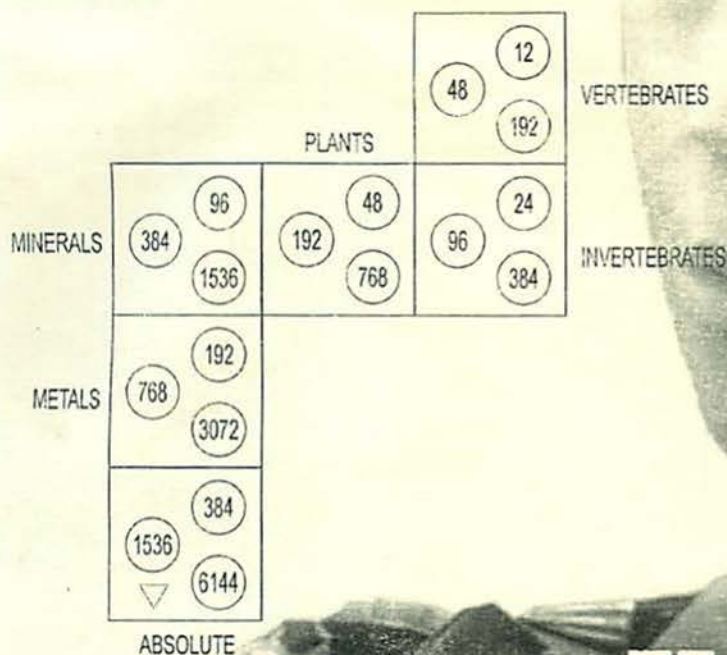
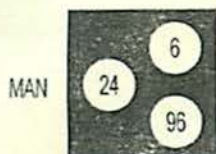
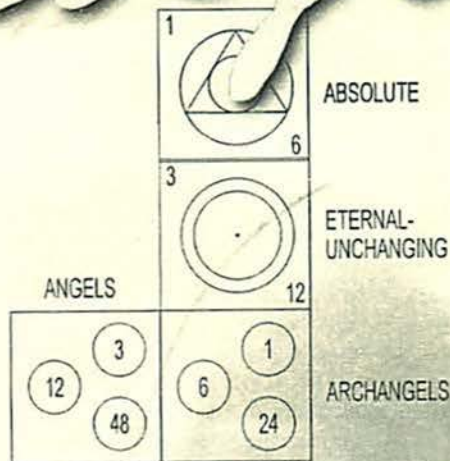


Gurdjieff



THE
MEANING
OF
HUMAN
LIFE
IN
THE
TECHNOLOGICAL
WORLD-TIME

Letters to TGF

Please send your letters to:
The Gurdjieff Journal Letters,
P.O. Box 58, Fairfax, CA 94978-0058,
or email us at:
Journal@Gurdjieff-Legacy.Org

Salvation

Thanks for providing a new and fresh point of view in the last issue. I've never looked at *All and Everything* from the perspective of salvation. Salvation seems like something far, far away, but definitely something higher, not lower. For me this brings up a lot of questions about redemption, healing, and faith. I've read that salvation in the Old Testament was the observance of the Laws; the New Testament has more to do with Faith. Of course, Gurdjieff points to the Faith of Consciousness.

Today's world seems like it's strewn with the wreckage of the "pleasure and enjoyment" seekers that Gurdjieff talks about, the ones who remain upside-down and, having no connections with religion, therefore have no thought about salvation.

Ted Hildebrand
Seattle, Washington

Mammon in the Fields

While there was general agreement with the ideas and conclusion that are brought forth in the article "Gurdjieff, Food & the Prolongation of Human Life Part II," some elaboration should be given to how we got to where we are today. Briefly, there was little mention

of hybridization of plants. This process, first noted by Mendel, is responsible for a very large percentage of the increase in yields in several crops. In the years after WWII, widespread use of F1 hybrid seed (corn in particular), along with chemical fertilizers, created enormous increases in yields. Additionally, new insecticides, herbicides and mechanization made it possible to forgo traditional crop rotations and cultivation practices and to use simple rotations or monoculture. The current genetic modifications/manipulations of food crops do not directly significantly increase yields, but they do make raising certain crops cheaper and/or simpler.

A scientific community that appears to be asleep to potential negative consequences is subjecting humanity and organic life to substances and processes that do not occur naturally. Is this experiment a zero sum game as the naysayers and doubters of this experiment often believe? Gurdjieff said, "*Nobody ever does anything deliberately in the interests of evil....*" Everybody acts in the interests of good, *as he understands it.*" Is increasing yields with hybrid seeds and chemical fertilizers to "feed the world" a good thing? Is using a genetically modified corn seed and not having to use an insecticide a good thing? Despite some potential good outcomes, the cumulative effect on human health of "modern" agricultural practices remains unknown, though one can intuit that it isn't likely to be positive.

Joy Davidson
Topeka, Kansas

Why Abyssinia?

The article on Gurdjieff and Abyssinia raises interesting questions, why did he spend three months there, and what might he have been looking for and what might he have found? But what is to be found now? The strife in the area is cited as reason not to go there and find out. But Ethiopians in Washington, D.C., a cab driver and waitstaff in an Ethiopian restaurant, said travel was possible and, with care, not dangerous. Of course, perhaps what's true for native Ethiopians is not so for nonnatives. But the possible treasures may make the game worth the candle.

John Webb
Oak Glen, California

Sayings of Substance

Only he is worthy to be called man and to receive some of that which is prepared for him from above who acquires data for preserving intact the wolf and the sheep confided to his care. By 'wolf' is understood the totality of the automatic and reflex functionings of the body. By 'sheep' is understood the totality of the feelings. And the 'man' in this case is understood to be the totality of the mentation—the Reason which directs, guards and guides.

Reason provokes thoughts whose images evoke feelings which conquer a special sentiment. Reason has no limits—only humans have limits. *True reason is the inner aspect of a being.*

The organic body obeys its laws. It only wishes to satisfy its needs—eating, sleeping, sex. It knows nothing else. It wishes nothing else. It is a real animal. One must feel it as an animal. One must feel it as a stranger. One must subdue it, train it, make it obey, instead of obeying it.

The psychic body knows something other than the organic body. It has other needs, aspirations, desires. It belongs to a different world. It is of a different nature. There is a conflict between these two bodies—one wishes, the other does not. It is a struggle which one must reinforce voluntarily. By our work, by our will. It is this fight which exists naturally, which is the specific state of man, which we must use to create a third thing, a third state different from the other two, which is the Master. By struggle and *only* by struggle can a new possibility of being be born.

Feeling of religiousness. Besides the desires and intentions of which they are not aware this being-feeling at times appears in the desire and striving for speedier self-perfecting in the sense of Objective-Reason. . . . They accept it as a symptom of certain of their numerous diseases and [in the case of planetary tension] call it nerves.

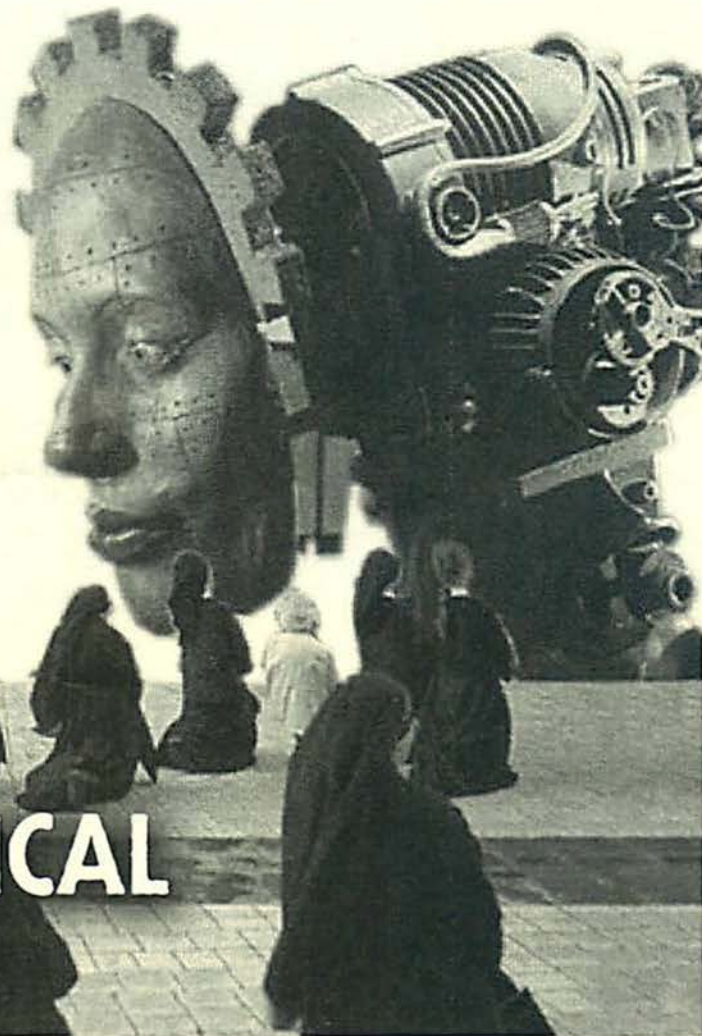
When you take a position of responsibility, you are responsible for all your acts—even for unconscious acts. And a record is kept for each. All you do is written in red or in black in Angel Gabriel's book. Not for everyone is this record kept, but only for those who have taken a position of responsibility. There is a Law of Sins, now you are subject to this Law. For every satisfaction, so much dissatisfaction (the red against the black). If you do not so acquit yourself with Nature, you will pay.

—G. I. Gurdjieff

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THE MEANING OF HUMAN LIFE IN THE TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD-TIME



MANKIND HAS PASSED THROUGH MANY WORLD-TIMES, EACH CHARACTERIZED by its primary means of organizing and sustaining life. Hunter-Gatherer, Agrarian, Industrial, Scientific-Industrial and now today's Technological—each is a World-Time. With each reorganization our activities, values, forms and customs change. Before the Technological, no World-Time has put in question the very essence of the meaning of human life. How we answer it—or how we allow it to be answered for us—will determine our future.

The word *Technology* is used in its broadest sense—sociologically, intellectually, emotionally, sexually and spiritually—in ways never before conceived. The marvels and the powers it offers are many. It excites us by diminishment of time and space and offers the capability to look ever more deeply into the workings of Nature, so that climate might be controlled, human life extended, and age-old maladies cured or alleviated.

