

DUVERSlTY NEWSLETTER 23

FALL 2008

For this issue we asked a number of our members to contribute on what was occupying them currently. The lead article by John Kirby takes the Gurdjieffian theme of the *three centers* and opens it up to embrace the remarkable contact with angelic intelligence reported by Gitta Mallasz in *Talking with Angels* and three events concerning Christ in the Gospel of John, including the turning of water into wine at the marriage in Cana.

This is followed by musings 'on board' by Knud Kusche, and poems by Michael White from his new book *Beyond Within*. Richard Heath contributes a short enigmatic piece kicked off by a revisit to Bennett's book *A Crisis in Human Affairs*. It is highly pertinent in this time of crisis and anxiety but completely throws out of the window any pretence of having solutions or knowing what to do. There is also Karen Stefano drawing on her work with Tissue Paper Collage to talk of cultivating creativity and reminiscences from David Salminen on cycles of time and opening to what is 'there'.

In speaking of 'transcendental' or higher matters, we are in a quandary. How on earth can we know of such things in terms of our limited – and probably distorted – range of experience? Are we then to remain silent? If we speak at best we can offer only beliefs that have been inculcated into us or opinions that derive from accidental experiences and temperament (studies have shown that whether one votes e.g. Democrat or Republican may be dependent on genetics). It may seem an absurd thing to say but one's opinions can matter no more than anybody else's – because they are just opinions, which means that they lack understanding; so we might as well not bother with

them. It might be, however, quite another thing simply to articulate what thoughts come to us but never as *ours* but just as forms of expression. A hidden factor in all this is that *reading* and *listening* can be independent of production of ideas. Hence, the possibilities inherent in reading one's own ideas as if they were someone else's and listening to other's ideas as if they were one's own.

Rarely, however, do we have a chance to *just* speak and listen. We have tried to produce such conditions in DuVersity events but it is an elusive thing to trust in the process. Anthony Blake outlines another attempt to produce the right conditions, which we will be offering in the near future.

Marriage at Cana by Giotto

Gitta Mallasz

The Perpetual Invitation to Work on Our Three Centres and the need for, and some history of, Experiencing

John Kirby

"Thus although thinking, feeling and moving are all equally functions, nevertheless we can call the thinking center the very representative of will, the feeling center the very representative of being and the body center the very representative of function. They are able to bring the universal reality of the three worlds of function, being and will into an individual reality. This individual reality is the fourth personality of a man, his "own I", his wholeness." J G Bennett, *Deeper Man*, p. 69

It has become commonplace to say that so much that is connected with ideas that Gurdjieff brought to us have gradually entered into more mainstream thinking. There are a proliferation of books and materials on the enneagram, for example, and in some areas of psychology the growing idea that man can be seen as asleep and cannot do. It may be that once an idea has been introduced it opens the door for new forms of manifesting and exploring the idea. In some of the following pages we can see how this may be happening with Gurdjieff's introduction to the western world almost a hundred years ago of the teaching that man has three brains or centers: a moving, a feeling and a thinking center.

Followers of Gurdjieff produced valuable and quite copious material expanding on Gurdjieff's teaching and this included exploration and experience of the three centers. One thinks, for example, of Ouspensky's books and Maurice Nicoll's extensive *Commentaries on the Teachings of Ouspensky and Gurdjieff*. But it is perhaps not until Bennett's *Deeper Man* was published, originally in 1978, that we see a broadening of understanding from how they work and our experiencing of them to a sense of seeing **what they are for**.

This then puts the centers in a far wider context and opens up ways of working with them. We see how the centers or brains are able to be in contact with higher forces and that indeed it may be natural, even important and necessary, that they become so. "As the level of organization of a brain is raised it becomes more subjective. When this passes into the levels of cosmic energy we say that the brain is becoming "spiritualized. This brings us to will and why Gurdjieff used the three different terms "brains", "spiritualization" and "center". A brain is a specific way in which the will can be related to the world of bodies. When a brain is spiritualized it acts from the will and it is the will that is the center. So when we use this word center we are talking about thinking, feeling and moving from the side of will rather than from the side of function. When a man is truly a "three-centered being" he has real "I" or his own will." Bennett, *Deeper Man*, p. 53.

It is significant that it was around the same time that *Deeper Man* was published in 1978, that another book which also helped throw light on the meaning of the centers and what they are for was published. This book, *Talking with Angels*, was first published in 1976 but relates to events that took place in 1943-44 in and near Budapest, Hungary. Four young people spent an intense seventeen months working with and being taught by higher intelligences. The diagram below is taken from this interaction.

It is interesting to see how the three centers, or differing qualities of 'souls' of life as they refer to them, are seen and described by these higher intelligences who are speaking from the *creating* worlds as they call them, as distinct from man's usual place of existing in the *created* worlds where the three brains are based. As is well portrayed in the diagram below taken from the book, the three centers in the created world - which correspond to the realms of mineral, plant and animal - are linked at least in potential to the three forces of the creating world. That which unites them is the IVth, the human, and is the link that is missing or, as it is described in the diagram, 'the abyss to be bridged' and 'the task of the human'. It is work on the three centers that can bridge the abyss. Some people may recognise a similarity between this diagram and the one Bennett uses in *A Spiritual Psychology*.

The angels see the seven levels of being or seven forces as realms in which we live, or are meant to live, but that we are trapped within and between the three lower forces of the created world, or the three brains. At one point they refer to the brains intriguingly as the three resistances, and that there is a Fourth (IVth) which is between matter and non-matter. The qualities of the three resistances or brains are the properties of earth for body (I), water for feelings (II) and air for thoughts (III), and that our task is to loosen our identification with them and to separate their respective energies out from each other, as they tend to overlap and interact in such a way that the energy of one center mixes with one or both of the other centers.

“Earth...water...air...and the ‘not yet known’.

You cannot lift earth into water, nor water into air.

Everything has its place.

DO NOT LIFT; DO NOT PULL DOWN:

JOIN TOGETHER!

Earth belongs to the earth...

water to water...air to air.

MOVE BEYOND THE NEW RESISTANCE (IVth)

WITHOUT LEAVING MATTER BEHIND.” *Talking*

ith Angels, p. 231 Gitta Mallasz who participated in th

wing note regarding this lesson: “Evolution occurs by means of our capacity of intuition, for only intuition is capable of attaining the new level where spirit and matter meet. The ascending ray of evolution transforms as it pierces the levels of matter, sentiments and thoughts. But then the inverse takes place: it is thought, sentiment and matter which are transformed and fulfilled by the descending ray of light. Descend follows ascent

uccessive detachment.” For th

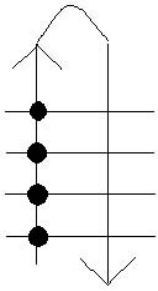
otes: “The first level of being is the MI

e truth, the number and the law.

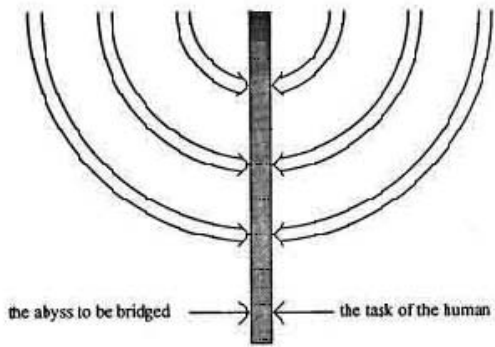
“The second level is the PLANT. Its soul is streaming love and the capacity t

“The third level is the ANIMAL, enliven by harmony, movement and rhythm. “These 3 levels are contained in the 4th, the HUMAN. But we so called humans are still not the HUMAN, the FOUR. It is our task to live on





CREATED WORLD				CREATING WORLD		
I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
MINERAL	PLANT	ANIMAL	HUMAN	ANGEL	SERAPH	THE
Body	Feelings	Thought				SEVENTH



“Never forget this key to understanding the angels reaching: it is the mutual evolutionary attraction between above and below, between the Divine and the human, between heavenly and earthly forces, between spirit and matter.

