

# DUVERSIY NEWSLETTER NO. 6, 2001

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## DUVERSE INTELLIGENCE

Patrick de Mare says that *mind* exists *between* brains and not *in* them. This brings our attention to the dynamic network of information exchange that involves the artefacts we have created and the landscapes of our thought. We are involved in a flux of giving and receiving information and to imagine that thinking goes on inside our heads is a very limited and distorted view. The inner networks of the brain are coupled into the outer networks of our 'artificial' world.

We consider it very important that people are aided in *thinking together*. The democratic ideal is that people *if allowed* can come up with good solutions to their problems. This is only possible under certain conditions. The first of these is that they must have access to *good information*. Such information is capable of verification by some means other than argument, persuasion, belief or force. We consider that access to this 'good' or 'clean' information is at least as important as access to clean food, water and air. To a very large extent, most people work under conditions in which such access is limited or even prevented but it is also true that we have barely acknowledged the *need to do work* to clean up the information on which we draw.

The second condition is that we are able to *remember* the course of the dynamic process

we are involved in when we think together. Many of us will have had the experience of enjoying a highly meaningful conversation, only to find afterwards that we are unable to reconstruct what it contained. A memory system is being developed in the method of logovisual technology that may revolutionize the processing of information through dynamic exchange. It is a mark of a strong intelligence that it is able to reconstruct the moves it has made, but most of us need all the help we can get to come near to this.

Given clean information and an adequate memory system we can then address the third condition: this is to *create new forms of expression* instead of relying on conventional or standard models or templates. This condition flies in the face of nearly all current practice, in which conformity to a normative mode of expression is taken as a mark of success.

## NEEDS OF THE SYNERGIC EPOCH



### Survival and Spirituality in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century on Earth

A DuVersity Gathering in Spring 2002

In the series of gatherings that began in 1997, the DuVersity has been taking themes originating from John Bennett, who has remained our main inspiration. His idea of the *synergic epoch* is that we are now entering a new historical period in which *co-operation* will become all-important and the humanistic emphasis on the separate individual will die away. He emphasized that this will come about only through immense difficulty and turmoil. In the transition, what we used to consider as 'spiritual' may be seen as just part of our conditioning and new developments in technology and organization will emerge as a new kind of spirituality. Spirituality is no more and no less than our link with the unknown, interfaced by creativity.

# THINKING AGAIN OF LIFE'S MIRACLE

Mae-Wan Ho

*Lecture at Schumacher College 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Celebration, The Prince's Trust, Charlotte Road,  
London, April 7, 2001.*

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This contains the main gist of the talk Mae-Wan gave at our seminar dialogue on *Methods of the Soul*

Imagine a fire-breathing dragon a mile long flying straight as an arrow across the evening sky. The night goddess, annoyed at the disturbance, casts a silken veil in its path. The head of the dragon hits the veil, but the veil does not rip apart. Instead, the dragon is absorbed into the fabric. In almost no time at all, the entire dragon has vanished, its roar replaced by an eerie silence. The night goddess smiles enigmatically and waits. Then, a slight flicker of her delicate hand, and whuarr! The head of the fiery dragon comes blasting out to continue on its way, but missing the rest of its body. The goddess laughs and flicks the veil again, and out comes the dragon's trunk. Finally, after another pause, she releases the dragon's tail. The mighty dragon has been permanently dismembered for violating the peace of the heavens.

I have been describing the remarkable experiment with laser light carried out by US physicist Lene Hau and her colleagues and reported in *Nature* at the beginning of this year [1]. They show how you can stop light in its tracks. A 2 km long laser light-beam, the dragon, can be trapped inside a layer of sodium atoms as thin as a veil, by means of coherent entanglement. The sodium atoms, cooled to near absolute zero and prepared in a coherent state by a coupling laser, slows down the incident laser beam ten million-fold, so that the head hardly has time to emerge before the tail end is completely absorbed. Switching off the coupling laser at this point effectively traps the beam – now squeezed to ten-millionth of its original length - inside the layer. The beam can remain imprisoned for close to a thousandth of a second, which is an eternity on the scale of the speed of light. Switching on the

coupling laser will immediately release the light beam to continue on its way. Not only that, by switching the coupling laser on and off three times in succession, the light beam can be released in three separate segments.

This amazing capture of energy by coherent entanglement is what organisms do for a living, day in and day out. Think of coherent entanglement in terms of partners dancing together, perfectly in step, but each doing different movements.

As we face the threats of genetic engineering in the midst of the climate change catastrophe, poet Wendell Berry reminds us, "Thine life is a miracle, think again" [2]. Think again, for it is imperative to replace the destructive, mechanistic and instrumental view of life with the truly organic and miraculous.

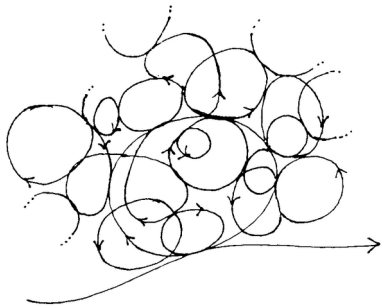
James Hillman and Satish Kumar talked about the soul this morning. The soul is the essence of the whole. Organisms are possessed of the irrepressible tendency towards being whole, towards being part of a larger whole. They are predisposed to be soulful. Whole books could be written on the miracle of organisms, and I have written one of them [3], but I won't have time to talk about that. Instead, I'll show you some suggestive images of the organism.