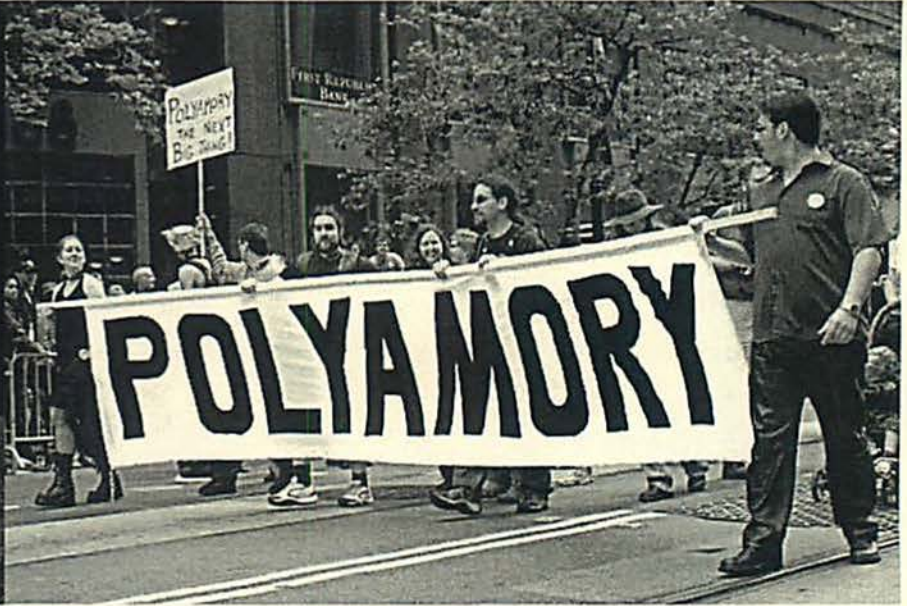
Singularity University, the brain-child of speech recognition software genius Raymond Kurzweil, has drawn many of Silicon Valley's wealthiest technocrats, such as Google's cofounder Larry Page, to embrace its techno-utopian vision of Singularity, in which, within several decades, a superior technological intelligence will assimilate all human thinking power and thus surpass human thinking. Predicts Kurzweil, "We will transcend all of the limitations of our biology." In his latest book, *The Singularity Is Near*, he posits: "Once non-biological intelligence gets a foothold in the human brain (this has already started with computerized neural implants), the machine intelligence in our brains will grow exponentially (as it has been doing all along), at least doubling in power each year. Ultimately, the entire universe will become saturated with *our intelligence*. This is the destiny of the universe." [Emphasis added.] If Kurzweil's techno-dream comes true, it won't be *our* intelligence

but a hybrid machine-human intelligence with machine dominating.

There are deeper problems with Singularity for Kurzweil and friends (many are passionate readers of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*) that Internet pioneer David Gelernter addresses in his essay "Dream-Logic, The Internet and Artificial Thought." He agrees that a computer can be built that "seems" to think, however:

It would be a zombie. The computer would have no inner mental world; would in fact be unconscious. But in practical terms, that would make no difference. The computer would ponder, converse and solve problems just as a man would.

But first there are formidable technical problems. For example: there can be no cognitive spectrum without emotion. Emotion becomes an increasingly important bridge between thoughts as focus drops and



Ray Kurzweil

2009 Polyamory Pride Parade in San Francisco

re-experiencing replaces recall. Computers have always seemed like good models of the human brain; in some very broad sense, both the digital computer and the brain are information processors. But emotions are produced by brain and body working together. When you “feel happy,” your “body” feels a certain way; your mind notices; and the resonance between body and mind produces an emotion.

The natural correspondence between computer and brain doesn’t hold between computer and body. Yet artificial thought will require a software model of the body, in order to produce a good model of emotion, which is necessary to artificial thought. In other words, artificial thought requires artificial emotions, and simulated emotions are a big problem in themselves. (The solution will probably take the form of software that is “trained” to imitate the emotional responses of a particular human subject.)

One day all these problems will be solved; artificial thought will be achieved. Even then, an artificially intelligent computer will experience nothing and be aware of nothing. It will say “that makes me happy,” but it won’t feel happy. Still: it will “act” as if it did. It will act like an intelligent human being.

And then what?

“And then what” may be “The First Church of Robotics.” The title of a recent article in the *New York Times* by

Jaron Lanier, an artificial intelligence expert. He gives a dire warning of just where Singularity is leading. A technical elite, he says, is creating “a new religion, expressed through an engineering culture.” It will be their “own ultramodern religion, and it is one in which people are told to wait politely as their very souls are made obsolete.” What past *World-Times* saw as central to what it means to be a human being—our spirituality—would then be reinterpreted in terms of Technology.

Singularity and robotic religion isn’t here yet, but technological advances in communication and finance have fueled the ever-growing mania of greed in the corporate world whose aim is, like Alexander of Macedonia, to conquer the world, but economically, not with foot soldiers. In a word: to be *the* world’s investment banking firm, and so forth. This began in the 1970s when U.S. companies began to outsource overseas our country’s manufacturing base (not only because of lower wages but also to evade governmental oversight and union contracts). The clever reasoning was that we would keep the knowledge work and let the rest of the world do the grunt work. But now we’ve lost a great share of the knowledge work to India and places east. What jobs are left are being pared to the bone in order for corporations to make even greater profits in their race to the world economic summit.

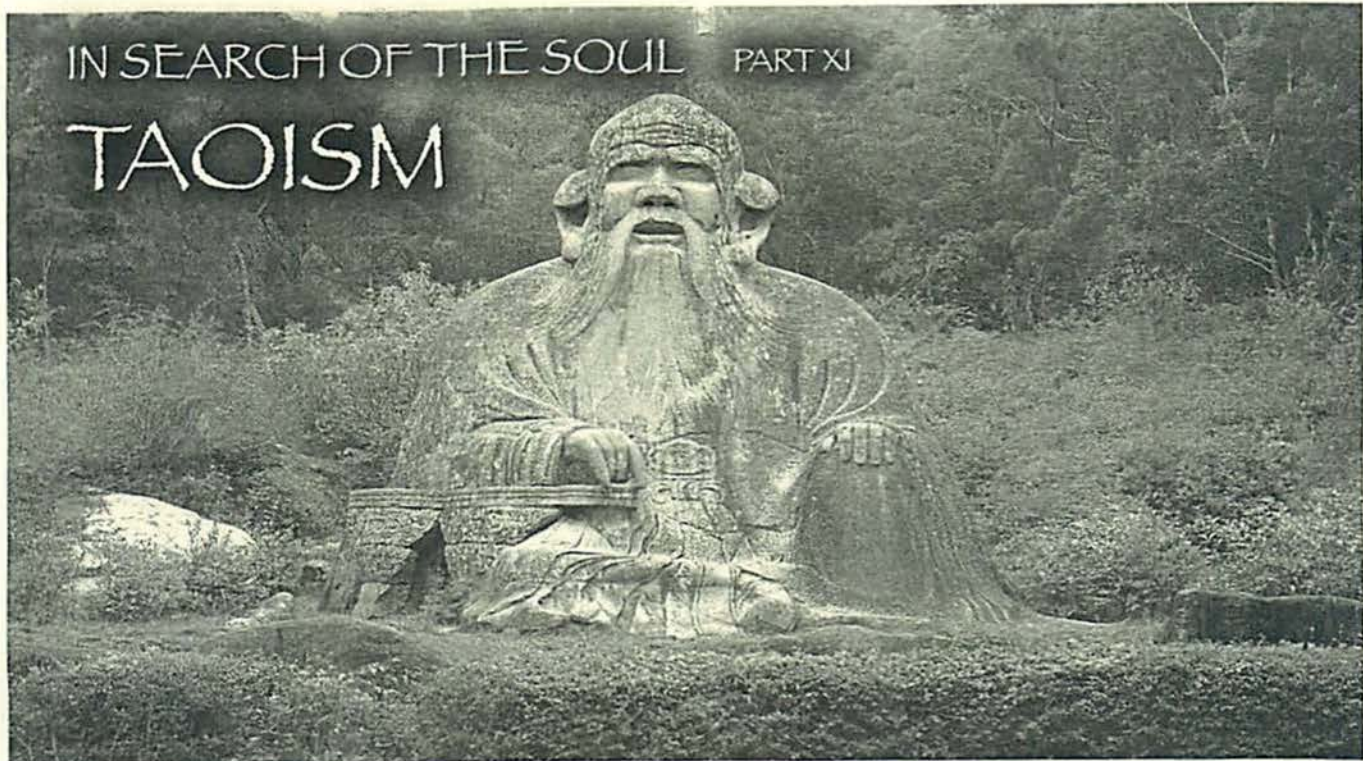
There are many examples of this profit mania and how it destroys human relationships, but one of the most recent is that of the contract dispute

within \$5.5 billion beverage conglomerate Dr. Pepper Snapple Group. It owns Mott, the profitable apple juice maker, but is demanding from its employees a \$1.50-an-hour wage cut, a pension freeze and other concessions. The reason: to bring plant costs in line with “local and industry standards.” A 24-year-employee on the union’s bargaining team said the plant manager told them flat out during negotiations, “You’re a commodity like soybeans and oil, and the price of commodities goes up and down.” In the current, all-consuming, dog-eat-dog business world, yesterday’s ideal of the company and its employees as “family” is, well, “so yesterday.”