“All of these forces join in the middle, on the Fourth level. They unite and give birth to the new Child, which is God and human...Creator and created. Light and matter.” TWA p. 305

From what has been said above it can seem that the idea of man having three centers is something new to the world, only being revealed in the last one hundred years. But this may not be the case at all. If man has three centers then he will obviously have had them for some considerable time reaching back in our evolution, and if so then the need to re-connect the link, the bridge, between the created and the creating worlds will have been known by higher intelligences and forces all the while. This may be revealed in sacred scripture, and one place that may be worth looking is in the reading of at least the first few chapters of the Gospel of St John.

The three centers in the opening chapters of John's Gospel

There are three events that comprise a triptych of the Feast of the Epiphany as the manifestation of Christ that we celebrate immediately during and after Christ's birth at Christmas in the church's liturgy each year. These are the Adoration of the Magi, the baptism of Jesus and the Marriage Feast of Cana. We are invited to celebrate the revelation of the divinity of Christ in this threefold event as part of the Christmas Epiphany.

The Adoration of the Magi represents humanity coming to the person of Christ and acknowledging who he is; also, as Thomas Keating writes, “the arrival of the Magi signifies the fact that all human beings, whoever they are and whenever they may be born, have an invitation to transformation into the divine nature”. Christ's baptism by John the Baptist is Christ's response, if you will, in accepting his place as a human. By being baptised by John, Jesus shows his complete solidarity with the human condition, and the words of the Father, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him”, represents the manifestation (Epiphany) of Christ to the people of Israel.

It is at the wedding feast of Cana that Christ performs his first miracle and in so doing manifests his divinity. “On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. And they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the feast had all been used, and the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said, 'Woman, what do you want from me? My hour has not come yet.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' There were six stone water jars standing there, meant for the ablutions that are customary among the Jews: each could hold twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, 'Fill the jars with water,' and they filled them to the brim. Then he said to them, 'Draw some out now and take it to the president of the feast.' They did this; the president tasted the water, and it had turned into wine. Having no idea where it came from -- though the servants who had drawn the water knew -- the president of the feast called the bridegroom and said, 'Everyone serves good wine first and the worse wine when the guests are well wined; but you have kept the best wine till now.' This was the first of Jesus' signs: it was at Cana in Galilee. He revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him” *John Ch 2:1-11*

Da Vinci's Adoration of the Magi

It is at Cana that we see the act of Christ initiating the union of the created and creating worlds, the bridge to be linked, an act of redemption, as shown in the diagram above. It is shown in the changing of the water into wine, of the old into the new, the need for this being seen and stated by Mary in her simple statement to him, "They have no wine." Wine is often used in the New Testament to represent spirit, and here Mary is pointing out that as there is an abyss to be bridged (see diagram) so as to enable us to truly receive the spirit again. Even though Christ seems to dismiss her appeal in his reply, nevertheless Mary knows the effect her statement will have and so she speaks to the servants, who also represent the created world, the human side of the created world, by telling them to "Do whatever he tells you." She is letting them know that there is a need for immediate and full material response to the spiritual input about to come from the act of Christ.

Jesus informs the servants to fill six water jars with water and the servants obeyed, indeed it is pointed out that "They filled them to the brim." Looking again at the diagram above we can see how Jesus represents the Fourth, the Word, and the six jars may be the six forces that he is uniting or linking. Although six is the allegorical number of imperfection in the Old Testament, here at Cana the six represent the six forces which have been disconnected in man until this act of Christ at Cana and the first signal He gives as to the nature of his mission: he makes the transformation of the human situation possible in one timeless act. It is an act of redemption, but it still needs the conscious obedience of the 'servants' for it to be manifest in this world. "The wedding feast of Cana symbolizes the celebration of the unity between the divine-human person of Christ and each of us. It is also the marriage of God with each of us. We do not earn this invitation, but we do have to accept it in order to consummate our union with God. Nor are we asked merely to celebrate it as a guest, but to be assimilated by it, and to fully enjoy it." – Thomas Keating [1].

There is no description of the miracle in the gospel text as it is an event that does not take place within time. Those who are familiar with Edward Matchett's work will recognize the event as taking place outside of time, even creating time, in what he calls *time ðt* [2]

In *Talking with Angels* (p. 233) Gitta Mallasz asks about this:

"Gitta: How can I know that I join spirit and matter?

-By the fact that you recognize it *afterwards*.

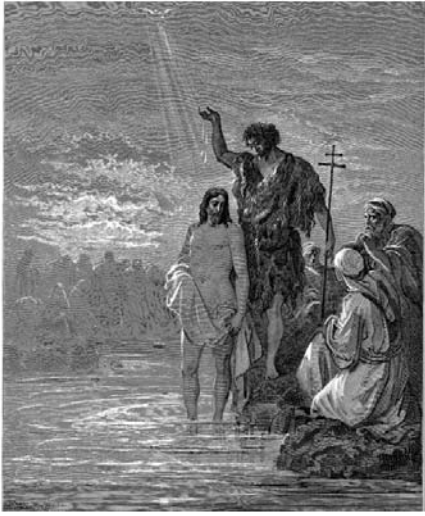
Knowing and thinking belong to the level of air, which is still matter – but subtle, finest matter."

So Jesus is the one who acts and reunites spirit and matter below again, uniting spirit and matter, heaven and earth, the creating and created worlds. He announces he is going to do this in the verses immediately before the story of Cana in John's gospel:

"When Jesus saw Nathanael coming he said of him, 'There, truly, is an Israelite in whom there is no deception.' Nathanael asked, 'How do you know me?' Jesus replied, 'Before Philip came to call you, I saw you under the fig tree.' Nathanael answered, 'Rabbi, you are the Son of God, you are the king of Israel.' Jesus replied, 'You believe that just because I said: I saw you under the fig tree. You are going to see greater things than that.' And then he added, 'In all truth I tell you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of man.'" *John 1:47-51*.

"You will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of Man", is a very good description of what we have in the diagram above with the Son of Man as the word in the Fourth and the angels now enabled to descend from the creating worlds at points V, VI and VII to worlds III, II and I as Christ, the Word, has initiated the bridging of the abyss, has shown through his joining us through baptism that he unites with us in the task of linking heaven and earth again.

The Baptism of Jesus Gustav D



The Baptism of Jesus Gustav Dore

These lines are the last verses of Chapter 1 of John's Gospel, and the first verses of Chapter 2 read, "On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited. And they ran out of wine, since the wine provided for the feast had all been used, and the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.'" We should remember here that the division of the books of the New Testament into chapters and verses was not created until several centuries after they were written, so the original text as it was written is uninterrupted, as, "In all truth I tell you, you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending over the Son of man. On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee." Otherwise 'on the third day' loses almost all its context. Of course, as it is often used in the New Testament three days, or the third day, is used to signify a time of completion, a fulfilment of something, the end of one stage and the beginning of something new, such as rising on the third day after the crucifixion or Peter denying Christ.. Here at Cana 'the third day' is used in a similar way as it is signifying the end of the broken link and the beginning of redemption, as well as being used as linking the events of Cana with the statement to Nathaniel 'three days' earlier.