It has become a truism that living organisms depend on energy flow. Actually, energy flow is not sufficient; it is energy capture and storage that is key. The sun shines on earth as it does on Mars and Venus, but only earth has life, as far as we know, because only earth has successfully captured and stored the energy of sunlight. The real miracle that enables life to emerge then is to close the energy circle, to make a life cycle that stores and feeds on the energy flowing through. Something magical happens with a circle. A circle entails perpetual return, and that means dynamic stability.

The life cycle is in turn made up of numerous sub-cycles of activities, or biological rhythms, ranging in periods of split seconds and minutes, to circadian, annual and supra-annual (see Figure 1). James Hillman has urged us all to slow down, but also warns against excessive slowing which leads to stagnation. Well, the organism has the full range of activities from the

very slow to the very fast all at once, and from the most local to the global. (Just as Schumacher says, we have to pay attention to both the very small as well as the very big, the local and the global.) Each sub-cycle in the diagram is a domain of stored *coherent* energy. Coherent energy comes and goes together so it can do work, as opposed to incoherent energy that goes in all directions and cancels itself out. You must imagine further, that each sub-domain has an internal structure similar to Figure 1. This ‘self-similarity’ of fractal structures is characteristic of natural processes. *All* the cycles of activities are linked coherently together; they are dancing together in step but each doing *different* things at different paces. That is why I can be digesting my breakfast while talking to you and waving my arms about as well.

As you can see, the more sub-cycles there are, the more energy is stored within the system. Cycles make perfect thermodynamic sense. Not only do they give dynamic stability, they enable the activities to be perfectly co-ordinated.



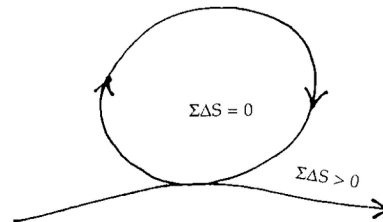
*Figure 1. The life cycle of the organism consists of innumerable, nested and coupled sub-cycles within.*

Most importantly, the cycles are linked through all space-time scales in a symmetrical, or reciprocal way, so that processes yielding energy can directly or indirectly transfer the energy to those that require energy, and their roles can be reversed as the need arises. By the same token, energy can be readily transferred from all over the system to any local point and conversely, energy created at any local point can spread over the entire system, with the minimum loss or

dissipation. In other words, energy transfer is rapid, efficient and reversible. This creates the conditions for internal balance, so that coherent energy is maximally conserved, and the system organisation is maintained.

All I have said up to now describes the ideal healthy organism, and applies also to a healthy ecosystem, or any sustainable system [4]. Figure 1 explains why sustainable systems are biodiverse, for they maximise energy storage over all space-time scales.

The reciprocal relationships between the activities occurring over the system are the key to dynamic balance and sustainability. You may ask how one can speak of reciprocity when it is always the wolf that devours the lamb. The wolf feeding on the lamb is storing lamb energy, so when the wolf dies and decomposes, it goes to nourish the grass that feeds the sheep that suckles the lamb. One has to think of reciprocities extending over space-times.



*Figure 2. The organism consists of cyclic non-dissipative processes coupled to the dissipative one-way energy flow.*

Now, let me show you some images of real organisms (see them on [www.i-sis.org](http://www.i-sis.org)). These are live organisms (the fruitfly larva, daphnia and the brine shrimp) recorded on video camera with an imaging technique invented in my laboratory, which enables us to see them in all the colors of the rainbow. The technique is a slight modification of the polarised light microscopy routinely used by earth scientists to look at rock crystals and more recently, also liquid crystals. But crystals have static molecular order, so how can living, moving organisms appear crystalline? All the molecules in the body would be moving around transforming and transferring energy.

The answer is that the molecules must be moving coherently together. Because the coherent motions are much slower than the vibrations of light, the molecules appear static to the light passing through. It is like capturing a still photograph of a moving object with a very fast film. In fact, these images directly demonstrate that highly coherent molecular motions must be taking place in the organisms' body. The organism is thick with coherent activities over all scales, from the molecular to the macroscopic. There is no preferred level within the organism. *All* the parts are participating in the whole.

These images also show that how we observe determines what we observe. As someone said, if your only tool is a hammer, then everything looks like a nail. Mechanistic biology is like a hammer, so everything looks dead as nails, or as Brian said, like nuts and bolts. If we observe with the sensitivity of organisms, however, we see them as organisms. Our imaging technique is non-destructive, if not non-invasive. You can put the organisms back into the aquarium afterwards.

I would like to draw out some of the main lessons the organism teaches us about the organic whole as opposed to the mechanistic whole. The organic whole is an ideal democracy of distributed control. It does not work in terms of a hierarchy of controller versus the controlled, but by intercommunication. Ultimately, each is as much in control as it is sensitive and responsive. In the ideal coherent system, local freedom (or autonomy) and global cohesion are *both* maximised. That is impossible within a mechanical system where public and private, local and global, are always in conflict.

Most important of all, the organic whole is quintessentially diverse and pluralistic. The organism is the antithesis of uniformity and homogeneity. We have some 30 000 genes and 300 000 proteins, astronomical numbers of metabolites, cofactors, inorganic ions, in numerous kinds of cells, tissues and organs that make up our body, all of which are necessary for sustaining the whole. In the same way, populations are naturally diverse, and thriving ecosystems are rich in species.

