has shown the influence of musical ideas on the creation of mythologies and theologies. The musicologist Petric has written in depth of the influence of musical numerology of physics, though also shows how this gradually gave way to the complexities of actual phenomena and the understanding of different kinds of relationships. I might also add here that the mathematics used in modern physics would be incomprehensible to the ancients.

The upshot has been a relegation of numerical symbolism largely to the arts. Again, I can add that there have been a few outstanding exceptions, for example in the ideas of Wolfgang Pauli who worked for a time with Carl Jung. Pauli argued, purely from the point of view of the archetypal nature of number, that physics went wrong at the time of Newton by adhering to a threefold understanding and neglecting the fourfold vision of alchemy.

Butler, bringing his story up-to-date points in his final chapter to the architecture of Corbusier, the music of Alban Berg in the writings of James Joyce. Since the Renaissance, however, artists have been free to choose any system they please which can help them organising the material – and one is tempted to add 'even none at all!'.

Number symbolism accumulated from hundreds and thousands of years of working and reworking patterns of number supported by narratives from religion, music, architecture, poetry and astronomy. The big factor in all this was the general adherence to symmetry as indicative of order or harmony. In this respect, I can add to Butler's explanation the fairly recent understanding of what is now called Ring composition or, sometimes, Semitic rhetoric. Some of his examples clearly indicate the construction of such 'rings'.

The book is an enthralling exposition of the way of thinking that is both evidently highly intelligent but also something of an illusion. As he said, nothing of real science in modern terms ever came out of number symbolism. The mathematics which has been increasingly powerful in contemporary physics is far beyond anything to be found in old patterns. At the same time, I believe, many people have come to acknowledge the appeal of a way of thinking that seeks to integrate everything into a coherent and relatively simple scheme. The tradition of numerical symbolism is intimately connected to ideas of the soul, God and harmonious development and very much upholds the principle that the inner workings of us humans should correspond to the 'music of the spheres'. Living in a time when it is widely supposed that life on the earth and human life and consciousness in particular is mere accident, an increasing number of people are seeking a convincing argument for human experience being integral to the formation of the universe.

This reviewer will say that if one wants to better understanding the formation of Gurdjieff's ideas one can hardly do better than read Butler's book. Many people have considered the question of where Gurdjieff's ideas came from but there has been relatively little effort put into understanding the *kind of thinking* that prevailed in ancient times. We regard Gurdjieff's idea of 'objective science' as merely metaphorical. I myself have tended in recent times to consider Gurdjieff as a supreme artist and not at all a scientist. It was reported by Denis Saurat, who talked with Gurdjieff, that the latter said that he and his friends in the group he called 'seekers after truth' but much of value in the writings of the ancients that found them lacking in practical methods. There is a close connection between 'inner exercises' and the arts.

The story of number symbolism reflects the story of art, science and theology. Gurdjieff warned against getting caught up in numbers and ignoring being. Yet, he uttered such strong statements as, 'love not out with your feelings', and 'objective art is mathematics'. Butler casts doubt not only on the relevance of number symbolism to empirical science but also on its veracity in regard of ascetic experience. By and large, people apprehend such things as harmonious proportions *through their culture* and not through any supposed 'direct' experiential realisation.

I think it proper to end this review with quotation of the final paragraph of the book.

In conclusion, one must say, whatever reservations one may have concerning the aesthetic of numerological proportion, that it seems clear that the very great works of art created in accordance with this aesthetic are capable of providing an enormous enrichment of our experience, once the ideas that surround them are understood.