So the story of Cana is one of Christ re-uniting the created and creating worlds after a seeming eternity of being separated, indeed since the time of the Fall. But even here at the very beginning of Christ's mission of redemption it is made clear that our participation is always called for. "Do whatever he tells you."

In our age we see the teaching of our co-operation expanded in such things as *Talking with Angels*, in Mary's many contemporary appearances and teachings throughout the world and in aspects of the Work. In *Talking with Angels* the nature of the action in participating in this activity is clarified and deepened:

"Never forget this key to understanding the angels reaching: it is the mutual evolutionary attraction between above and below, between the Divine and the human, between heavenly and earthly forces, between spirit and matter. "All of these forces join in the middle, on the Fourth level. They unite and give birth to the new Child, which is God and human...Creator and created, light and matter." *TWA* p. 305

And this is why this work is so often referred to in parables as to do with marriage, as at Cana, as it is the mutual attraction **in us** that draws and unites above and below. We can see how this may apply also to Matchett's Sophiagenics and his 3M formula (making media plus matter meaningful in time δt) in the sense that although we are the instrument of the 'making' element nevertheless the action described in the formula already wants to take place and that although we need practice, effort and discipline it is more than helpful to recall that this is wanting to happen and we are learning to co-operate in that wedding taking place in us.

"IF YOU COULD SENSE THE LONGING OF THE WEIGHT FOR LIGHT –
IF YOU COULD GRASP THE YEARNING OF THE LIGHT FOR WEIGHT-
THEN YOU WOULD TASTE ECSTASY" *Talking With Angels*, p. 96

Looking at how the responsibility we may have towards such as the three centers may be being revealed in John's gospel may also be seen as continuing in the verses immediately following the Wedding at Cana. The story of Cana ends at chapter 2:11 and at 2:13 begins the story generally known as the cleansing of the temple:

"When the time of the Jewish Passover was near Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting there. Making a whip out of cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, sheep and cattle as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the dove sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop using my Father's house as a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: I am eaten up with zeal for your house. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us that you should act like this?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple: are you going to raise it up again in three days?' But he was speaking of the Temple that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and what he had said. During his stay in Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he did, but Jesus knew all people and did not trust himself to them; he never needed evidence about anyone; he could tell what someone had within." *John 2:13-25*.

It is plainly spelt out here, there is no need to imply or suggest that he was speaking of the body, it is stated as so in the text, the temple is the body. The cleansing is described as the need to separate out the mess of forces at work represented by the money changers and those selling animals. In the diagram we see the centers of the body (temple) as I = Mineral/material, II = plant and III = animal. In the story of the cleansing of the temple I, then, corresponds with the money changers, II by the whip of cord (made of plant) and III by the cattle, sheep and doves.

In *Talking with Angels* we saw earlier how this need to separate out and yet have the centers linked is the conscious work we are called to.

In John's gospel story it is the whip of cord, plant or II in the diagram, that is the feelings or emotional center, that is the energetic element of the action needed. In the chapter on the three centers in *Deeper Man*, Bennett says:

"It is almost impossible to arrive at what man truly is by thinking. But when our feelings are open to something deeper and the ordinary emotional uproar is abated in us, then it is possible to feel what this human nature is, feel that it has been present on the earth for many thousands of years, and the feel the greatness of the destiny that belongs to it. This is how it is when our feeling nature becomes open to the working of the higher energies. So essential is the right working of our feelings that we can say that the transformation of man is the same as the transformation of his feeling nature. Until this has begun, transformation has not begun at all in any way.

"The true power of the feelings is to be able to perceive directly how things are. This is not done through knowing, sight or hearing but through participation, by entering into things...Very often it is the feeling nature in us that first starts us on the path of transformation. We feel our own emptiness and have a longing to have some substance for ourselves or to have an assurance that we have a place in the world.

"..We need to be disillusioned with the world and what it can give us [*the temple in John's gospel story*]; we need to see that our feelings should not be dependent on what comes to us from the external world. The feeling nature is not designed for the world of bodies but for the *alam-i arvah*, which we described as the "world of energies." It does not work from the outside of things. The *alam-i arvah* in its original meaning was the world of "spirits," which we can understand as the "essence of things" or what they are.

"It is only when we begin to get a clear picture of the privation of our feeling lives that we can begin to see the urgency of the need for work upon ourselves." *Deeper Man* p. 62.

That this forceful episode of the cleansing of the temple comes straight after the opportunity presented to us as a result of the miracle at Cana shows how important it is that we know and respond to this work on our centers now that the opportunity has come to bridge the link with the higher energies, the creating worlds, achieved by Christ's act of uniting the higher with the lower again at the wedding of Cana.

The importance of this preliminary work in our transformation is stressed at this point in the teaching contained in *Talking with Angels* and is echoed in Bennett's chapter on the centers in *Deeper Man*: 'It is a common illusion to believe that we can do something to begin our transformation if we subject ourselves to certain kinds of influences or practice certain kinds of exercises but none of these is any use unless we have reached the starting point.

"It is only the man who is balanced called by Gurdjieff Man Number 4, who is able to have real purpose in life, who can understand what he wants, and who can begin to work toward his own transformation.. He is the first kind of man we can call normal, ...He is able to function through his own initiative, and his efforts will be productive...For real and not imaginary work of transformation, we have to reach the starting point. It is this that can take quite a long time. Sometimes it is said that 'the first step is the hardest of all'. *Deeper Man* p. 54

Having announced the uniting of heaven and earth to Nathaniel, Christ then performed such a miracle at Cana, followed immediately by demonstrating the work needed to participate in these new conditions ensuing from the miracle. In the next chapter, He begins to teach the importance of recognizing and participating in such work:

"Jesus answered: In all truth I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above."
John Ch 3:3

"Jesus replied: In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit; what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above." *John Ch 3:5:7*.

This is repeated and developed 2000 years later in the events of *Talking with Angels* where Gitta Mallasz articulates the teaching of the Angels (see quote on page xx):

It is noteworthy that when speaking to Nicodemus in Ch 3 of John's gospel Jesus rebukes him, almost in astonishment, that as a religious teach he doesn't already understand this teaching of the centers and their proper relationship with 'above', and the need of the centers to be able to communicate properly with the higher forces.

"Nicodemus said, 'How can anyone who is already old be born? Is it possible to go back into the womb again and be born?' Jesus replied: 'In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit; what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above. The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' 'How is that possible?' asked Nicodemus. Jesus replied, 'You are the Teacher of Israel, and you do not know these things! 'In all truth I tell you, we speak only about what we know and witness only to what we have seen and yet you people reject our evidence. If you do not believe me when I speak to you about earthly things, how will you believe me when I speak to you about heavenly things?" *John Ch 3: 3-12*.

Back to the future: three centers outside of the Gurdjieff movement

In more recent times we can find descriptions of experiencing the connection between the centers and the corresponding higher forces. The experience of the linking of the I and the VII can be seen in these words from the Mother, who worked with Sri Aurobindo in the last century.

"And if we carry the experience still further, it seems that when one comes to the work of transformation of the body, when some cells of the body, more ready than others, more refined, more subtle, more plastic, are able to feel concretely the presence of the divine Grace, the divine Will, the divine Power, the Knowledge that is not intellectual but a knowledge by identity, when one feels this in the cells of the body, then the experience is so total, so imperative, so living, concrete, tangible, real that everything else seems a vain dream.