As hundreds of indigenous tribes today are being driven to extinction by the activities of corporations engaged in mining, timbering and oil extraction, I must stress in the strongest terms that we need the diversity of cultures in the human species. We need the full diversity of cultures to sustain the human miracle, to express the full creative human potential.

*Notes*

1. Liu C, Dutton Z, Behroozi CH and Hau LV. 'Observation of coherent optical information storage in an atomic medium using halted light pulses.' *Nature* 2001, 409, 490-3. Apologies to Cornell EA. ('Stopping light in its tracks'. *Nature* 2000, 409, 2001) for taking liberties with his account based on train-spotting.
2. See *Life is a Miracle* by Wendell Berry, 2000.
4. *The Rainbow and The Worm, The Physics of Organisms* by Mae-Wan Ho, World Scientific, Singapore, 1993, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1998.
5. On the nature of sustainable economic systems. Mae-Wan Ho *World Futures* 51, 199-221, 1998; also final chapter of *Genetic Engineering Dream or Nightmare? Turning the Tide on the Brave New World of Bad Science and Big Business*, by Mae-Wan Ho, Gateway, Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1999.

## PLAYSHOP

With Dr. Edith Wallace, Santa Fe, New



**Mexico. July 18-22, 2001**

The *Continuing Your Quest* playshop with Dr. Edith Wallace took place at the Sangre de Cristo Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico from July 13-18, 2001. There were 17 participants. This playshop had an extraordinary quality of freedom, creativity and discovery. Dr. Edith Wallace is a Jungian Analyst and long time student of John Bennett. She is the originator of the collage technique utilized in the playshop; the aim of which is to deepen contact with the unconscious and awaken a deeper knowing. There will be

another playshop from December 17 through December 22, 2001 in Santa Fe; for information contact Karen Stefano [registrar@duversity.org](mailto:registrar@duversity.org).

## History of the Soul

Anthony Blake

*edited from transcripts*

It seems first of all a very curious thing that the soul has any history at all, but I am going to look into some aspects as of how this broad concept of a part of man has been understood differently at different time periods. Unfortunately, I only have time to deal with and only have some knowledge of the Western Greco-Roman tradition so I neglect all—to a large extent—those other vast areas such as Asia which had their own cultures and their own terminology for this sort of thing.

Edith said in her talk that the Greek *psyche* is not the same as *soul* but of course in usual translations *psyche* is translated as soul and the two are treated as one and the same thing. I went to look up the English word 'soul' and find out where it came from, as a sound in language. I did discover something intriguing. The English word soul actually derives from the Anglo Saxon word *sawol*. Now *sawol* are the lungs, the physical lungs.

And here I must pause because there's an important thread of what I want to talk about, that in ordinary language the terms we use really without thinking, when we're not being philosophers and all the rest of it, have their origins in the way in which people quite some time ago understood the relationship between, let's call it for the moment our psychological experience, as experiencing selves and our physical body, so that all the different parts of the body at different time periods and the different cultures were ascribed certain psychological values.

Let's take another word, which is largely now gone out of usage in English—the word *pluck*. Now when I was a boy the term *pluck* referred to courage. Hardly anybody uses this word anymore, possibly because what it originally referred to has faded out of common experience. What it originally meant was the lungs and heart

of an animal and you can see that there could be just an accumulative folk feeling about that part of an animal which is to do with its power—its power of life, its vitality, its breath—or courage. So do appreciate if you can that our present way of thinking which is tending always to divide into mind and body, into an inner part and an outer part; that very early cultures had nothing like that in them. The psyche or the psychological was physiological. There was no difference. The original notion in the subcontinent of India of the *atman* or the spiritual self was actually a little being of a certain size, physically located in the center of the body.

I'm going to say a little bit more in a moment about this physiology of the soul if you like but I also want to draw attention and lodge a little bit in your brains about the prevalence of images and undercurrents which percolate through to us in stories and fairy stories, in what we take for granted—so much take for granted that we never consider that this actually has to do with very important knowledge or very important perceptions and understandings of our own nature.

Let me read a few words:

*Beauty, truth and rarity.*

*Grace in all simplicity here enclosed in cinders lie.*



This is referring to Cinderella. Now *Cinderella is one of the great metaphors of the soul*. The story of this woman, this girl is that of the soul: denied her true mother, having to dwell in the cinders which is the material world, in the ashes; maltreated by her

stepsisters who are the false authorities over her; visited by the fairy godmother, the higher powers, and neglected by her father, who is mind. The transformations have to do with her gowns of three days, to do with the perfecting of the soul. It's all there in the fairy story. If you want to know true philosophy read the fairy stories.

This story has all sorts of variations. There's one in which Cinderella is not in the hearth but on a ship and the many things to do with the image of the ship which is a vessel, a *karnak* or vehicle. Sometimes she is hidden, locked inside a tree and has to be released from the tree and so on and so on. Look to the fairy stories. They have the value of course of having some emotion in them, such as the feeling of the beautiful maiden in tatters, in sackcloth, badly clothed. You can empathize with this. You're empathizing with our own condition. This is what, maybe, *what our own souls feel like dwelling in us*.