If economically this *World-Time* has radically changed relationships, the same is true sociologically. Our sense and value of ourselves as human beings is being remodeled as our attention is devoured by the abstractions of virtual realities, fantasies, video games, violence and vulgarity. Intimate friends now “Facebook friends”; sex reduced to hooking up, sex-dating, becoming a “f*k-buddy”; polyamory thrives; gay adoption increases and third sex marriage hovers; tattoos, nose and tongue rings and even more intimate piercings are the fashion of the day; “medical marijuana” the new growth industry; New Age hubristic “individuality,” channeling and be-my-own-spiritual-teacher predominate; Mammon is king. “When money talks,” said one CEO,

Continued on page 28

TAOISM



THE STUDY OF TAOISM AND WHAT IT HAS TO SAY ABOUT THE SOUL CAN BE a bewildering exploration. The word Taoism itself is problematic in several ways. "Taoism" (not the word *Tao*, which has ancient roots) was coined in the second century BCE by a historian writing about the main schools of Chinese thought then known. It was a term he employed to describe one of the schools, which included the two seminal texts, the *Tao Te Ching*, attributed to Lao Tzu, and the *Chuang-tzu*, which bears the author's name. Since that time, however, Taoism has come to encompass what is called Philosophical Taoism and Religious Taoism. In doing so, it has obscured the differences between the two. In addition, Philosophical Taoism is not philosophical in the way Westerners view philosophy; it is a way of transformation. Today it would be called spiritual, quite likely esoteric spirituality. Religious Taoism is said to be a subsequent branch of Philosophical Taoism, but in important respects the two share very little and, as we will see with respect to the soul, they contradict each other. This exploration will begin with Philosophical Taoism and the two main texts, the *Tao Te Ching* and *Chuang-tzu*.

Philosophical Taoism

Nothing is known with any certainty about the author (or authors) of

the primary text, the *Tao Te Ching*. In addition, the meaning of the text is often obscure and passages within it sometimes appear to be contradictory. Thus, even its basic emphasis is in dispute: to some interpreters the text is primarily a social, political treatise growing out of the turbulent times in which it was written, while others view it primarily as direction for individual spiritual growth. The nature of the text has led to a wide variety of translations, making it difficult to reach any definite conclusions about its meaning in general and, more specifically, what it has to say about the existence and nature of the soul. Nevertheless, the study of Philosophical Taoism is valuable for the perspective it presents and the questions it raises.

While the precise date that the *Tao Te Ching* was written is unknown, it is generally believed to have been written during a time of great turmoil in China's history. Beginning in 771 BCE the Chou (or Zhou) Dynasty was defeated by barbarians, removed from its capital and reestablished miles eastward in Luoyang. This move presaged a period of great decline. With the rulers becoming impotent, their vassals engaged in civil war. Historically in China, one purpose of war had been to demonstrate one's mastery of *li*, the Rites. During this era of decline, however, that objective eroded and those who were vanquished were not spared. This period of brutality

extended until 221 BCE when the first emperor was recognized. The *Tao Te Ching* is said to have been written sometime during this span.

The author of the text is also unknown. While the traditional approach is to call the author by the name Lao Tzu, his existence is disputed. The earliest attempt at a biography of Lao Tzu, written in the first century BCE, was limited to inconsistent anecdotes. Most scholars today believe that he was a fictional character, created to enhance Taoism's stature in comparison with Confucianism. Aspects of the text are critical directly or indirectly of Confucianism. For example, the *Tao Te Ching* spurns Confucianism's approach to cultivating morality as a way to end wars, opting instead for an approach called *wu wei*, which roughly means inaction. Thus, some believe the character Lao Tzu was created as a necessary foil to the teacher Confucius.

In addition, there is a dispute as to whether the text was authored by one man or by many over time. Those who opt for the many do so on the basis that the stylistic and linguistic inconsistency

Lao Tzu's Rock at the foot of Mount Qingyuan in Quanzhou, East China's Fujian province. The statue of Lao Tzu (Laozi) was carved out of a natural rock during the Song Dynasty—at 16 feet high and 26 feet wide it is the largest Taoist stone sculpture in China, and a symbol of health and longevity.



Song Dynasty painting in the Litang style, illustrating the theme "Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are one." Depicts Taoist Lu Xiuqing (left), official Tao Hongjing (right) and Buddhist monk Huiyuan (center, founder of Pure Land) by the Tiger Stream. The stream borders a zone infested by tigers that the men have crossed without fear, engrossed as they were in their discussion. Realizing what they just did, they laugh together, hence the name of the painting, Three Laughing Men by the Tiger Stream.

of the text suggests both varied authors and a long period of gestation. Those who have concluded the *Tao Te Ching* is the work of a single author do so, in part, by considering the same factors and reaching an opposite conclusion. The single author advocates see the text as taking conflicting elements and "subtly weaving them together into a pattern perfectly consistent and harmonious." That these contrary positions have been taken on the basis of similar evidence points to one of the primary sources of the challenging nature of the *Tao Te Ching*. The Ancient Chinese in which these words were written does not have the grammatical rules, tenses, or parts of speech that English readers and writers are used to. In addition, the mystical aspects of the text were apparently written in a deliberately cryptic manner. One possibility is that it is a Legominism for initiates, written to obscure its meaning to those who are not. Consequently, the *Tao Te Ching* is simultaneously difficult to translate and amenable to a wide variety of interpretations.

An understanding of the nature of Tao is central to understanding what Taoism has to say about the soul. The famous first sentence of the *Tao Te Ching* introduces us to Tao. To provide

the reader with a taste of the challenges the text presents, below is a small sampling from among the 112 English translations of the first line of the *Tao Te Ching*:

The Way that can be described is not the absolute Way; the name that can be given is not the absolute name.

Existence is beyond the power of words. To define: Terms may be used but are none of them absolute.

A way can be a guide, but not a fixed path; names can be given, but not permanent labels.

The Dao-Path is not the All-Dao. The Name is not the Thing named.

The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao.

The Way that can be experienced is not true; the world that can be constructed is not real.

The way that becomes a way is not the Immortal Way, the name that becomes a name is not the Immortal Name.

Tao is beyond words and beyond understanding. Words may be used to speak of it, but they cannot contain it.

The principle that can be enunciated is not the one that always was. The being that can be named is not the one that was at all times.

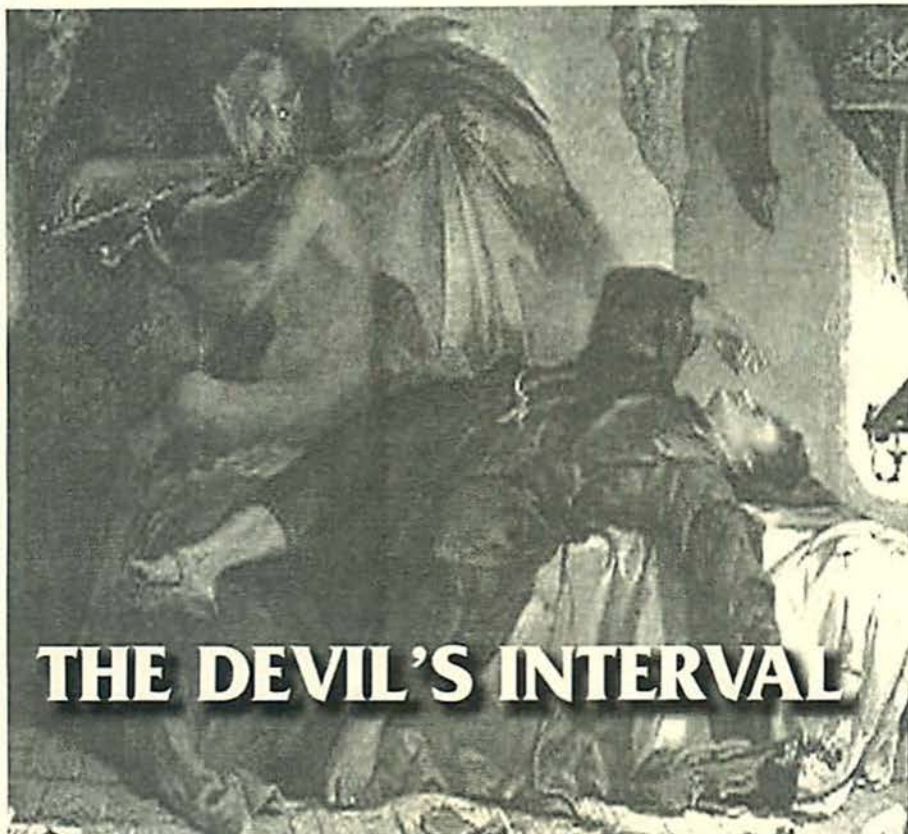
What is clear among these variations is the recognition that there are limitations inherent in teaching by way of a text: the limitation of words and of names. As such, this introduction appears to undermine the endeavor from the outset. This approach, however, may be perfectly consistent with the book's purposes. What can be spoken about is simply a pointer toward the reality to which the words refer. Therefore, Tao cannot be explained in words; it can, however, be experienced.

Exploring the Tao

One of the most direct explanations of the Tao is contained in chapter 25:

There was something formlessly fashioned,
That existed before
heaven and earth;
Without sound, without substance,

Continued on page 17



THE DEVIL'S INTERVAL

IN MUSIC, THE DISTANCE BETWEEN ANY TWO NOTES, AS FOR INSTANCE, the distance between any two keys on a piano keyboard, is called an interval. A particular interval has come to be known as the "Devil's Interval"—the *diabolus in musica*, the devil in music.

This musical interval has a history of being avoided or restricted. It is a dissonant interval and the Medieval Church associated dissonance with secular music and drinking parties, wild dancing, sex, gambling and pleasure-seeking in general. Singers could be "bedeviled" by it and the interval was thought to be ungodly, vulgar and symbolized evil. *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* says, "It has been regarded as dissonance since the Middle Ages, when it was named the *diabolus in musica* and was the object of prohibitions by theorists." But what can the devil have to do with music?

Music comes to us as sound and sound has four attributes. We hear sound in terms of pitch or cycles per second (c.p.s.), loudness (decibels), length (duration), and timbre. Timbre refers to the tone quality or tonal "color" which allows us to distinguish the difference between a flute and a violin when both instruments are playing exactly the same note. The sensation

of sound that we hear is produced by a medium that vibrates. Air carries this energy from the source to the listener where it is perceived through the ear at the hair cells of the inner ear. So we are literally touched by sound, the sensation of the vibration.

Modern World Dissonance

In the world-time in which we live the amplitude or loudness of sound is dominant. However, the primary function of our hearing should be to determine pitch or ratio of sound and the quality of the sound. Most sounds in the modern world can be characterized as noise, and noise can be defined as sound that is confused, random, unpleasant, senseless, nauseous or lacking in musical quality. So, much of the sound we hear in the modern world is dissonant. But what about music then?