“And so we may say that it is truly when the circle is complete and the two extremities touch, when the highest manifests in the most material, that the experience will be the most conclusive. It seems that one can never truly understand until one understands with one's body.” *“LIVING WORDS, Soul-Kindlers for the New Millennium – Gleamings from the works of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother”*, from the chapter *“A New World is Born, Born, Born.”*

In the world of biology there are signs of recent thinking about three centers or brains in, for example, Joseph Chilton Pearce's *The Biology of Transcendence* especially the early sections on *The Structure and Function of Our Threefold Brain*, *The Evolution of Our Brain: Incorporating Old into New* and *The Independence and Interdependence of Our Three Brains*.

Around 1925 Pak Subuh, the founder of Subud, discovered himself being prepared to pass on the Subud latihan to others, and in the process to understand the forces at work in the human being. "He told how this experience returned almost every night, and how the movements that accompanied it kept changing - the movements of prayer giving way to dancing and martial arts. They also gradually became deeper and more complete, involving his feelings and understanding: he found he was being taught about and experiencing all levels of life in the universe: the material (physical), vegetable (emotional), animal (mental), human, and levels higher than that. He knew that what was happening to him was the will of God, but he did not understand its purpose until a culminating experience occurred about eight years after the first one, in which he was finally given the understanding that the gift he had received was not for him alone but would be passed on to whoever might ask for it; and that they in turn would be able to pass on." *Honour and Duty*, Countess Ilona Edelsheim Gyulai, pp. 401-02

More recently I have had a more personal experience concerning the three centers. I have a particular devotion to the Divine Mother, the Virgin Mary, as may be hinted at in some of my other writings(!). In the early days of my devotion I had a particularly personal meeting with her. There was nothing to see or hear in the normal sense, and yet there was nothing but her. In those moments the world consisted only of her and I. After a while I found myself moved to ask her 'while she was there' if I could be allowed a taste of heaven as I felt that such an experience would then be enough to get me through the rest of my life here. Childlike, indeed, but genuine. The response was extraordinary. Immediately I was given to see all of my life as lived until then, and to see and experience it as one whole. I was aware of how low grade it was, and how little of life had been lived compared to what was possible. I hasten to add that it is unlikely to be such an experience for most people. Perhaps because my life had been lived on such a small scale it had created a need through my devotion where Mary found it necessary to show me what I was completely unaware of. At the same time I was also given to see and experience the whole of my life as lived by each center. I could see the life of each center separately, and yet also see all three simultaneously. For example, I could see the complete life of my feeling center as something like a pair of heavy, rusty doors that were just learning how to open and be. The thinking center was pretty much a parrot that had learned to repeat a few things, but nothing of its own. As for the physical/moving center I won't even begin to describe its life.

The contact with Mary was an act of mercy. I didn't know, I just hadn't known that's how my life had been as seen from an objective viewpoint. I was seeing even as I was seen. As the Cure d'Ars once said, "My children, we are in reality only what we are in the eyes of God, and nothing more." It was an act of mercy, at the same time it was showing me that the condition of such a person, such a life, cannot experience heaven, it is incapable of it. But now I knew what to do, the beginnings of how to work. Later I realised that a person in such a condition as I had seen myself, if they were to die then, would see exactly the same as I had been given but be unable to do anything about it, and so would be craving to be born again so as to live differently and more fully. So, a great act of mercy was shown to me that night.

I confess that for some time afterwards when thinking of this experience I was slightly surprised that the means used to communicate with me by Mary was what I then considered to be 'Gurdjieff's three centers', rather than something more obviously Christian, or even Catholic! That was almost twenty years ago and now I can see how the seeing of life through the living of the three centers is how we are seen, and perhaps have always been seen.

Quite how I have managed to get to this point without mentioning *experiencing* is another wonder. For anyone who doesn't know what I am speaking of an introduction can be found in the DuVersiy web site [3]. Not that experiencing is limited to the three centers in quite as rigid a way as I may have suggested in this essay but, to move from my experience with Mary, for example, to experiencing is a natural and sensible thing. To discover the truth and way of one's own life by exploring the energies and potential working and life of the centers, preferably at least sometimes with others, is a truly hopeful process.

More recently in my own experiencing, I have taken times during the practice to stop as if to allow myself to be seen, to invite, for example, Mary to be with me/us as one event. This is not done with the intention to have the kind of experience that I have described above as being seen, but rather that it enhances one's own seeing and to follow whatever may take place. Without wanting to be too fancy in this there are times when it is as if Mary takes position in one of the other empty chairs in the room, relaxes, maybe crosses her legs, rests her hands on her knee just like any other participant and then it can be that one becomes aware that much seems to be taking place but it is all either above or below one's normal conscious, but the fruits seep out in the day and days that follow.

Around the same time Bapak was having his experience of the history of the human forces at work in this world, Rudolf Steiner was writing of the story of man and the forces and the parts of the human which had evolved from the very earth itself. The different parts "... were connected with the earth by all kinds of currents, and remained connected with it. Hence man had an entirely different life; for example, the circulation of the blood, which is now confined within the limits of the skin, extended everywhere into the surrounding earth - it existed in the form of natural forces... but the forces in it were connected by innumerable threads with the rest of the whole earth. That was the beginning of a physical man.

"We must clearly understand that the paths of the blood now existing in man are nothing other than continuations of currents which in the ancient condition of the earth permeated the whole earth. It is the same with the nerves. All the nerves extended into mother earth. These are now sundered, as it were...and the same goes for the other parts of the human being. Before he became a son of man he was a son of earth. Before man became a human being the earth was the bearer of all human forces. Thus the earth is the mother of mankind. However little you can imagine that man could ever grow out of the present stony earth, he did indeed spring forth from the earth, when it was still a living being.

"If we were to ask ourselves whether the earth was not indeed exceedingly important for man, we would have to say: Yes it was, for in its original form it contained all that man later took into himself. In one part the heart was prepared, in another the brain; in our earth every fiber was prepared. And just as our inner being was prepared in the earth, in the same way, in what we shall have developed as our new body when the Earth has reached its goal, will we carry within us the form which the future planet, the future embodiment of our Earth must assume. Today man works upon his soul; in this way he makes his body more and more like the soul, and when the Earth has arrived at the end of its mission his body will have become an outward image of the soul which has taken Christ into itself... he must take care that the work he can now do consciously is done in the Christ-like way, so that the etheric body which will be an image of this work will enter worthily into the spiritualized Earth."

According to all we have looked at we see the forces of the human originating out of the earth itself, evolving eventually into separate beings with the same forces now at work in their bodies, until the present when we have the chance to unite these forces with the higher or cosmic energies so that the earth can, hopefully, create a species that can link heaven and earth and maintain that link for the betterment of the earth and the divine.

The three centers and their energies are just how things are, how we are. So the point of mentioning Joseph Chilton Pearce, Talking With Angels, Pak Subuh, etc is to show this growing awareness of the natural universality of our centers. Bennett's *Deeper Man* was/is a great help in articulating the how of the centers, TWA shows the known universality but from the creating worlds themselves. Of course, Gurdjieff was never claiming that teaching of the three centers was 'his'; his teaching concerning the centers was initiating at this time in the world the objective truth and reality of the centers. It is only us, understandably, who have made it, at least for the short term, a Gurdjieff thing!