This stream to do with folk wisdom is taken in with mother's milk so to speak, in stories. This may be now been radically lost or distorted because we no longer have the telling to each other of stories. We no longer have the context in which things can be transmitted through such things as food and clothing and so on as they once were and it's a very, very great sadness because this wisdom is really there but maybe out of reach now. It is like a pool, a reservoir of a wisdom which is not 'esoteric' at all but completely natural, instinctive for people and maybe is shared throughout the whole of the planet. It's been addressed in some measure by psychologists like Jung. Other people like Idries Shah have looked into the sources of the stories that pervade all cultures. It's an incredibly rich source. They are not put into textbooks at all. They are to be retold and reinterpreted and felt.

It's said that what appears as philosophy, even what appears as poetry, is nothing but the slightest tip, the slightest fragment of this inherent wisdom which you see is nobody's wisdom. Rather like folk songs—as with some folk songs of my own country of England—they have a beauty because you don't know if there was anyone who composed them. In time they become part of the people.

Now this fabric is neglected by scholars who only deign to speak to scholars. We are unlikely to find a philosopher who would go out into the streets and talk to people about how they feel about things as a resource for their philosophy and it's a great shame. One exception was a Frenchman who I very much admire, a man

called Denis Saurat, an extraordinary writer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He came to England and went to Hyde Park corner. And for those of you who don't know about this I will explain it. At one time, no longer so, it was where anybody could stand upon a soapbox and give a speech on any topic arguing any point of view, whether communism or vegetarianism, anything at all. It was a wonderful place. Saurat met there a preacher who represented something of this current in the psyche of the people and he discovered a document expressing its views - one of the most astonishing things I've ever read. It's far better than any esoteric book I've ever come across and it was all delivered as matter of fact. Of course it's like this. It's no big deal. You can talk about the stars, the angels, dreams, children, nature of insects, the evolution of mankind, planes of existence, and of course it's just like that.

I'm going to try to bear this in mind, speaking to you about the philosophers. Even the great poets Victor Hugo, Baudelaire, and of course William Blake, Spencer, Milton gifted with the supreme eloquence of the time were just an echo of the voice of the people. There is already an understanding flowing like a current, which is part of our natural heritage, of 'instinctual thought'.

To me the question is, when we speak of soul would it also be right to allow us to speak of a folk soul or the soul of the people or of the great human soul or of any scale of soul? We are—forgive me the 'we'—very much occupied in a certain kind of individualism and it's difficult to realize how long it took and what immense forces were involved in establishing in us this assumption of such things that we have life, we have free will and we have immortal souls. This in other epochs would have seemed totally absurd. Maybe we were not always like this? Maybe the very nature of this mind, this consciousness, this psyche has altered in time or maybe that the way in which it's coming to us is again just like the tip of an iceberg, just one out of the multitude of alternatives. The very things we take for granted are the things that bind us into a set assumption about how we are being in the world.

As far as we know, in the Western Greco-Roman tradition—we're going back 2,600 years, something like that, to the time of Homer and so on—the sense we can get is that there was nothing like the present day widespread belief in the individual immortal soul. As far as we can tell, there was the belief—and do forgive me, these are very crude generalizations; I would like to understand it better myself—that only very exceptional people, very exceptional beings, had the right to a passage beyond life. For the ordinary person, there was nothing. One powerful expression of this is *Peer Gynt* by Ibsen where Peer, who's this ordinary man full of imagination, meets the Button Molder, who says, 'I have come to melt you down so I can make some more buttons. You're neither good enough nor bad enough to be anything independent. You're just a non-entity. Into the pot with you.' And then--and I'll come back to this later—he is saved from dissolution by the woman who loves him, who has gone blind but for all the years Peer Gynt has deserted her, has been praying for him to the Virgin.

Any portrayal we have of the people who have died such as in Homer, presents a very, very sorry sight. They are poor, pathetic, hungry ghosts. When Odysseus wants to consult the dead

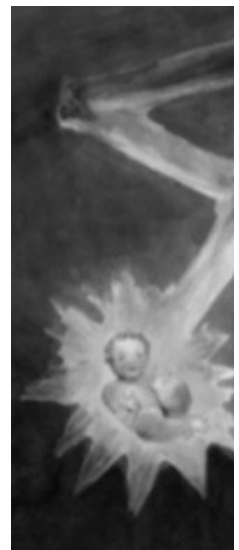


prophet Tiresias they make great blood sacrifices and drive away the other shades so that Tiresias can eat, take in the vapor—the vapor coming out of the sacrifices—and, assuming solidity, can speak to them. So they are poor things, the dead. Poor, wretched, lost things hovering on the fringes of the fires or the fire of life.

In the Greek tradition it was not until the time of Pythagoras that the notion of there being individual souls having an independence from the body was entertained at all. It is said that Pythagoras went to Iran in the reign of

Cambyses and met with other learned beings in a great gathering. This is the event which Gurdjieff portrays through his character Hamolinadar [see quote below] and there Pythagoras would have met people coming from Asia for whom the doctrine of the soul passing from life to life would have been a normal thought form. Pythagoras then taught the doctrine of metempsychosis, the soul going on from life after life in different forms and many extraordinary ideas about time such as recurrence with it.

The Greeks being Greeks would argue about everything and some would say man has no soul at all and others that he really does have a soul and, even if they agreed he did have a soul they'd argue about what it consisted of. Remember when I said the early people tended to be very—in our terms—very materialistic, physical. I loved that passage in the movie *Blade Runner* when the replicant is asked to demonstrate his powers. He insists that replicants are not like computers, but *physical*. In another movie *Altered States*, the scientist rages that he after the *actual molecule* of the true self.