Music is usually produced by the voice or instruments; the listener is taking in a synthesis of rhythm, melody and harmony. But music exists on a spectrum between consonance and dissonance. Even without a background in musical theory, when we hear two or more notes played together, we can hear and feel whether the music is consonant or dissonant. Consonant intervals are considered stable, are felt as pleasing,

in tune. Dissonant intervals are considered unstable, grating, out of tune. A consonant interval wants to maintain stasis, dissonant intervals want to move or resolve to other notes. Early Church music favored intervals that were consonant; the Church strove for music that would mirror and embody the Word, a sonic representation of higher truths. The *diabolus in musica* is a dissonant and ambiguous interval and has implications for music as well as metaphysical implications.

Let's begin looking more closely at intervals by making use of the system now called solfège (sol-fa + sol-fe), first developed in the Middle Ages and used as a technique for teaching sight-singing from a musical score. The system uses a seven-note scale, a collection of pitches arranged in order, in the case of an ascending scale, from the lowest to the highest. Adding a repeat of the first note (at a higher pitch) makes an octave of eight notes.

Each note in the scale has a name which can be sung. These are the familiar "doh," "re," "mi," "fa," "sol," "la," and "si." After si comes doh again, at a higher pitch than the first doh, making it one octave higher.



The first seven letters of the alphabet are also used to designate the different notes of the scale: A, B, C, D, E, F and G. Our example scale begins with the letter C because the note sequence C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C represents the simplest scale to write for or play on the piano since only the white keys are used. So equating the solfège names with the letters doh is C, re is D, mi is E, fa is F, sol is G, la is A, si is B, and the doh of the higher octave is also C.

As noted previously, the distance between any two of these keys on the

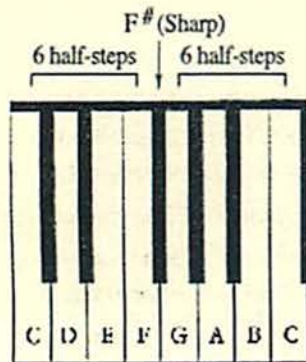
The devil appears in a dream to 18th-century violinist and composer Giuseppe Tartini, playing what Tartini, when he awoke, transcribed as his Devil's Trill Sonata. Artist unknown.

keyboard is an interval. Intervals are named for the number of notes in the interval. The interval from C to F is called a "fourth" counting C as 1, D as 2, E as 3 and F as four. C to D would then be an interval of a "second" and C to E would be an interval of a "third." Also, an interval can start with any note on the scale. The interval from F to A is also a "third." The interval from C to G would be a "fifth" as would the interval from D to A. Likewise, intervals between two notes where the first note is higher than the second note are counted the same way. Starting at C and counting down to F is a "fifth."

Tones and Half Tones

On the piano, pairs of keys C and D, D and E, F and G, G and A, and A and B represent whole steps. The black keys between each of these pairs represent half steps (a half tone). The pairs E and F, and B and C do not have black keys between them because they themselves represent half steps and do not need any black keys. So, moving from one key to an adjacent key, in either direction, whether to a black key or white key, is always a half step.

What then is the *devil's* interval? If we begin on C we find that taking three whole steps or tones (this interval is a tritone) brings us to the black key between F and G. This note is named F sharp (F#) and is not a part of the scale of C, it is an outsider. Although there are dissonant intervals within the scale of C, the F# coming from outside the key of C indicates that it is a dissonant interval to the scale. This black note cuts the octave exactly in half between the beginning doh and the ending doh. When



the F# sounds against the C it lends an ambiguity and instability, there is a need to "move" the tension that is created so that the dissonance can be resolved to

consonance and a feeling of stability. The interval can be heard in the popular song "Maria" from *West Side Story*. It occurs between the first two syllables "Ma" and "ri" of the word Maria.

On the subject of the tritone Schwaller de Lubicz, the Egyptian hermeticist, stated, "Natural division is always into *uneven* parts. . . . I can already feel the cardinal sin that will call for the devil. The product of an even division will never be stable in its duality." So, dividing something in half is not according to Nature.

For example, if we look at the Devil card in the Tarot, the 15th card of the Major Arcana, we can see that when the card is divided exactly in half the line intersects the hermaphrodite figure at the penis. Obviously there is a connection with sex. Unlike the phallic symbol of the Egyptians where the penis extends from the navel at a distance that measures the Golden Section of the individual, the intent here is to indicate the function of sexual reproduction, the only option for most people dominated by their lower nature.

Sabotaging the Soul

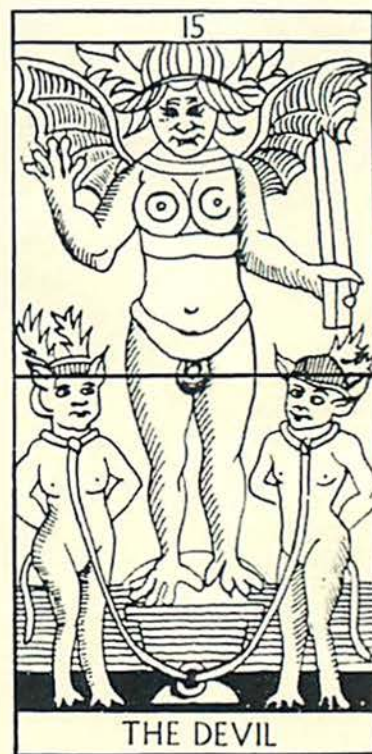
Astrology writer Fred Gettings says that the card represents "stagnation" and is "a total barrier to spiritual freedom." Further, he says the bottom half of the card can be taken as a square representing materiality and the top half of the card could represent an inverted triangle balanced at the penis indicating that man's spirit is "off-balance because it pivots on sex."

As to the children on the card, it is quite possible that they represent the subjugation of the creation of the soul itself! Gettings says that they may refer "to emotions and energies which have either not been developed or are not capable of development." He also thinks the card represents the four elements of the material world—Fire, Air, Water and Earth.

In her book *Aristoxenus's Ghost*, Mitzi DeWhitt explains that the two incommensurates of Fire (spirit) and Earth (body) can only be reconciled by a two-part soul. She says that the soul is divided into two parts, the Nous or higher part representing the element of Air and symbolized by the "son." And, the lower part, Logos, representing the element Water and symbolized by the "daughter." "This third force, the 'child' of heaven and earth, can actually

be either a son or a daughter and thus can represent not one but two forces." So the children (the soul) on the card are being held down in materiality by the devil atop the smith's anvil to which is attached the rope and noose around their necks. A card that, when divided, is connecting sex with the cerebral cortex; sex on the brain. Also, one is reminded here of what Gurdjieff said, "Sex: it is the principal motive force of all mechanicalness. All sleep, all hypnosis, depends upon it."

Is this smith-god simply the devil reigning over "matter" or is something



else possible? Could it be that the devil may be blocking the development of the soul and may represent the duality that people usually live with, whereby the "person" is driven by the body's wants and desires and external stimuli? The devil's interval itself would be the sonic representation of this symbolism.

In listening to the devil's interval we can get a sense of the duality. When everything is consonant, we don't have to do much, we're carried along, so to speak. But, suppose we hear the siren of an emergency vehicle passing by on the street sounding this interval. As the dissonance of the interval is added as a sensation in the body, something new is required, but what? And, if nothing is done, what happens?

Continued on page 25

Talks with Katherine Mansfield

by A. R. Orage

The New Zealand writer Katherine Mansfield in her brief life (1888–1923) was a key figure in the development of the short story, incorporating for the first time the expansiveness of the interior life and a poetry of feeling. Among her literary friends were Aldous Huxley; Virginia Woolf, who said Katherine Mansfield had produced “the only writing I have ever been jealous of”; and D. H. Lawrence, who later turned against her. Introduced to the Work by Orage, she arrived at the Priuré in October 1922, before it had opened. Having recognized she was “simply one pretense after another,” she felt Gurdjieff was the only person who could help her. She was in the terminal stages of tuberculosis.

This remembrance of Katherine Mansfield first appeared in The New English Weekly, May 19, 1932, Vol. 1, No. 5.

Everybody knows that Katherine Mansfield spent her last days in the Gurdjieff Institute at Fontainebleau, and the letters and diaries which Mr. Middleton Murry has now published bear ample testimony to the value she attached both to the institute and to the system of training employed there. Many questions have been asked concerning the particular advantage other than health which Katherine Mansfield hoped to derive from it all. Had she come to the end of her writing impulse? But she was still full of sketches and plans for future stories and even a novel or two. Was she dissatisfied with her craftsmanship, and did she hope to improve it under a special method of training? But she was always dissatisfied and always improving herself. From the age of about 21, when she showed me her first sketch, and I published it in the “New Age,” to her death at 33, at a moment when she was planning to write again after some months’ rest, she worked, as few writers work, to develop and perfect her style in the agony of conviction that so far it was only embryonic.

Some months before she went into the institute at Fontainebleau she told me that she could not read any of the



Katherine Mansfield at her writing desk in 1920 at the villa Isola Bella, in Menton, France

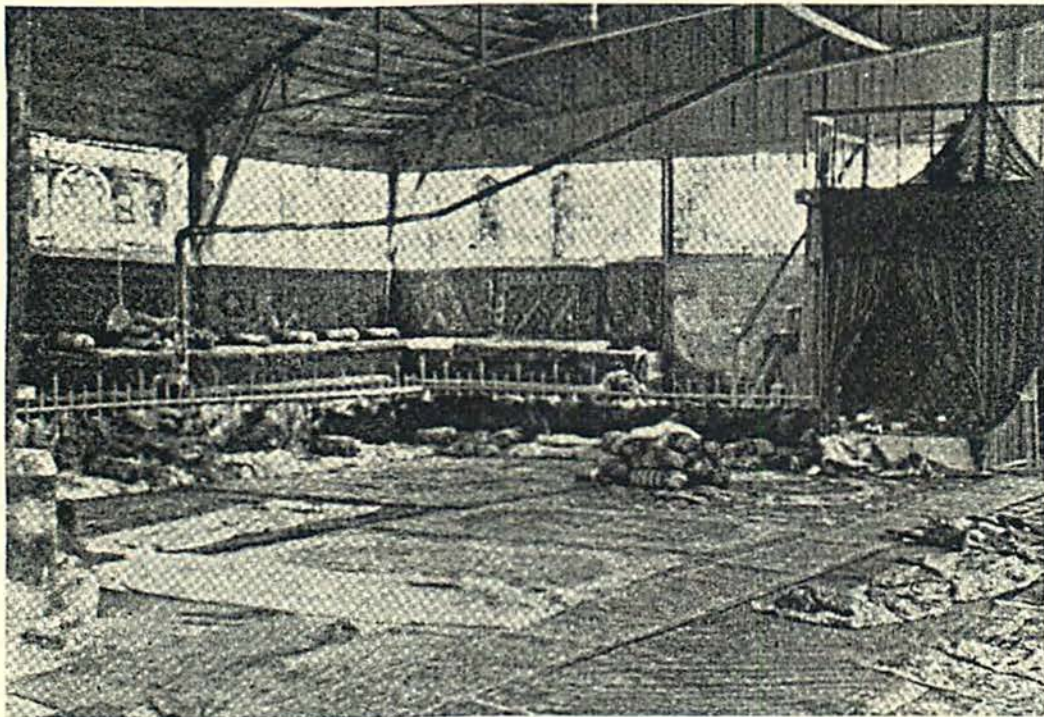
stories she had written without feeling self-contempt. “There is not one,” she said, “that I dare show to God.” It therefore did not need the institute to intensify her wish to excel in her craftsmanship; and, indeed, the institute was not a school of literary art, nor was she under any illusion that writing could be taught there. The real reason and the only reason that led Katherine Mansfield to the Gurdjieff Institute was less dissatisfaction with her craftsmanship than dissatisfaction with herself; less dissatisfaction with her stories than with the attitude toward life implied in them; less dissatisfaction with her own and contemporary literature than with literature.