So it can be said that all of the preceding pages are simply a comment to the effect that exploring and working with our centers as in experiencing is such a wonderful thing for us to have now. It offers so much but it can not even begin to be seen without exploring it for ourselves. We can speak of Steiner and Bapak and experiences with Mary and John's gospel but, simply put, all of this comes down for us to the joys in uniting the centers with their corresponding forces in the creating world and thereby discovering our individual nature and individual task.

*I died as a mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was Man.
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as Man, to soar
With angels blest; but even from angelhood
I must pass on: all except God doth perish.
When I have sacrificed my angel-soul,
I shall become what no mind e'er conceived.
Oh, let me not exist! for Non-existence
Proclaims in organ tones, To Him we shall return. - Rumi*

[1] <http://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/trans/trans2-01.htm>

[2] <http://members.aol.com/johndkirby/TedSite/index.htm>

[3] <http://www.duversity.org/Experiencing.html>

On Board - Reflections on Subjectivity

Knud Kusche

I received Tony's invitation to write on board the ship I'm currently working with.

What is new? Good question, quite appropriate right now, because many times before I have been in the same situation i.e. arriving on a ship I have not been on for some time.

Due to the natural processes of renewal, decomposition and hazard nothing is like it was before. Change is constant. Am I aware of it? Rarely. Does it feel like something? Not so easy to re-feel past situations.

There is a level where everything is just as hopeless as always. Knud lost, panicking, in despair. It is unpleasant and the fact that an impartial observer is present does not make the despair easier to bear.

There is an interior world which I try to access and where at times I enter. Usually I notice when I am not there anymore, after the visit.

Sometimes I see the whole picture and that does not seem to change a lot. Still it is a comfort and I feel more serene for a while.

For almost 30 years I have been in active contact with the Work. I can re-feel some moments. It is like looking at some personally meaningful pictures and you can relive the moment they were taken. Nice but so what? (I am a practical and as a genuine German also quite romantic - hence Rilke - fellow)

I am still around, function in society, do an honorable job as a father and am a decent husband. I still like to learn, to discover. (Coincidence that I affirm that just after mentioning that I have been exposed to DuVerity and predecessors for a long time?)

I do not believe I can change, do change. Essentially what I believe is what I do not suspect, what I am unaware of. Almost all obvious beliefs I have shed. I constantly discover new items on my sometimes less hidden agenda.

I guess I have faith as I am not interested in suicide.

Interaction with people, active and practical dialogue is probably my most stimulating and desired spiritual activity. The biggest obstacle to realizing the potential inherent in the situations and encounters is my tendency to take control, my lack of patience, this seemingly unbreakable conviction that I know better than most others.

As said I do not believe in change and yet it happens. It is likely that it even happens on my level - that I actually change. Within how many lifetimes is the question (And I have in no way come to terms with reincarnation).

So what probably happens is that I am experiencing feelings and seeing parts of me which were always there but so far ignored. Stripping off fatigue, cynism (I am happy to report that Microsoft spell check informs me this word does not exist), disappointment which account for most of my proudly presented tolerance, distance, wisdom what is left?

Five, ten or twenty years ago would I have been able to live the last PI event in Kent in a comparable way? Then & there I contributed a lot of not interfering, allowing, an openness. What seemed effortless and natural during the weekend was not possible once back home, experiencing alone.

(It is of course an unanswerable question, the one on how would the PI event been in 1992)

I re-feel other seminaries. I see: I was more focused on doing then, on getting something. Also it was more a more extreme affair, sort of oscillating between despair and ecstasy

Once I got a similar feeling to the one I enjoyed last June. It was through sweat and hard labor I got there and I felt cheated afterwards. I had fared bravely and got "nothing". In Kent the nothing was not even noticed. I just carried on with my usual routines. Afterwards every now and then I realize that Kent was different.

Another question could be: Did my fellow seamen notice a difference, felt a change when I came, when I today worked with them. Maybe the only real indicator. Fully subjective but leaving no place for my ego or illusions. (Which makes me remember and re-feel a seminar Tony did on Philosophy around 1986 in the UK: I retained that objectivity is the illusion and only subjectivity real and re-feel moments of togetherness with Tony and his wife, of sitting on the carpet in a big living room before a paper board and being amazed.)

POEMS

Michael White

*Selected by Michael from his recently published collection **Beyond Within***

"Americans...Germans...English, French, Russian – all have ideals, all have peaceful purpose, all kill." G. I. Gurdjieff

one imagines
then believes
then forgets it was imagined
in a hypnotic social trance
propagated by consensual suggestion
and buffered with prejudices
only the techgnosis of self initiation
and the inner aim of dis identification
subjectivises the other
enough to move the point of view
from the personal
to the global
to create autonomous freedom
within the ossified customs of the host
and maintain a holonic cosmology
that consciously acquits oneself with nature
in a reciprocal maintenance
that does not offend the earth

"I know no other Gospel than the liberty to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination" William Blake

dogmatism domesticates imagination
the power of conceptualization
fossilizes into cold materialism
so that the empirical sense
is the darkness at noon
as opposed to revelation
which restores creative imagination
and provides a prophetic guide
to the imaginal realm
where the sensory universe
is pure light
and all forms apparitional
this other world
has identical contours and dimensions
but is devoid of concrete materiality
each thing is a theophanic vision
on a screen of active imagination

"Those who come together in the night and entwine in swaying delight perform a serious work" Rilke

who can complain
of suffering for love
the price must be paid
love is fickle
and life short
don't be resentful
suffering is the coinage
minted in the fires of desire
used to purchase the delight
that flies in the night

"In order to keep a thing, we have to give it away." Joseph Rael

Joseph tells a story
about counseling a woman
who was having financial trouble
so he gave her a hundred dollar bill
and told her to give it away
to anyone she chose on the street
soon after this the woman got a new job
with a very nice salary increase
a friend of the woman
hearing this tale
sent Joseph a hundred dollars
and suggested he play it on a certain machine at the local casino
Joseph always tries to do as he is told
so he went and put the money in the slot machine
where he won twenty-five hundred dollars

Don't Rush Off

when i first moved to Tennessee
there was a distinctive dialect i hadn't heard before
they had an expression they used to bid one another farewell
where the person leaving would say
"come go with me"
to which the other replied
"don't rush off"
which meant simply "good-bye"
soon after i moved up from Florida
one of the neighbors came by for a visit
he came in and talked for a while
and welcomed us to the neighborhood
and when he was ready to go
he said, "come go with me."
i wanted to be friendly
so i said "sure"
and went out and got in the truck with him
we went to his place
and he showed me his house and barn

then brought me back home
it didn't take long to figure out
that when one of the neighbors was getting ready to leave
and they said,
"come go with me"
i wasn't supposed to get up and go with them
instead i learned to say,
"don't rush off"

"Look into experience." A. G. E. Blake

inner impressions
fed by the senses
associatively constitute cognitive constellations
that establish habitual structures of meaning
which mechanically judge incoming perceptions
to see things any other way
requires consciously creative disciplines
that experiment with experience
by voluntarily directing attention
to forge heightened perspectives
that articulate new qualities of awareness
which create allegoric gateways
to different levels of understanding
awakening unthought thoughts
beyond localized cultural restraints

"I place a certain trust in human nature, even in the nature of the most limited." Jean Genet

in this shivering evanescent dream illusion
one isolated hermit poet
one piper at the gate
one ray of enlightenment from under a tree
one writer on the fringes
one heroic solitary seeker
waking in the midst of this contrived universe
can cut through the fundament of conventionality
and with pure individualistic naked mind awkward illumination
stand forth
as one veritable thing
in this phantom world