Now, if there was something like the soul, and it was physical what would we think of? Well we can imagine that between all the material of which our body was made there is another material, a finer material. There would be room for this finer material just as there would be room for particles of sand between pebbles in a jar. When the body dissolves, what happens to this finer material? Does it dissolve away with the gross body or does it survive in some degree of order? The Greek-Jewish philosopher Alexander of Aphrodisias argued in the fourth century that with the dissolution of the body, the soul dissolved. Themistius in the fourth century said no, the rational soul is immortal.

I want to jump into the fairly modern era just a couple of centuries ago in England. You might imagine that all religious people believe in

the soul and its survival after death as a matter of course, but they don't. In the seventeenth century there was a Christian movement called the *Mortalists* associated we might say now with Marxist ideas, though originating way before Marx. It had an influence on Milton and Milton was of great importance in history in the England in terms of both poetry and legislation. This sect insisted that there was no soul that survived after death. These religious people believed in Jesus Christ and all the rest of it, how could they have ditched the soul? *They believed in the Resurrection.* And when the time came they would be resurrected, *body and soul.* You didn't need this explanatory device of a ghostly thing hovering around to get round the death of the physical body if you believe in the physical Resurrection. There is a powerful thread in Christianity that reality always involves the physical. That is to invest in the *reality of the person.* There is no such thing as a disembodied person.

Now let's turn to Socrates because he was probably the first one in the Western tradition to speak of the soul, not in terms of some substance but in terms of who a man really is. Therefore for him the soul was always an ethical matter. The soul is that which is made by acts of virtue and that is its strength. And this is an extraordinary step or innovation. It brings in the question of changes in the fabric of the soul due to the *acts* that the person makes. It is these that 'make the soul'.

There is a thesis that in the period from 500 BC to the time of Christ and then afterwards there was a great process going on of creating at least the rudiments of the theory that every living person has a soul with a certain destiny *being regarded by God* and thereby, and only thereby, having the possibility of responsibility. And it is only while embodied that people have real choice, because there is uncertainty and risk.

I'm going back to the physical and the Greeks. One of the most beautiful metaphors they produced for the soul is this—the body is like a musical instrument. The soul is then the *harmony* played on the instrument. Then they were faced with the dilemma. If I have a lyre and play a tune on it then if I destroy the lyre, where is the tune?

Can the tune go on without the lyre, without the instrument? What kind of reality can that be?

Now this metaphor of harmony truly is a most elegant one but it came in association with the beginnings of a kind of scientific reasoning. Another word used in the past, which is sometimes translated as soul is *anima* and in a moment I'll speak about Lucretius and the *anima*. *Anima* is in the word animation and it means the capacity to move—there must be that which makes motion and that which makes motion is not the actual body itself but something within it, 'animating' it. So the soul animates the body. The soul produces movement. This is a whole stream to do with the soul, which Joseph masterfully expounded yesterday. The process, the energy, the dynamic of life was identified as the *anima*, that which moves.

In this stream, the material world is inert, incapable of movement. Then with life it begins to move. How is it able to move? Because the animating soul derives from the world soul and in its turn the world soul comes from the One.

When we came to the second century BC, my favorite people the Stoic physicists of Greece had a wonderful phrase for this kind of soul presence in the being which is like a vibration, a standing wave, and they called it *tonike kinesis* or 'tensional motion'. This is like the metaphor of music. Imagine the stretched string, struck, the notes sounded. See how they were working towards the notion of an *energy*, of an energy world that could have its own subsistence and not have to be dependent upon being contained by a vessel.

Let's think of containment for a moment. I have this glass which is a mineral solid. It contains water. First idea of containment, a vessel model. Now, how is air contained in the water? It's by dissolving into the water. It's a very different kind of containment. And if we jump then to fire, there's a fourth element like plasma. Plasma can only be contained by magnetism. Now we are used to regarding the most stable as the mineral and these other states of matter as being more ephemeral but it may not be so.

So let's jump a little bit to Lucretius who lived in the first century BC. He used two terms—



anima and animus. The anima was the organic soul. The animus was related to *gnosis* and mind and intellect. From a very early time there was always these two principles. One principle to do with the soul which is life force, and the other to do with intellect or knowing. It is very interesting that having these two enabled a kind of very interesting exploration to take place and it was on the following lines.

Only the realm of mind or intellect can be immortal. This is the intellect, which is like the stars. It's the informing forms, which up to about several hundred years ago was always taken as being a spiritual principle. This and this alone is the immortal. In relationship to that what was called the soul or presence of the person was not immortal. In the classical philosophers, the distinction was always kept between the true immortal and the soul. So much so it was up to about 1,000 years ago that we spoke about the intellect as being only one Intellect. There were not intellects for different people. There was one intellect only. And so if a person saw, had insight, it would not be like him in his mind getting this insight. He would touch this universal truth and see it as it was. It was not his.