I had many conversations with her on this topic during the years of our acquaintance and particularly during the months preceding her death. She was even more explicit on these occasions than in her letters and diaries. “Suppose,” she used to say, “that I could

succeed in writing as well as Shakespeare. It would be lovely, but what then? There is something wanting in literary art even at its highest. Literature is not enough.”

“The greatest literature,” she said, “is still only mere literature if it has not a purpose commensurate with its art. Presence or absence of purpose distinguishes literature from mere literature, and the elevation of the purpose distinguishes literature within literature. That is merely literary that has no other object than to please. Minor literature has a didactic object. But the greatest literature of all—the literature that scarcely exists—has not merely an esthetic object, nor merely a didactic object, but, in addition, a creative object; that of subjecting its readers to a real and at the same time illuminating experience. Major literature, in short, is an initiation into truth.”

“But where do we stand in relation to that?” I asked. “Where is the writer



Katherine Mansfield lived to see the study house at the Prieuré, completed days before she died.

with the keys of initiation upon him?"

This was Katherine Mansfield's introduction to the Gurdjieff Institute, and the object of her travel there. For she realized that it is not writing as writing that needs criticism, correction, and perfection, so much as the mind, character, and personality of the writer. One must become more to write better. Certainly this does not exclude the possibility of great improvement in technique without the aid of any system of personal training. On the other hand, when, as in Katherine Mansfield's case, the improvement of one's technique by the ordinary means has ceased to be possible or has fallen under the law of diminishing returns (yielding too small a result for the effort expended), then the adoption of an entirely new means, such as special self-training, becomes imperative if the will to perfection is still as active as it was in her.

I saw Katherine Mansfield almost every day in the institute, and we had many long talks together. For months she was quite content not to be writing or even reading. We had a common surprise in contrasting our current attitude towards literature with the craze we had both experienced for many years. What has come over us? She would ask whimsically. Are we dead? Or was our love of literature an affectation, which had now dropped off like a mask? Every now and

then, on the other hand, a return of the old enthusiasm would be experienced. She would begin a story and confide to me that she was rather enjoying the thrill of writing again. The following day she had torn it up, quite cheerfully and with a grimace of humor. Premature delivery! She was under contract, I believe, to write a number of stories for one publisher or another, and many times she spoke of it as an obligation. But greater even than her wish to keep her engagement with her publishers was her resolution not to write stories in the old style. Her new stories were to be different. How different only she had any real conception; and, moreover, she kept it to herself, not even confiding it to her diaries or her most intimate letters. It was, in fact, a conception to be brooded upon, and not written about—a conception that slowly arose within a new state of being and understanding; a conception, therefore, inexpressible in words until its inner metamorphoses had been completed. I read her diaries in vain for a real trace of the new idea that had begun to dawn in Katherine Mansfield. She writes in them repeatedly of new stories, but never of the new attitude to be implied and manifested in them. She would write, as before, with all her old qualities vivified and illuminated; she would continue to employ her marvelously microscopic

observation of men and women. But her attitude was to have undergone a change. In a word, she would have a new purpose in writing—a purpose not only to gratify and instruct, but to initiate and create.

One day shortly before her death she sent for me to come to her room; she had something very important to tell me. When I arrived, she was in high spirits. Her face shone as if she had been on Sinai.

"What is it, Katherine?" I asked. "What makes you so happy?"

"I have found my idea," she said. "I've got it at last. It arose, of course, out of a personal experience. Katya has felt something that she never

felt in her life before, and Katya understands something she never understood before."

I cannot recall the exact words in which she proceeded to expound her new idea or, rather, new attitude toward life and literature. It was, moreover, adumbrated with the aid of silences during which I thought as intensely as she on the subject; and from these she would emerge with a fresh suggestion or an improved formulation of a previous opinion. I can only record fragments and the final impression in her mind. Briefly the conclusion was this: to make the commonplace virtues as attractive as ordinarily the vices are made: to present the good as the witty, the adventurous, the romantic, the gay, the alluring; and the evil as the platitudinous, the dull, the conventional, the solemn, and the unattractive.

"I have not been able to think," she said, "that I should not have made such observations as I have made of people, however cruel they may seem. After all, I did observe those things, and I had to set them down. I've been a camera. But that's just the point. I've been a selective camera, and it has been my attitude that has determined the selection; with the result that my slices of life (thank you, Mr. Phillpotts!) have been partial, misleading, and a little malicious. Further,

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What Do Women Want?

“WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?” FAMOUSLY ASKED THE PIONEER of psychoanalysis. If Freud had lived 13 years longer—he who believed biology was destiny—he would likely have been shocked by the French Existentialist Simone de Beauvoir’s answer—“The modern woman accepts masculine values: she prides herself on thinking, taking action, working, creating, on the same terms as men; instead of seeking to disparage men, she declares herself their equal.” [Emphasis added.] Her *Second Sex* was published in French in 1949 and English in 1953. In 1963 came American journalist Betty Freidan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, which, catching the rising temper of the times, gave birth to Gloria Steinem’s *Ms. Magazine*, the National Organization of Women, the Red Stockings, a lesbian contingent, and so forth, until . . . here we are some 60 years later and the message is becoming so clear only the culturally blind cannot see it—women want equality. In everything.



Meryl Streep and Alec Baldwin as a reunited divorced couple in *It's Complicated*

Hollywood's Modern Woman

Cinematically, you can see it in most every film. *The Kids Are All Right*, an upscale, lesbian-sperm-donor-feel-good drama starring Annette Bening and Julianne Moore, which none other than Rupert Murdoch’s *Wall Street Journal* dubbed “A heartwarming look at modern families.”

Up in the Air, which preceded it, stars George Clooney as Ryan Bingham

and Vera Farmiga as Alex. They are two execs, he’s single, she’s married but concealing it, winging around the country, him moving from woman to woman, her from man to man. Their first bedroom romp shows him bedside lying on the carpet, the sheets all heaped and tussled in the wake of romantic passion, and Alex stepping from the bathroom naked, Ryan’s tie around her waist, something akin to a matador

having been awarded an ear. Just who is she, a bewildered Ryan wonders. Alex gives it to him straight—“Just think of me as you with a vagina.”

The idea of political equality has been around since the Suffragettes at the turn of the 19th century, but lesbians giving birth, women as sexual predators, and in same-sex marriages! What’s it all mean? However that’s decided, one thing it means is “starter” marriages and easy divorce. With *It's Complicated* we see some of the aftereffects of divorce. Jane (Meryl Streep), as entrepreneur, and Jake (Alec Baldwin), as high powered lawyer, earlier produced a starter family before he fled the coop for a younger woman. Now, a decade later, Jake, old lust rising, wants to return to Jane. Their three kids, now young adults, bewildered and still hurting, do their



Julia Roberts finds Mr. Right in the macho, yet sensitive Javier Bardem in *Eat Pray Love*.

best as papa courts mama out of what she calls her “comfort zone” to play this time, of all things, “the other woman” to Jake’s tattooed younger wife. Enter Adam (Steve Martin), the architect who is designing an addition to Jane’s house. The sensitive artist type, Adam’s still smarting from a divorce when his wife ran off with his best friend on a couples biking trip to Italy. Jane, meeting someone who sees things as she does, at least in terms of kitchen and bedroom placement, smokes a joint with Adam (one Jake had earlier given her), takes her first toke in 27 years, and finds herself in the usual love triangle, notable only since they are all divorced and in the final laps of middle age. Streeper’s Jane, unfortunately played as all gushing false personality, doesn’t seem to learn much from her experience, whereas Baldwin’s Jake, a high testosterone macho type, now becomes sensitive to the family he has left in his libidinous wake.

No divorce is one-sided, but writer-director Nancy Meyers never lets us know Jane’s role except for a bedside agreement that she played a part. Few viewers will wonder why or will see the story as a one-sided indictment of the old he-man male and a wish for a new, more sensitive Adam. With male testosterone in a global decline, women may just get what they want. Only time will tell, of course, if that is what they want.

Eat Pray Love, based on travel writer Liz Gilbert’s best seller (6.2 million

copies sold in the U.S., and translated into 40 languages), cashes in on the ever-growing divorce market. Her three country trip to find herself post-divorce is a rather facile quasi-documentary that takes Liz (Julia Roberts) to Italy to get her appetite back, then on to an Indian ashram to stop the mind (this is a life’s quest, but she gets it in only a few months) through heavy meditation and the bumper-sticker sage advice of Richard (Richard Jenkins), a recovering alcoholic (Jenkins, last seen in *The Visitor*, is really the highlight of the film), and finally Bali to meet Mr. Right, hunky Felipe (Javier Bardem), a divorced, former macho, now sensitive (see Adam), Brazilian expatriate. It’s a neat and tidy trip of only a year’s time, underwritten she now admits by her publisher, which blends tasty desserts with plenty of the Italian *la dolce far niente*—the sweetness of doing nothing—with grand dollops of spirituality and ends with the promise of marriage. The couple have now settled into the wilds of New Jersey (close to her New York publisher). As for Gilbert’s second book, *Committed*, an anguished account of her ambiguous feelings after marrying Felipe, only 200,000 copies have been sold in the U.S., not bad, but against her first book that’s a ratio of 25 to 1. Where *Eat Pray Love* makes for an unrivaled self-search success story that no doubt has put many a modern divorcée on the road, *Committed* ruins the infantile fairy tale ending and brings us back to the real world.