"I'm preachin' the word of God, I'm puttin' out your eyes" Bob Dylan

the only rules to follow
are the ones you make yourself
all boundaries
are self imposed
anything you can imagine
can be real
what is real now
was once only imagined

include all possibilities
things go by quick
kiss'em if you can
when offered a choice between two things
take both

"Words and meanings in association are poetry." Bhamaha

the innate potential of words
is their layered meanings
denoting all the ambient shadowings
 foreshadowings
 and shadings
of their metaphorical potency
which aesthetically suggest
a delightful beauty
provoked by the indicative indirection
of semantic signifiers
that bends words
and arrays all their meanings
such that
 poetry is to language
as the
 crystal is to light

"the knowledge of it is deep silence" Hermes Trismegistus

the fathomless indifferent abyss
is the ground of all existence
where the blind face of desire
acts out the principle of generation
to transform the undifferentiated chaos
into mineral earth
 into plant life
 into sentient awareness
 into self conscious recognition
 into self realization
which returns to the primal unity
in a great ascending cycle
of recurrence

The Crisis in Human Affairs - Fifty Years On - a short celebration of Bennett's commentary on World Affairs and Evolution

Richard Heath

*Richard is beginning work on a new book, provisionally entitled **Sacred Latitudes and the Evolution of Human Purpose** that boldly surveys the human search for meaning since the Stone Age and its possible new emergent forms today. He has made LogoVisual Technology a major point of reference and a necessary evolution from the work of Gurdjieff and Bennett. Readers who want to read an explanation of LVT can look it up on Wikipedia. It marks a major departure from thinking as planning and control and may approximate to what Bennett was after in his concept of 'progress' as only **within the present moment**.*

The present world condition is that of an historical crisis between industrial scale meaning and individual meaning-making. The organisations that are helped by magnetic hexagons [1] are trying to compete within the industrial scale meaning markets that (a) wish to subvert the will of customers to buy their products by producing more industrial scale meaning and (b) better exploit the resources of the planet in order to achieve their own growth and the growth of the economy. Going green is a new industrial scale meaning.

This approach is contradictory if connected to John Bennett's aims to find a master-idea, which he suggests will relate to the Law of Reciprocal Maintenance [2]. He also says in *Intimations (The World Situation)* that humanity must find an alternative to growth and progress as the currently ruling master idea of the modern age. The new master-idea will also, therefore, neutralise both progress and the industrial scale meanings found in Church, broadcast publications, and advertising/ politics, all of which diminish the role of the individual except through the deification of celebrities, leaders and the super rich as the new gods of progress. Since the atrophy of the organ of conscience referred to by Gurdjieff, it has remained a moot point as to what could possibly make any difference now, for conscience would allow the Law of Reciprocal Maintenance to be directly seen and the role of the human within the overall scale of things to be adjusted, not to be great (re Bennett's Megalanthropic Epoch) but to co-operate better on the meaning of their lives.

The only organ left is basically that which processes the current industrial scale meanings of the information technology that distributes this to the masses. The Internet has provided an arena in which co-operation is possible, peer-to-peer, but the broadcast systems still dominate. There is, in a real sense, a battle in heaven between individual meaning and centralised meaning, the latter advocating entertainment, indoctrination and consumerism. The biggest weakness of individual meaning making today is that people do not know how to think. We cannot expect people to learn this since the formatory apparatus substitutes real thought with something that looks like thoughts. In this respect there is a "market" for LVT outside of commercial organisations.

Bennett's Work Continues?

"Hodgson and Myers invented hexagons and modelling in the 80s, as JGB et al invented structural communication in the 60s. It would then seem to have been timely to invent LVT in the nineties and make this as big a step. In fact, it was invented but not noticed or taken up until the noughties." A. G. E. Blake (private communication).

Here we have four epochs that can be related to Aristotle's four causes, but here appearing as *incapacities*:

1. Gurdjieff & Ouspensky (Formal: man cannot do)
2. Structural communication & systematics (Material: man cannot learn)

3. Hexagon modelling (Efficient: man cannot decide)

4. LVT (Final: man cannot think)

Four incapacities lead to "meaning happens out of nowhere", a change of paradigm! This is synergic and not megalanthropic, thence also dialogue in knowing that you don't know. It was all supposed to be about emptying the mind but more detail was required. Realise your incapacities and the true source is then revealed. Children work well with incapacities hence play. Child-like not Childish, they used to say, was what Jesus meant.

In a sense, much of the modern world becomes irrelevant to the new sense of meaning as an invisible partner in your life on Earth. Meaning is a transaction between the situation and your pattern. A zillion objects of knowledge and desire are truly, largely an irrelevant accessory to life.

Only enough is required but enough is necessary, etc.

[1] Magnetic hexagons were and are used in management workshops and were derived from structural communication to embody 'units of meaning' in movable objects. The precursor to LVT.

[2] Taken from Gurdjieff: 'There exists in the world a law of the reciprocal maintenance of everything existing'.

Harvard-Smithsonian

Early Earth: hostile to life as we know it, but friendly to the first methane-loving bacteria. Astronomers modeled the history of Earth's atmosphere to learn what fingerprints to seek on alien worlds.



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CULTIVATING THE FERTILE GROUND OF CREATIVITY

Karen Stefano

Playing and making tissue paper collages may seem like creative activities reserved for kindergarten students, however, it's these basic inventive and imaginative actions that have the power to shape lifelong changes in our body, mind and emotions.

The creative impulse is wired into each and every one of us, an impulse that moves all life forward. Its inherent rhythms bring us growth and expansion. Every thing that we can see began with a creative thought; an inspiration. We are no exception.

As human beings, we need an open space for the full articulation of our own essence and not to be confined in boxes. Various forms of imaginative play and artistic creation can bring out of hiding some of the essential properties we were born with but have been neglected and covered over. Unfortunately, our lives have become so busy and complex that what is natural to us has become blocked or completely shut down, because we have had to compete with or copy others. This causes us to become stuck in our lives. Consequently, the unexpressed emotions of anger, fear, grief and sorrow become trapped in the body and the psyche.

Becoming aware of the unconscious material that is held deep within our psyche, we have the opportunity to start cultivating a mindful and creative life. Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist (1875-1961) said, "If you have nothing at all to create, then perhaps you create yourself." When fully engaged in creative activity, propelled by an energy that has nothing to do with logic, we begin to move past the critical mind, to restore the unity of body, mind and feelings.

Journeying to the part of ourselves where inspiration, joy and creativity live, we begin to express feelings that are difficult to address in traditional therapeutic contexts through the form of serious play. A child plays and the whole of her learns. In adult life we have to find ways of playing deliberately to restore our original curiosity, and sense of beauty. We need to experiment and re-integrate the adult with the child, the young and old in us.

One avenue of opening the creative channels is through making and engaging with collages, where the hands do the thinking without thought, and play inventively with colorful tissue paper, letting images emerge from deep within. The mutual activity of hands, eyes and brain produces a subtly different kind of awareness. In this process the minds has time to let go of words and plans and relax into the moment.

The Tissue Paper Collage Method Playshop, developed by Jungian analyst Dr. Edith Wallace, is an exceptionally powerful way to access the unconscious. This unique method introduces a new and significant synergy of expressive art and self-discovery, using collage making, meditation, movement and writing as catalysts for healing. This creative fusion acts as a bridge between conscious and unconscious thought in a safe and non-threatening way. Through this kind of work, a dialogue can develop between what is unconscious or unknown and what is conscious or known. This allows for a more holistic intelligence to come into play, bringing meaning and inspiration into our lives and the community around us.