Now side by side with the Greeks struggling with their materialism, their morality and all the rest of it, remember the residues of the Mysteries. It's most interesting to see that in the Orphic mysteries as far as we can tell and as well as we can translate, the soul was the *stranger*. What a contrast: in Socrates the soul is the man himself, while in the Orphic mysteries the soul is a stranger! Now this, I think for me it always had an echo of meaning. An echo of meaning such that the encounter, the encounter with the soul world would be like an encounter with otherness. There was a question here of a relationship between the day-to-day construct, the persona, and this presence. *Which is the stranger?*

Again, our present day image, even if we allow for enormous amounts of unconsciousness and archetypes and all the rest of it, is like okay, we're here. We're in control of our heads, this is our private space, keep out, and this is me, this is who I am, all that kind of stuff. But it was not like that in earlier times. An ancient Greek turns round and kills somebody and says that a god

slayed this man: in a moment of inspiration, of violence, happening out of some creative realm, they felt they had no control of. Even Socrates himself spoke about this in terms of his *daimon*. Daimon from which we get our 'demon' is a word given to the realm of the head, which in this time period was not at all treated as conscious but was sexual and creative. The head was the most creative sexual organ in the body while thought was in the breast. Now to tell people this today and they'll think you're crazy: of course, thought is up here in the head and my heart is where I feel!

Things are shaped by history in most mysterious ways and a lot of changes went on in Greece because they were undergoing the beginnings of an extraordinarily important revelation to do with science. What happened in the midst is still to me totally inexplicable but science is not just people getting into their heads and being clever and torturing nature. It's also a revelation; it's an opening of a doorway through which stuff comes through. There were adjustments about the very construction of consciousness and we underwent an extraordinary metamorphosis.

You treat something in your own experience as a direct experience and say well it's like that, it's like tasting beer or something. But question this idea of direct experience very much. Consider with me what ancient people were dealing with. What is acting in us? Daimon or demon gave rise to the later Latin word *genius* and to the halo and the fire because this was a fire realm around the head. And the people would say it just takes control now and then.

So enormous work went on about integrating it into a whole psyche and so when I refer to the Orphic mysteries, to treat the soul as a stranger, it would have been in that context. And it's also a hint of a very subtle thread of alienation here. This is to do with



the whole quest and the uncertainty of the authentic. What is authentically me?

Now let's go to the Gnostics. We've had these attempts to create a physical picture of the soul. All the ideas of fine matters, finer 'hydrogens' in Gurdjieff, turn up again and again in what's called the occult tradition because the occult tradition tends to try to deal with concrete energies. The occult was attacked and suppressed by the Christian Church that had such an effect on the emergent science of physics that it led to the widespread indoctrination in the west of the universe as a *mechanism* without soul or life. The Church was totally against the idea of a living universe! Following quite another way than the occult, the Gnostics understood the nature of the soul as *that which turns towards God*. So the attention was not on what it's composed of, where it's made or anything like that, but on that which turns towards God, that which seeks God.

Now this idea developing over time became more and more extraordinary and so in Emmanuel Kant, for example, the soul *has* to be immortal because it looks towards God and its one task is perfecting; so it cannot cease until it becomes perfected. God cannot mock us; therefore the soul is immortal.

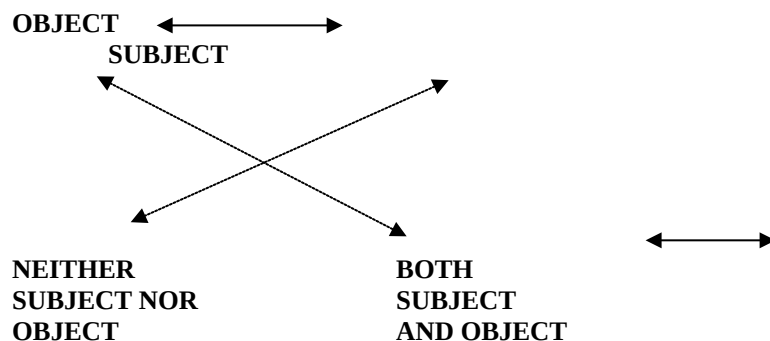
Consider now the two perspectives. In one from the side of the body we have to ask: How does it endure? How does it hang together? What bottle do you put it in? This kind of thing. But from the other perspective it is that *to be known* is enough. It is totally in the world of perception. That God sees me is the only true guarantee I have of the soul and God sees me or some higher power sees because of the act of seeing itself creates the containment. This is the woman praying to the Virgin Mary for Peer Gynt and preserving him.

Now we can go back to our strange Christian sect that didn't believe in the soul and see that it becomes in a sense superfluous. The only thing is to be known by God. As long as God knows you, how can you ever die? How can you ever disappear from existence? You would imagine that God is not naively empirical about this thing. He doesn't say: Oh, he hasn't got a body anymore, let's delete him from the list. That is irrelevant.

Where it becomes relevant to us is in terms of time. Now you have, as you know from the East, this notion of reincarnation, driven by the same idea. If there is something that is sacred in people, how can it be abandoned when it's half-cooked? You must give it another chance and another chance and another chance until it reaches perfection. In India Buddhism incorporated reincarnation but was influenced by Mahavira Jain and the Chavakras or materialists. They were raising the questions about what is the driving force of this reincarnation. What is the law whereby perfection is the lot of every human soul?

You see the Western version came eventually to be called *Purgatory* (that is why Gurdjieff discusses his view of the soul in the chapter of that name in *Beelzebub's Tales*). You messed up in life and so you go to reform school where your mistakes can be corrected. What the hell—maybe literally what the hell—is going to happen to me when I kick the bucket and I've got this something hovering around which is affected by my acts during my life, shaped by these because if it's not shaped by these then why the hell am I living in the first place? Maybe it has not attained its own coherence and needs to put in a holding tank where it can be cooked further. It may take a great deal to turn us into a dish fit for God to eat!