It is too early to tell what equality will mean for women (says Gurdjieff, “All these theories for general welfare and general equality are not only unrealizable, but they would be fatal if they were realized.”), but one thing no woman would want to return to is portrayed in *Winter’s Bones*, which deservedly took best picture prize at the Sundance Film Festival. Set in the Missouri Ozarks and shot in black and white, it shows a backcountry life of dilapidated wooden houses surrounded by dead trucks, batteries, cracked toilets and the jetsam of human life, where kinship is everything and nothing, depending on circumstances. Time hasn’t moved much here, the prevalent thought form of keeping off the grid and to themselves is pretty much as it’s always been, except that where once the main source of income was distilling moonshine, it’s now cooking meth. The men, snorting lines, hard and mean, the threat of violence ever hanging in the still, dank air; the women, their faces drawn and fixed from a lifetime of ill treatment, know their places and somehow keep things together.

Seventeen-year-old Ree Dolly (Jennifer Lawrence) still hasn’t lost the feelings and intelligence that have been blunted in the older women. Left to care for her father’s two young children and a mother who no longer speaks, Ree learns that her father has been arrested for cooking meth. To get out on bail, he’s put up his house and land as a bond. Trial date is nearing and if he doesn’t show the homestead will be lost. Having no other choice, Ree sets out to find him only to learn that no one knows where he is, or isn’t saying.

Director Debra Granik gives a stark picture of what many women in one way or another have had to undergo. The question is, at least here in the West, where are we going? Is it to a time of women acting like men, divorcing and remarrying or having lesbian affairs (as did de Beauvoir and Freidan)? And if so, is there something we are forgetting. What about the children? What do women want is a question still being answered. ✎

Notes

1. *The modern woman*. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Penguin, 1972).
2. *General Equality*. P. D. Ouspensky, *Search*, pp. 307–8.



Ree (Jennifer Lawrence) comforts and protects her younger brother (Isaiah Stone) in *Winter's Bone*.

Courtesy of Roadside Attractions

Gurdjieff and Hypnosis: A Hermeneutic Study

by Mohammad H. Tamdgidi
Macmillan, 288 pp.

IN HIS RESOLUTE AND DENSELY ARGUED *GURDJIEFF AND HYPNOSIS: A Hermeneutic Study*, Mohammad H. (Behrooz) Tamdgidi admits to being drawn to the Work ideas, as he sees the need for an understanding that goes beyond mere "knowing." Recognizing that "alone [one] can do little," he attended a number of spiritual retreats (though, strangely, given his interest, none are Gurdjieffian). At one such retreat he suddenly "awoke" to its hypnotic influences. He uses this to justify his not joining a group because he must "maintain distance to avoid being trapped" in what he calls the "Yezidi circle" of hypnosis. Therefore he believes he writes from an independent scholastic stance, the unstated assumption that he is unbiased, and, of course, that he is not one of the hypnotized.

As an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, holding a Ph.D. in Sociology with a graduate certificate in Middle Eastern studies, Tamdgidi certainly has the scholastic credentials to apply a theory of interpretation known as hermeneutics to Gurdjieff's texts (oddly, he waits until the last page of his book to mention Gurdjieff's first writing, *The Struggle of the Magicians*, a ballet scenario which gives a many dimensional representation of the depth behind what Gurdjieff brought). Hermeneutics is an analytical approach traditionally used with the study of scripture, the intent is "both to conduct an in-depth textual analysis and to interpret the text using its own symbolic and meaning structures." His sole purpose, Tamdgidi says, is to "engage with Gurdjieff's life and teachings in his own terms . . . considering not only what is included but also what is excluded . . . as being equally significant." Further, he writes: "It is not a question of merely *what* is included and what not, but a question of *where* and *when* one or another data, thought, and idea is inserted inside a text. It is not that the data is necessarily omitted, but that it is omitted from *this* place and yet is then inserted in *that* place."

As to what Gurdjieff includes, that can certainly be known, but what is excluded and why is open to judgment. As to the way he wrote, he purposely used what is commonly known as a "salting technique" (not mentioned by Tamdgidi) by which he "buried the dog." Tamdgidi's main thesis is that Gurdjieff's writings "themselves were conscious, intentional, and systematic efforts in literary hypnotism." That the same might be said of the Old and New Testaments and the Koran doesn't seem to occur to Tamdgidi. But beyond that he misses Gurdjieff's saying that the ideas in *All and Everything* have three meanings and seven aspects. That the ideas are salted throughout the three series of books demands that the reader be active, not passive, toward the material and so, their intellectual intuition engaged, suddenly see the connections, thus being moved from what Gurdjieff calls the "reason of knowledge" to the "reason of understanding."

Given his careful exposition of the approach of hermeneutics, it is odd to see Tamdgidi regularly deviating from its strictures. For example, he references supportive material external to Gurdjieff's writings, such as Ouspensky's *In Search of the Miraculous*, to address concepts such as the enneagram and self-remembering, but even more intellectually entrapping, introduces new words and concepts, such as a discussion of food "circuits." At one point he even proposes that *The Herald of Coming Good* and "The Material Question" are in fact books of the *Third Series*, hardly concepts presented in the material itself, and on the face of it rather laughable. No less so the idea that Gurdjieff was hypnotized by his father. This he attributes to Gurdjieff's adult understanding but it is pure Tamdgidi projection.

Almost half of the book is the author's attempt to represent through condensation, intricate diagrams and interpretation of (a subset of) the concepts presented in *All and Everything*, which he relegates to the level of "philosophy" (something Gurdjieff generally held in low esteem, though he did believe Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* had missed only scale). Tamdgidi's depiction of an "observing self" as opposed to *observing* is not an accurate summarization of Gurdjieff's words. Note also should be taken of the

author's extensive use of quotes around individual words. Ostensibly, Tamdgidi is simply noting words that receive emphasis in Gurdjieff's writing. But what is the cumulative effect (a kind of "hypnotism" of which he accuses Gurdjieff) of repeatedly seeing "ancient," "knowledge," and "being" in quotes? Perhaps a questioning of the veracity of these terms? That what Gurdjieff is presenting is not authentic? How does he know this never having been in the Work?

A scholastic, or as Gurdjieff calls them, "learned being of new formation," the author places himself at an equal or higher level to the material being presented. He documents and analyzes myriad (seeming) inconsistencies in the writings, never understanding that it is for the reader to break through the hypnotic literacy; a homeopathic fighting fire with fire whose subtlety completely eludes the author. He muses on the experiments on theosophical "guinea pigs," reported in *Herald*, postulating that these experiments were hypnotic in nature. Tamdgidi presents himself as a scholar whose sole purpose is to divine the "actual" intention behind Gurdjieff's writings. But as the reader works his way through its factual spins, supposition, argument, declaration and counter declaration—for example, Gurdjieff is a black magician but later not a black magician really—the question arises: just where is the author coming from? An Internet search reveals he is the founder of The Omar Khayyam Center for Integrative Research in Utopia, Mysticism, and Science (Utopistics). Tamdgidi writes:

Since the world's utopian, mystical, and scientific movements have been the primary sources of inspiration, knowledge, and/or practice in this field, [the center] aims to critically reexamine the limits and contributions of these world-historical traditions—*seeking to clearly understand why they have failed* to bring about the good society... The center aims to develop new conceptual... structures of knowledge whereby the individual can radically understand and determine how world-history and her/his selves constitute one another. [Emphasis added.]

As Tamdgidi names his center

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GURDJEEF AT TALIESIN

BY FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

This newspaper article was published in the Capitol Times, Madison, Wisconsin, on Sunday, August 26, 1934. Frank Lloyd Wright's relationship with Gurdjieff began when Olgivanna Hinzenberg, one of Gurdjieff's early pupils, married Wright. Gurdjieff and Wright first met in June of 1934 when Gurdjieff visited Taliesin in Wisconsin. Though Wright was never Gurdjieff's pupil in any conventional sense, he resonated with many of Gurdjieff's ideas. (Note that Wright is often carried away by his enthusiasm, and the English spelling of Gurdjieff's name had not yet been standardized.)

REAL MEN WHO ARE REAL FORCES FOR AN ORGANIC CULTURE OF THE individual today are rare. I venture to say one might count them on the fingers of one hand with the thumb to spare—unless the thumb were to go to George Gurdjieff of the Prieuré at Fontainebleau, France, and spare the little finger.

Only One

There is only one Gurdjieff. His career is as unique as is the man himself. Rarely going out of his way to visit anyone during his brief stay in the United States, he honored us at Taliesin by coming out from Chicago to stay 24 hours with the Fellowship. He is a Greek who has roamed about Asia and western Europe in search of the temple rituals of Oriental culture. He has from this data by way of the genius that is his, developed new rhythms in the dance and new music so designed as to integrate the human faculties and prepare the man for a more harmonious development than any we can show by way of our current ideas of education.

In his sardonic fashion, with his tongue in his cheek a good deal of the time, he has crystallized his philosophy in nine fat volumes and has in manuscript form, as yet unpublished, some 8000 pieces of music of such quality that undoubtedly when he permits their publication, he will be best known as the author of a new school of



The architect Frank Lloyd Wright in 1930

“objective” music; that is to say, music that does not mean one thing to one man and another thing to another man but music so crystal clear and simply related to human feeling that all men will weep or smile or dance as the music itself does. And when one of our young men played from the Gurdjieff manuscripts 25 or 30 of his compositions this seems to be true. A prayer, a solemn dance, a gayety—all were emotionally true and organically beautiful.

Three Classes

His writing is to be had by translation only and so his involved oriental style comes out in some confusion but no humbleness. The thought is there, however, addressed to “idiots” by way of Beelzebub. Beelzebub has his fun with the idiots. Gurdjieff, declaring all mankind idiots, divides them into three classes—those who take what they can get; those who get what they can take; those who get what they get.