Healing past traumas through "play" is a model successfully used for children all the time, and adults rarely take advantage of this avenue of adventure and creativity for healing. Donald Winnicott, a British paediatrician and psychoanalyst has said "It is only in playing that the individual is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self." Playing invites you into a matrix where unconscious forces allow your mind to wander freely and find a healing equilibrium.

Playing always happens in the moment, providing a transitional space that allows for the emergence of creative energy. An alchemical process begins when you allow the space for creativity to bubble up into awareness, where the imagination can lead the way. The founder of the Play Therapy Association, Charles Schaefer, has said, "We are never more fully alive, more completely ourselves, or more deeply engrossed in anything than when we are playing."

Whether you are painting, sculpting, writing or making collages, all creative endeavors take time. This generation has been weaned on fast food, supercomputers and instant gratification; it has become normal to be moving at 120 miles per hour. Our lives are so filled to the brim with activity, it's often a chore to put aside a chunk of time for one's own spiritual, emotional and mental well being. One cannot enter into a creative space while talking on the phone, working and multi tasking everyday responsibilities. It takes time and effort to slow your life down to a pace where you can allow your imagination to cultivate your life. Trust me; the effort will be well worth the wait.

Here are five practices that I have found helpful in cultivating creativity:

1. Stop, Slow down and Take a Breath

Stop! Decelerate from the high speed of your life. Slow down enough to breathe deeply and quiet the body/mind. This is your starting point.

2. Ground your body to the earth.

Find a body oriented practice geared toward developing a deeper awareness of your connection to the earth. For example, with your feet planted on the ground imagine growing roots deep into the earth, allowing the intelligence from the earth to rise through your feet, slowly upwards into your awareness. Or, simply just *touch* something until you really feel it.

3. Tune in to yourself and listen

This is a time for you to pay attention to what is going on in your body, mind and emotions. Find a contemplative practice in which you can locate yourself in your physiology, allowing thoughts to flow freely, your mind to empty and inspiration to enter spontaneously.

4. Trust in the unknown

The natural rising of creativity cannot be coerced. Creativity does not happen on command; it is about cultivating an open and receptive state of mind. Make an appeal to that which is sacred to you and wait.

5. Dwell in what you are doing – give it time.

Now is the time to play! Put ambition and any expectations on hold for a short while and allow your curiosity to roam. See what arises. Don't think in terms of results and don't compare yourself with others.

Playshop at the International Association of Group Psychotherapy, Japan Oct. 6-8, 2008. Karen Stefano introduced the tissue paper collage method to the Pacific Rim section of the IAGP. She a talk and experieworkshop. They were enthusiastically received.



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REMINISCENCE ON TIME CYCLES IN A LIFE, and OPENING UP TO NATURE & MUSIC

David A. Salminen - November, 2008 – Portland, Oregon:

A few weeks ago I wrote a letter to Tony Blake. He replied in an encouraging way and asked me to expand and complete some of the thinking I'd expressed. Something in me strongly resists getting the material into an article format - and I don't even know what the resistance is, so how can I "get it done"? It is perhaps best to begin here by simply quoting the beginning of my original epistle: "Just today the current Newsletter arrived. At a first glance, it looks like an exemplary issue and I thank you. I am full of thoughts, actually, and wonder if there would be some value in writing a few of them down... my intuition (conscience?) tells me that I should simply make space for a few moments, eschewing the demands of my 'busy-ness' and just write..."

More recently than the original epistle, I have noticed and begun contemplating a specific cycle in my life connected with major completions and new beginnings, in 17-year periods. This is not something I've seen discussed elsewhere, and I can't help but wonder if other people find something similar in their own lives. The cycle that has caught my interest is not just any 17-year cycle, but rather the one that began with the lead-up to my 6th birthday, and subsequent cycles as well. Somewhere around the 6th birthday, as Yul Kilchur once told me, is an extremely important time in one's development, when you start to lose your "milk teeth", and normally perhaps start to go out exploring more of the world with other children. What I remember most vividly from the time is a strong desire for a bicycle. My neighborhood pals were mostly 2 or 3 years older than I was, and I really wanted to keep up... my parents were able to accommodate my wish as a birthday gift, and boy was I happy! But my birthday was in January and we lived in big snow country, so I had to wait for the beginning of spring to start learning to ride... Then, using a mud-squishy, grassy hill as an aid to momentum and a soft place to fall, and with a couple of my friends helping steady the bike while I got onto it from a stepladder (the bike was a bit big for me), and aided by my strong desire, I got the hang of it – in one afternoon. My older sister was so jealous... she was 3 years older and had been relying on training wheels for a couple of years! Desire is a big thing, if we can harness it. Soon after I was riding – how soon, I don't remember - my parents put limits on how far away I could go, down the country road we lived on. I fondly remember "the pig farm" as the original limit, about a mile away... we used to love to go down there and watch the pigs making their funny noises and wallowing in the mud.

Seventeen years later, in 1974, I graduated from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, began giving piano concerts, moved west with my first wife (we gotten married in 1973) started working professionally in the music industry in Los Angeles, then moved up to Alaska, experienced a painful separation from my wife, and began an involvement with the Alaska Institute for Creative Studies - a Gurdjieff study group founded by George and Mary Cornelius.

Seventeen years later again, in 1991, I experienced more separations and beginnings: For instance, I visited Mary & George Cornelius, who'd retired to southern Oregon – responding to a letter from George requesting that I come down to visit, in response to a request from Mary (who died a few weeks later) to hear me play piano again one last time. Once there, I gave concerts for them and friends for 6 or 7 nights in a row. Earlier in the year, I'd received my last letter from Elizabeth Bennett, who also died, that same year. She and the Cornelius' had been very close, I think... these were separations that affected me for years, although I didn't really understand the import until very recently. Perhaps Elizabeth wouldn't mind if I quoted from her letter, dated 19 March, 1991 – "George B is in the states for the moment, visiting Mary & George. I will discuss with him and Tony Blake about material for your work. To me it seems - from the group here; I don't know about yours! – that people tend to treat the Work more as an intellectual exercise than as a life-support. If we actually practiced what is preached to us, the Work would come alive for us in a different way."

After a last but well-received public late fall farewell concert in Alaska, and a painful parting of the ways from the Alaska Institute, my 2nd wife Veerah (together now for some 27 years, I'm happy to say) and I moved down to the "Lower 48", i.e. from Alaska to Oregon. Thus started a whole new life again - big changes in lifestyle, and careers, and in most of our relationships, but also new ways of approaching our spiritual life and music... there is more... but I will move on to "now"...

This year, my 57th, seems to be another watershed in my life. It is largely about contact with Nature, new directions again in music – charity work on a different level, better health, and coming home to “myself” while simultaneously experiencing a new dimension of relationship with Veerah. It is just as much a huge year for her – in terms of self-healing and integration, and social maturation - or more so, if anything. However, she is a few years younger than I am, and not necessarily on the same hypothetical 17-year cycle.

This particular cycle seems to be about big movements in time acceleration and space – literal as well as metaphorical, and I wonder if it is a typical thing...

As I blurted out in my letter to Tony Blake a few weeks ago, I was just this year finally able to really experience for myself just how powerful Matchett’s “neural education” (more recently called ILM, by Mr. Blake) can be. This is something that came upon me after years of not really applying the idea of it seriously, and thus not getting it... perhaps I delayed because I am a trained musician, and have experience and information on various other ways of listening or using music which are also valid, in their own way. Or there might have been a laziness on my part... The listening for a feeling of Wisdom through the music, as opposed to the music itself, is such an opening! I would expect all kinds of reports coming out from people, if they can just be brought to the threshold...