Applying the form of the tetrad, sometimes called 'Buddhist logic', we can conceive of the following four states:



And it would be convenient – though only a formal step – to consider the soul as *both* subject and object and the spirit as *neither* subject *nor* object.

I mentioned the world of perception. It's very problematic for dealing with human things. For so long the dominant idea has been that there are these so-called conscious beings – us- and there is inert matter that we become conscious of. It's a nice little set-up. There's matter lying around so we can be conscious of it, you see, and then because we're conscious of it we can mess it about and do things with it and enjoy it and this is really the sum total of what is assumed.

Then how do I perceive another person? A very, very serious issue. Do I perceive the other person as a piece of inert matter, as an object? If I want to challenge that, how do I perceive them? With what can I perceive them? This is not an easy question. I am speaking for myself. I would hardly deign to claim that I can look at you and I see your soul. How could I say this? You see why I would hesitate. It would be almost like treating myself like God. God can see your soul. Can I see your soul? It's not like that. There's a problem here, an anxiety because it then becomes part of one's own soul experience unless almost to say, unless I see the other, how can I be with myself?

Someone was mentioning the Grail legend this morning and the question that had to be asked of the wounded knight: What are you going through? It is an enormous, incredible question; also expressed as being able to put oneself in the place of another human being. Without this, you're not living in the soul because in a sense only the soul can do that. You can have empathy. You can imagine. But placing myself or being placed in another in any way in even a semblance of a way cannot be done by anything that has been called 'perception' in the sense related to material objects. This raises in my mind another sort of prospect. I even invented a fancy new term for it, a fancy new Greek term, which even the Greeks did not think of. I want you to picture it like this.

Say that one of you leaves the room so you don't see her or hear her. She's not physically present here and where is she now? Now, the ordinary answer would be that she's outside the room. Now I don't want you to think about this. How do you know she's there outside the room when you don't actually see her there? Just stay

with the question without allowing the usual answers we have all learned to think. If someone is not present to you, might we include the dead? Where are they? This placing, this place of absent people is not in space or time but this doesn't necessarily mean it's in some mystery either. To me the soul is not a mystery. I want to get the Nobel Prize, get this thing sorted out. This is one of the joys of the modern age. You don't have to have a soul but you can still sort it out.

The person leaves the room as far as I am concerned. As far as she is concerned, she is still *here*. We assume we just have a mental construct: she is in the hallway out there. This is a house in West Virginia. The house and the State exist, so she must continue to exist. We've got all these mental constructs of some kind of validity but only in a certain world of perception, only according to certain laws.

There has been a slow process, developing a change in our understanding of space and time. A person who influenced me greatly on this was David Bohm, a renowned physicist, who proposed a *topological* kind of space-time. This is space and time that is subtly interwoven and is not composed of distances at all but only of places and of moments. You live in a world of places and moments and not in terms of train lines and train timetables. I call this world that of *topousia* the *placement of being*. The laws of the world of *topousia* are not those of mechanical space and time.

Then this is the world, maybe, in which souls can co-exist. It becomes something quite different from the sense, probably most of you share with me which in myself I abhor, of being locked up inside this cage, this little echo chamber, rabbiting on day and night. It's an awful thing.

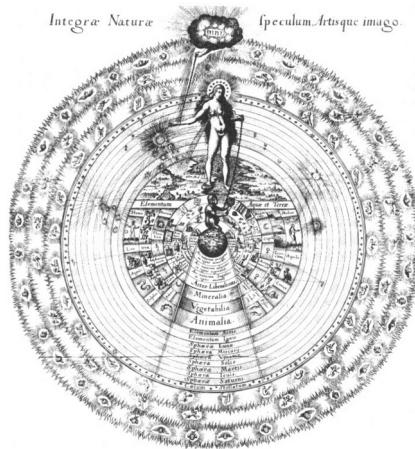
One of the metaphors you come across sometimes can appear as extremely associated with extreme violence and torture. One of the great images of awakening the soul is being flayed alive; the skin taken off. Why? Because the skin is a metaphor for a fixated soul. When a person is flayed alive it means the soul is being created. Steiner writes about the story of Hypatia, the beautiful Greek mathematician torn apart in 415 AD by a Christian mob in Alexandria in these

terms. Being torn to pieces is in the literature as a way of understanding how being changes. Unless one is torn to pieces and reconstituted, one's being cannot change. In India yoga, there is a practice in which one's limbs are taken apart!

There are very frightening pictures to do with things close to torture. We have the word work that is associated with the word *travail*; travail comes from the French word for a torture instrument. Why this torture? Why this anguish? It's to do with *making*. I was just thinking yesterday that maybe two main metaphors available for the guru figure. One metaphor is that of the doctor—the curer of souls, the physician. Bringing medicine, he cures. The other is that of the *cook* and there are portrayals of people being cooked alive. Rumi had stories about this. The peas for example want to leap out of the pot and the cook says: I'm putting you back for your own good. The pea says it doesn't feel like it. Let me out of this.

Joseph reports a visionary experience of going through walls and so on. How can this be? In the realm of topousia, that's how it is. Because the wall isn't there. A wall is understood as a barrier but only in a certain kind of world. Mr. Bennett used to set us an exercise to visualize how it was impossible for a knot to be tied in four dimensions! It is the same thing.