There is enormous ego in this man. Always deliberate in movement, not large although he seems so—with the skull bald and tall behind—forceful humorous luminous eyes. In him we see a massive sense of his own individual worth. A man able to reject most of the so-called culture of our period and set up more simple and organic standards of personal worth and courageously, if outrageously, live up to them. He affected us strangely as though some oriental Buddha had come alive in our midst. With perfect unconsciousness of self he would deliberately walk to the piano and adjust his glasses to correct

the player. Or, his bulk seated at ease in his chair, he smiled about him when his readings were read, watching the different faces and recognizing the feelings behind the various expressions.

Nothing Escapes Him

A kind, solid, fatherly man. All that went on about him seemed to impress him little and yet he would later give evidence that nothing escaped him, so highly are his powers of observation and concentration developed. He would appraise a character in a remark. He has rejected them and perhaps the personality of Gurdjieff is somewhat similar to that of Gandhi only, of course, more robust, aggressive and venturesome in nature. Now a man of perhaps 85 looking 55, he has some 40,000 “followers”—he will not call them students or disciples—has 104 sons of his own and 27 daughters for all of whose education he has made provision and to which he has given his attention.

He rather impressed me as being something of a Walt Whitman in Oriental terms, which neither describes nor explains him. He is an interesting study in himself, defying such analogy. He would resent such study and in no uncertain terms would put the observer back into his proper place.

Knowledge Seems Perfect

His knowledge of human nature and all its foibles seems perfect, and he does not hesitate to use this knowledge for his own ends although with a conscience that sees to it that they get something worth while out of his meeting them. Not caring at all for America or Americans, he has come over here, as he frankly put it, “to shear the sheep.” He will turn the wool into some kind of good work for humanity. His hypnotic powers have served him well in this connection, but he is more careful now in exercising them. American fruits and foods he finds unfit to eat—likes only our tomato juice and our dollars. But eats enormously just the same. The style of our money he approves. But the shearing I imagine is not so good. The wool is now so short. Notwithstanding a superabundance of personal idiosyncrasy, George Gurdjieff seems to have the stuff in him of which our genuine prophets have been made. And when prejudice against him has cleared away, his vision of truth will be recognized as fundamental to the man men need. *AK*

WORKING WITH INSTABILITY

THE TIME WE LIVE IN IS ONE OF INSTABILITY. ONE THAT IS GROWING, NOT lessening. The surface of life as we have known it continues, but underneath one senses a fragility, an imminent pulsation to pull apart, fracture. Everywhere a feeling of withdrawing, a taking cover, as before the onslaught of a storm. Will it pass in the night sky? One can't know and so lives in the instability of unknowing. The search then, understandably, is for stability. Something that we can depend upon, trust, that will get us through this time.

The time could be framed in many ways but nothing strikes so directly at its heart as what was pointed out early on:

"The present period of culture is, in the whole process of the perfecting of humanity, an empty and abortive interval. And *this is because, in respect of the development of the mind, that chief impeller to self-perfection, the people of our civilization cannot transmit by inheritance anything of value to their descendants.*" [Emphasis added.]

When we in the West who live by the mind, and value it to the point of worship, read that the mind is the *chief impeller to self-perfection* we immediately reject it. Several years before his writing about the present period Mr. Gurdjieff put it more succinctly to John Bennett when he visited the Prieuré—"With too much knowledge," he warned, "the inner barrier may become insurmountable."

How to understand what Gurdjieff is saying about "mind" and "knowledge"? One way might be to ponder the difference between self-knowledge and knowledge, and about the reason of knowledge versus the reason of understanding.

Knowledge certainly is one of the main reasons people are attracted to the teaching of The Fourth Way. The richness of its ideas, their scope and scale, gives a perspective and a meaning to human life that is unique. More accurately, it was unique, for a dominant trait of the time is its eclectic nature. That various fields of knowledge begin to become permeable and influence one another is all to the good, but when it comes to spiritual teachings, and especially the esoteric, this

eclecticism results in the hybridization we see with pseudo teachings that create the inner barrier that Gurdjieff speaks of by mixing and matching concepts and practices, covering it with psychologisms and proclaiming it as something new and better suited to the time.

Another feature is the belief one can be their own teacher and so put together their very own self-made teaching. So doing, they encase themselves more deeply in their own world giving rise to an "esoteric I," filled with concepts and fleeting experiences but empty at heart.

But the primary feature of a time of instability is the unconscious rejection of self-knowledge, for it in itself is *destabilizing*—the very opposite of the stability one wants. But to come to true self-knowledge one must first be serious and sincere enough to see through the self-image one takes oneself to be, observing impartially all the various "I's" with their motives, agendas and dreams. No doubt experiencing that I am not who I have thought myself to be only increases my sense of instability, vulnerability. Which is one of the main reasons a teacher, a point of stability, is essential.

With this spiritual friendship as an anchor, the student can weather the instability and in so trusting, become embodied, a real will and a self-integration developing, false personality weakens and essence growing, a Kesdjan body is created—all founded on a spiritual stability equal to any challenge. To give a practical means of realizing this, Gurdjieff introduced the ancient and seminal teaching of The Fourth Way. "The teaching whose theory is here being set out," he said, "is *completely self-supporting and independent of other lines* [of spiritual development] and it has been *completely unknown* up to the present time." [Emphasis added.]

Fundamental to the message Gurdjieff brought was that no matter how dim or sparkling the surface of one's life may be, everyone not authentically working for self-development is in the way of involution. Those called to this teaching enter the way of evolution. The former is a descending octave, the latter ascending. Living in the first we live as bioplasmic machines automatically receiving and transmitting energies. In the second we

learn how to develop body, emotions and mind harmoniously and so cease to be a machine and genuinely live and not be lived by our conditioning. By studying and practicing the teaching, a new ascending octave is created within oneself. One learns to balance between these two currents, one ascending and evolving, the other descending and involving. Creating a conscious context for these two currents creates a finer and finer vibration which allows a receiving and transmitting of higher energies which in turn allows the creation of new bodies beyond the physical. It is in essence a sacred and religious work one is called to, a way of spiritual evolution that is a help for oneself, others and God.

Which is why whenever a person leaves the Work—and it is always "the person"—it is a self-inflicted tragedy. Called to evolve, they fall back into involution. Said Gurdjieff, "It often happens that having stopped before some barrier, usually the smallest and most simple, people turn against the Work, against the teacher, and against other members of the group, and accuse them of the very thing that is becoming revealed to them in themselves . . . And what is it that they most of all desire to preserve? First the right to have their own valuation of ideas and people . . . They are already bringing into the Work their own paltry and subjective attitude . . . Already they accept one thing and they do not accept another thing; with one thing they agree, with another they disagree; they trust me in one thing, in another thing they do not trust me." So the closer we get to the truth of ourselves the more likely we are to become confused, for false personality defends itself. Deeper than this, as Gurdjieff says, "the principal reason [for leaving] is that it is impossible to sit between two stools . . . People usually think that they can acquire the new and preserve the old; they do not think this consciously of course."

Initially, leaving the teaching seems otherwise. One is "free," they've got their life back! But that life is the life they left, the life they were disappointed in. They believe that having worked on themselves they can bring the finer energy and knowledge they now have with them. But the energy is not fixed and the

knowledge a passing presence. In time the energy runs down, the knowledge hardens into concepts.

And so a second phase begins: the search for another teaching. But, as Mr. Gurdjieff says, they are "poisoned." Poisoned with what? The truth of having seen something of themselves. And poisoned, too, with the truth of the teaching itself. And so nothing suffices for long. To fill the gap, an Internet search begins for others who have left the Work, a "Fourth Way" forum may be joined—the ridiculousness of this shows how paltry their understanding has become. One may even begin to counsel others. Or they may shut down completely, jump back into the literalness of the material life, hiking and biking, and not wake up until years hence. Now and then a fear emerges, followed by anger and then, of course, justifications. *The person cannot be wrong.*

But the truth is they have condemned themselves to a life without value or promise, a life of involution. Given a chance to spiritually evolve, the resistance to observing and suffering the self-image and false personality that controls them, the need for applause, the fear of losing a relationship with one opposed to the teaching, not getting a green card . . . whatever the test of their sincerity they have not come to the stability within themselves to absorb it, so it absorbs them. Worst of all, they comfort themselves with thinking they are awake when, in fact, they have fallen into the deepest of sleep. "Many are called," it is said, "but few are chosen." But what is making the choice is not something outside us but that within ourselves which is highest or lowest. The highest chosen we come to a stability that no outer instability can break and so we live fearlessly, able to adapt to whatever appears. The lowest? Look around. It is everywhere. . . .

—William Patrick Patterson

Notes

1. *The present period of culture*. G. I. Gurdjieff, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, p. 8.
2. *With too much knowledge*. John Bennett, *Witness*, p. 121
3. *Completely self-supporting*. P. D. Ouspensky, *Search*, p. 286.
4. *It often happens*. Ouspensky, p. 228.
5. *The principal reason*. Ouspensky, p. 270.

Gurdjieff and Hypnosis

Continued from page 13

for Omar Khayyam, one wonders if Khayyam is anything more than the philosopher, mathematician and poet he is commonly known as. According to Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr, a revered Sufi himself, in his *Anthology of Philosophy in Persia*, he names him a Sufi. Then one remembers that early in his book Tamdgidi says that his intellectual analysis of Gurdjieff has been augmented by meditation practices from other traditions. But he does not identify them or say how they helped his analysis. The intuition suddenly springs to mind—could Tamdgidi, an Iranian, be a closeted Sufi or one much under their influence? If so, the hidden agenda behind his project becomes clear: the intention is not to give an independent appraisal of Gurdjieff and his writings, but rather to present him as a flawed individual and his writings as a failed attempt to waken humanity and so skew Gurdjieff's Fourth Way teaching; this a long held Sufi aim and obsession. If so, it aligns with another Sufi, Idries Shah, who some 40 years ago tried something of the same with *Teachers of Gurdjieff*. Touted as nonfiction, it caused a great stir. Unmasked as fiction, it died on the shelf. While Tamdgidi's analysis isn't fiction, it falls on its own petard. It is hardly independent; rather it is an intellectual attempt at hypnotic propaganda. ✍

—Marc Cleven

Notes

1. *Alone [one] can do little*. Mohammad H. Tamdgidi, *Gurdjieff and Hypnosis: A Hermeneutic Study* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 115.
2. *Joining a group*, Tamdgidi, p. xx.
3. *Maintain distance*. Tamdgidi, p. xxii.
4. *He even outlines the need*. "Gurdjieff's legacy goes far beyond intellectual knowledge, and includes significant emotionally- and physically-laden experiential material that can only be transmitted and grasped via practical learning." Tamdgidi, p. 16.
5. *Hermeneutics*. Tamdgidi, p. xvi.
6. *Engage with Gurdjieff's life*. Tamdgidi, p. xxiii.
7. *Considering not only what is included*. Tamdgidi, p. 21.
8. *It is not a question*. Tamdgidi, p. 21.