Looking for a way to bring more insight or creativity or wisdom into my life, I’d gone back to reading one of the Dramatic University journals devoted largely to Neural Education, from sometime in the 1990’s when Saul Kuchinsky was still alive and doing his epoch-making capable editing and marshalling together of diverse writing talent – Ted Matchett, Tony Blake, Tony Judge, et al. And again, I was remembering something Bhante used to say... *try hard*... I applied myself as honestly (not simply with a coarse insensitive effort) as I could, and was immediately quite flooded with meanings. “Media” has been more accessible to me ever since, and new “meanings” keep emerging and evolving – I find myself having the odd experience (at least it still seems odd to me) of seeing my set, old or new understandings of different things being superseded again and again... by a lovely transcendence... different from the mere disillusionment that “life” - ala Nicoll’s “life” or Thomas de Hartmann’s “banality of life which man cannot conquer” - throws against us relentlessly & mercilessly. (Hartmann’s remark was actually the subtitle of one of his nocturnes.)

The music I “used” for my personal initiation into Neural Education on that singular day, was one of David Lewiston’s old recordings of Tibetan chanting and drumming... what differences do our environments, choice of music, the company we keep, what we recently ate or drank, etc. make to the application of the technique? It remains to be seen, I suspect...

But the main thing here for me, in any case, was that I was somehow initiated that day into a technique of listening to music that is really different, and divergent, from the also valid “emotional education” benefits that I have long touted as a teacher of music and music appreciation... It’s one thing to “get” what one certain something is about; it’s another to see past the apparition at hand to another dimension of meaning..

Of course, music is a natural thing, and nature is musical, so – or rather, the positive benefits of open nature-experiencing and open music-listening... lead toward a common place. In my own case, I think that there has been a preparation going on, to enable this personal breakthrough.

For this whole past year (starting a bit before my 57th birthday last January) my wife and I together have been walking in nature (mostly in a nearby relatively “wild” nature park, 550+ acres large) almost every single day. We’d started walking together regularly in our neighborhood a couple of months earlier - originally as part of a weight-loss & fitness program - but as the neighborhood streets became boring, and our fitness levels improved, we started going out into the hilly nature park nearby. Inexplicably, for the previous four years we’d lived nearby, we had hardly dared approach it. I guess the hilly climb up a rocky trail into the park put us off, but now we rather look forward to it. I daresay, I think I need to cognize for myself how often “obstacles”, whether big or small, are certainly made much worse by erroneous thinking! It strikes me now how wonderful it is that I or anyone can change one thing, just one thing, in our lives – and then, having changed one thing, little by little other things become possible...

For the most part when we walk together, we walk silently, now usually for an hour and ½ or so, and we each practice awareness disciplines in our own ways. For myself, although we walk at a normal pace, I am usually able to work with a version of the paced and mindful “walking meditation” I learned many years ago from The Venerable “Bhante” Dharmawara. Veerah also had some exposure to “Bhante” and his training, but as we have separately and severally been exposed to a host of trainings in awareness, we each let the other be in his or her own experience. Sometimes one of us will bring a bit of the day’s business up the trail with us... but it soon becomes clear that we’re both better off to let it go...

Our disciplines have served to open up a great deal, I’m sure, but I have also learned that there is much that comes without - or perhaps even in spite of - specific techniques. For instance, as many people have discovered, after walking in a specific natural area again and again, you spontaneously start to have noticing or discovering experiences of all kinds. Easiest to relate, I think, are the bird watching opportunities. But they can be so rich – the cliché description of “birdwatcher” seems very inadequate to describe the wonder - Last Winter, for instance, sometimes even on very inclement, windy days, we would catch sight of a smallish bird, apparently a raptor, with an odd habit of hovering high in one spot facing the wind and working quite hard to stay in one place. Sometimes the bird would do acrobatics, and sometimes it even seemed (forgive me for this unpardonable presumption) to give performances “just for us”! Later in the Spring and early Summer, we would see this bird - the American Kestrel, we found out - sitting on strategically placed trees or bushes seemingly in rapture to the sunset...

Then, the Kestrels went missing for several months. But recently, with the Fall weather, they’ve come back again. There are other raptors as well, that show up unpredictably - like Red-tailed hawks that exhibit high, lazy soaring circling, especially on clear, warm, sunny days - and Northern Harriers, that course low over meadow areas. The variety of behaviors is as interesting, or more so, than the beautiful plumage.

I could go on - describing a number of these discovery experiences available from nature - but in general, perhaps the one most special thing that has come out of our regular walking in nature - difficult to prove objectively - is simply an increased sensitivity to the presence of critters. For example, walking home at dusk sometimes, I’ll glance over to a dark woods on one side of us or the other, sensing without actually thinking about it, that something interesting is there... then there’s a movement, and an owl takes off – as if just for our delight! Or a deer moves... and lo’ – she’s followed by a fawn! Our joy at such things is almost unbearable, having spent too much of our lives in isolation from Nature... isolated from what is or should be natural for us, since we are, after all, natural critters ourselves. Reading some books by Edward Wilson – like his “Biophilia” that was recommended to me by Tony in response to my “original epistle” - has helped me to further understand and appreciate my experiences, and validate somewhat the deepening perception that is being enhanced over time (but in fits and starts) by our walks. Specifically, Wilson’s insistence that experiencing nature is an imperative educational process, for creatures that have come out of the natural world as we humans did, is not simply a sweet idea, but something that can be nurtured, I have found – even though breakthroughs, such as “first sightings” are always spontaneous and unexpected. Sometimes, for better or worse, the sudden discovery of something new, say a woodpecker we haven’t seen before, or only rarely, elicits a chimpanzee-like vocalization from me... I’m learning to restrain myself, though – not that it really matters. Also, I’ve discovered, birds are very sensitive - even a long way off - to having humans point at them... they fly away from such behaviors. Such learnings, I believe, are not insignificant; for me, certainly, they have deepened my sense of being a part of something very big...

THE SUPREME ART OF DIALOGUE - structures of meaning

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Stories below taken from The Keyen of Fu Tze by Charles Fontenay, originally published by Coombe Springs Press. Some extracts are available to DuVersity members on our forum.

Property

Why is it", asked Hsin Hsueh, "when one has accumulated knowledge and ability through many years, gaining him a measure of human recognition, this is considered inconsequential as an aspect of his true self? Has not this knowledge and ability been acquired as a consequence of the nature of the true self?"

"Yet it is still but an acquisition, and the acquisition must lack the wisdom of that which has acquired it", answered Fu Tze. "If you place your identity in something that is not yourself, you limit yourself to less than you are."

The Mirror

"I do not understand how it is that the circumstances of our lives can change with the state of our inner being", said Hsin Hsueh.

In reply, Fu Tze handed him a mirror.

Others

"I find that it is much easier to remember myself in the Way of Heaven when I am alone", said Hsi Fang. "When I am with others, I fall easily into the habits of thinking and acting that are characteristic of the Way of the World." "Your problem", said Fu Tze, "is that you have been taught to consider others as people."

DUVERSITY EVENTS 2009

February 13-16, USA event to be determined

March 27-29, USA Systematics

June 4-7 UK event to be determined

July 31-August 5, USA Playshop

VIDEO-CONVERSATIONS ON DVD with Patrick de Mare, Joseph Rael, Gordon Lawrence, Warren Kenton and many others – check our web site!

Patrick de Mare, June 2007, at his home in Hampstead