Gurdjieff spoke of us as being 'food for the moon' and you might wonder where such a strange idea came from. We need to go back to the idea of there being two kinds of inner principle – soul and spirit – and Xenocrates who lived in the fourth century BC He spoke of two deaths: physical death here on this planet when the soul goes to the moon, and in the moon it may undergo another death when the higher soul goes to the sun. It was an ancient idea



that the structure of the cosmos was identical with the structure of the psyche and we may return to this again in the future. Whatever we come to observe 'out there' must correspond to something 'in here'. Again, this is true in the world of topousia not of mechanical space and time.

In Plato, there are three kinds of soul—three aspects of the soul - reason, desire and appetite belong to the human, the animal and the vegetable souls and this was taken over into medieval times. In Aristotle the soul is the *form* of the body. It doesn't mean the shape of the body. It means the active containment, emotion and act of the body. It's interesting to go back to Plato for those three because they correspond right across cultures to India to the Samkhya system and that is Sattva, Rajas, Tamas, which are consciousness, force or energy and inertia respectively.

And I want to add in just a little bit more into this bundle of explorations. Edith mentioned the plurality of the souls within us. I've given you the definition of the soul as the form of the body. The Christian thinker Saint Bonaventure taught in the thirteenth century that the prime form of the body, the form of corporeity, is *light*. This idea is immediately effective in starting something in you.

Naturally enough in time many of these different strands came together. I will just mention the Islamic figure Al Farabi of the tenth century who dealt with the question of saying the soul in itself is not mind. Remember Lucretius distinguishing between mind and soul. If you read a modern philosopher like Hannah Arendt talking about the soul, it is seen as passion, a feeling, not concerned with reasoning at all. Reasoning and speech is mind. You have the soul. It's not itself capable of intelligence. Al Farabi said it could begin to fuse with the intellect and provide and create a *germinal intelligence*, which is probably much the same as Gurdjieff's *objective reason*. But it has to be an actual new fusion made, giving this objective power of seeing.

Reasoning here of course is not a class on calculus or on logic. It's rather more perhaps in the spirit of Goethe, the way in which nature thinks, which is not like our thinking. It's the

making, the principles of the coming to be of things.

Now let's try and draw some of these strands together. The question of the soul has reached us with a whole variety of options, so you can believe what you like and describe it as you like; but I wanted to emphasize that it is a sense of questioning of who I am, what is my reality, how does this reality of mine come to be?

#### *Additional Note*

I consider the idea of the soul as arising because we do not feel we are really real. Joseph says that 'we do not exist' and this is a good way of putting it. Of course there is the body, but we feel that this is not enough to guarantee our reality. What we call our minds seem to leak out into the world and get lost. The mind is just the echo of something that the ancients called Intellect. We have the mystery of what is a person. Our genetic code is not enough. That is why religious and spiritual people argue that evolution involved something else besides genetics. If we value the sense of free will, then we are responsible for what we are. This means that we are involved in making ourselves. We are not something, a noun as Joseph would say, but a process, a *verb* in his terms. As a process, the Greeks saw the soul sometimes as like *fire*. We would call this now an *energy*.

I have suggested that there is a realm or world – the world of *topousia* – in which we have our being, and that this is not the same as the world we project of mechanical space and time. It is in such terms that we can believe in 'life after death' only our understanding of time needs to change to make this more than a pious hope. In the realm of *topousia* we can meet with other souls. In this world, we cannot. What connects the two worlds according to all traditions is the realm of *breath*. Breath is life and life is the link we are given between the material and the spiritual. However, it is said that we need to 'die to our lives' in order to go further.

The sole guarantee we have of being able to go further is that there is a *perception* of us, sometimes expressed as being in the sight of God. Sometimes, when we wake up, we feel and sense that *we are being seen*. The Christian ideas of sin,

forgiveness of sin, purgatory and so on arise because we realize that our state is imperfect. That we are not truly who we are. The question of who we truly are is itself a link with God. It is an act of pure surrender.

I spoke in terms of two perspectives, that of the body and that of God. I consider that it is *our* job to look for the physical, the bodily. We cannot take on the perspective of God. This means that the usual tendency to treat the inward or soul world as non-physical is a mistake. This was Gurdjieff's position. Of course, my use of the word 'physical' is much the same as 'real'. What we know as real starts with the body. So, we can look for an advanced kind of body rather than look for something that is not bodily at all. The *meaning* of body changes. The body is the true mystery. How on earth can we be made of these atoms, molecules, cells, tissues, etc? Our picture of the body may be quite wrong. Nature gives us a body but we need to learn what to do with it to make ourselves more real.

This includes realizing when and where we are, which Joseph calls *placement*. We are not here as a thing (with a mind floating around at random) but as an act of inspiration. Perhaps to make a soul we need to create some meaning for us being here at this time that makes a difference. The body that we know is what exists. God, said Mr. Bennett, does *not* exist. This statement is a surprise to most people because we confuse existence with reality. Existence is a state of *privation*. It is like a kink in non-existence. When we make a soul our 'kink' has to change. Some more of our non-existence needs to come into the body. This is called realization, or making real.



William Blake seemed to understand this in his paintings, as in his widely known picture shown here *Albion Rose* – Albion being the soul of England that Blake saw in the flesh of his visions.

***soul-saw-sawol-sol!!!***