9. *Self-remembering*. The term "remembering oneself" is mentioned only three times across both the *First* and *Second Series*, though mentioned several times in the *Third Series*.
10. *Relegates to "philosophy."* This is the approach of Paul Beekman Taylor who first met Gurdjieff in December 1948 and traveled with him and others later the following year. According to Taylor, when Gurdjieff first saw "Polo," as he was known, he threw his food at him and later told him he would "tell many stories." Taylor never joined the Work. Since retiring as a professor of medieval literature, he has written several books on Gurdjieff drawing on his many contacts in the teaching (he was raised by Jean Toomer and his half sister Eve is Gurdjieff's daughter) and, as predicted, he told many stories. For reviews of his books, see back issues. Accordingly, Taylor gives Tamdgidi a bountiful back cover blurb, as does Basarab Nicolescu, who writes about the Work but whose only experience was with a group, albeit a faux group, in Berkeley in the late 1970s. Of J. Walter Driscoll, who writes a laudatory introduction to the book, and is cited many times in footnotes, his Work connection is not known other than to say he was initially the student of E. J. Gold.
11. *Observing self*. Tamdgidi, p. 64. See also p. 116.
12. *Conscious, intentional, and systematic efforts in literary hypnotism*. Tamdgidi, p. xxff.
13. *Literary hypnotism*. Tamdgidi's search for inner composition would have been better served had he read Mary Douglas's *Thinking in Circles* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), which examines the ring composition in scripture and classical literature.
14. *Actual intentions*. Tamdgidi, p. 208.
15. *That humble and honest*. G. I. Gurdjieff, *All and Everything*, p. 562.
16. *Omar Khayyam*. Idries Shah, *The Sufis* (New York: Anchor Books Edition, 1971), pp. 185–93.
17. *Mohammad H. (Behrooz) Tamdgidi*. <http://www.okcir.com>.
18. *Utopystics*. Tamdgidi, p. xviii.
19. *Since the world's utopian*. <http://www.okcir.com>.

Taoism

Continued from page 6

Dependent on nothing,
unchanging,
All pervading, unailing.
One may think of it as the mother
of all things under
heaven.

Its true name we do not know;
"Way" is the by-name that we give it.

The Tao is the source of all that exists; it is "the mother of all things." Is the Tao eternal, does it stand outside of time? It was "formlessly fashioned," suggesting it has not always existed, and yet since it has come into existence it remains unchanged. Whether or not it is the uncreated creator is never resolved. The text raises the question and leaves it unanswered: "Was it too the child of something else? We cannot tell."

So is there something beyond the Tao? The opening line of the text in many of its versions also points to a suggestion that the Tao has different aspects. The explanation provided by Holmes Welch in *Taoism: The Parting of the Way* suggests a higher level of Tao that is beyond naming—"no thing." His translation of the opening lines, rendered more literally, is: "The Tao that can be *Tao'd* is not the Absolute Tao. The name that can be named is not the absolute name." He explains it this way: "The Tao and the Something Else are, I think, *only aspects of one another*. That Something else is the *ch'ang tao*—the Eternal, Unvarying, Absolute Tao. It is a Way that we cannot follow. We cannot even give it a name. And when we give the name 'Tao' to its manifest aspect, it is not a true name, for 'its true name we do not know.'"

Welch likens the Tao to the mystery of Trinity, an analogy directly supported by the text:

The Tao gave birth to the One, the One to the Two, the Two to the Three, the Three to all the myriad objects which carry the yin and embrace the yang harmoniously intermingled.

John Blofeld, in *Taoism: The Road to Immortality*, explains the trinity in this way: "the [nameless] Tao in giving birth to the potentiality of forms produced the One [the named Tao]; that the One's passive and active principles,

yin and yang, are the Two; that these two in combination produced three treasures, the Three, and from these are born all the myriad objects of the universe."

The three treasures are *ching* (essence), *ch'i* (vitality, or life-breath, sometimes used to refer to the soul) and *shên* (spirit, also sometimes used to refer to the soul). These are active at all levels of existence from the microcosm to the macrocosm. They are, therefore, present in the human body. The yogic practices of Taoism and the work with the body and breath are intended to refine and transmute them to achieve unity with the Tao.

The process of change that is encompassed by the Tao is addressed on two levels, cosmological and individual, and in two directions:

In Tao the only motion is returning;

The only useful quality, weakness.

For though all creatures under heaven are the products of Being, Being itself is the product of Not-being.

The structure of reality thus contains a movement away and an inevitable return, the "vertical, metaphysical movement from the phenomenal Many to the pre-phenomenal One. Starting [from our perspective] from the state of multiplicity in which all things are actualized and realized, it traces them back to their ultimate origin." The creatures under heaven, all things in the world, come into being from the Being aspect of Tao, that which can be named. But that stage of existence itself comes into being from the "Not-being," the unknowable, unnameable Tao. And it is to this unnameable no-thing that all things return.

The phenomenal world in which we think we live and in which we differentiate one thing from another, me from you, is one level of existence. However, as Chuang-tzû describes, there is another level of existence, obtained through a higher level of consciousness



Laozi Riding an Ox, hanging scroll, light ink and color on paper, mid 1500s, by Zhang Lu, National Palace Museum, Taipei. Lao Tzu is said to have been traveling in the company of an ox and a servant boy when he dictated the Tao Te Ching.

in which this differentiation no longer exists, where there is no difference between, to use Chuang-tzû's example, a butterfly and Chuang-tzû (Chang Chou). So while all things are in constant flux, they are nevertheless different aspects of the One:

Once I, Chuang Chou, dreamt that I was a butterfly. Flitting happily about at ease and to my heart's content. I was indeed a butterfly. Happy and cheerful, I had no consciousness of being Chou.

All of a sudden I awoke and lo, I was Chou.

Did Chou dream that he was a butterfly? Or did the butterfly dream that it was Chou? How do I know? There is, however, undeniably a difference between Chou and a butterfly. This situation is what I would call the



Chuang Tzu Dreaming of a Butterfly, (or a butterfly dreaming of Chuang Tzu), Ike Taiga, ink on scroll, Worcester Art Museum

Transmutation of things.

The undeniable difference between things is on the phenomenal level only. Thus, the world is a dream.

[Chuang-tzú] wants to suggest that Reality in the real sense of the word is something totally different from what Reason regards as 'reality.' In order to grasp the true meaning of this our normal consciousness must first lose its self-identity. And together with the 'ego', all the objects of its perception and intellection must also lose their self-identities and be brought to a state of confusion [referred to as Chaos] . . . where 'dream' and 'reality' lose the essential distinction between them, at which the significance itself of such distinctions is lost. On its subjective side, it is a state of consciousness in which nothing any longer remains 'itself', and anything can be anything else. It is an entirely new order of Being, where all beings, liberated from the shackles of their semantic determinations freely transform themselves into one another. This is what Chuang-tzú calls the Transmutation of things.

This transmutation must be examined within time and outside of time. From a supratemporal perspective, the transmutation of one thing into

another means that ultimately they become merged together into an absolute Unity; the distinction between the two is simply apparent, not real. To one who has awakened, the realization is that all things are one. That is, all things are Reality itself, phenomenal forms of the Absolute One: the unity of existence.

The same phenomenon, viewed through the lens of time, explains Chuang-tzú's perspective on life and death. This theory is not a theory of transmigration of the soul. The soul does not migrate from one body to another. "Everything is a phenomenal form of one unique Reality which goes on assuming successively different forms of self-manifestation."

Chuang-tzú writes:

True Men are those who, being completely unified with the Creator Himself, take delight in being in the realm of the original Unity of the vital energy [the primordial cosmic energy which existed before the creation of the world] before it is divided into Heaven and Earth. To their minds Life is just a growth of an excrescence, a wart, and Death is the breaking of a boil, the bursting of a tumor. Such being the case, how should we expect them to care about the question as to which is better and which is worse Life or Death? They simply borrow different elements,

and put them together in the common form of a body.

The elements to which Chuang-tzú refers reflect the belief that the human body is a provisional phenomenon composed of the four basic elements: earth, air, fire and water, which have by chance, at a point in time, been united into this physical form. Thus what is *a* becomes *b* and what is *b* becomes *a*. But from a nontemporal viewpoint, *a*, by becoming and changing into *b*, refers itself back to its own origin and source, that is, *a* is really always *a*, it just takes a different form. There is, therefore, no real distinction between Life and Death.

What then does Taoism say explicitly about the soul? The most direct pointer to the suggestion that Taoism supports the existence of the soul is in chapter 16 of the *Tao Te Ching*, as translated by Arthur Waley:

Tao is forever and he that possesses it,
Though his body ceases, is not destroyed.

The implications of this seem clear enough: one who works on himself in the way prescribed by Taoism may possess the Tao and when the body dies, something identifiable with him does not. Yet other chapters of the *Tao Te Ching*, as translated by Waley and upon which Welch relies in reaching a different conclusion about Taoism's perspective on the soul, are inconsistent with this statement. The last sentences of Waley's translation of chapter 33 read:

But only what stays in its place can endure.

When one dies, one is not lost;
there is no other longevity.

Based on this line and others, Welch concludes that the *Tao Te Ching* does not support the existence of an immortal soul. "Whatever the soul may be, therefore, Lao-Tzu does not exempt it from the universal return to Non-being. He does not believe in life after death." Welch's interpretation is that the return spoken of in chapter 40 is a return during one's lifetime by way of a trance state toward the Tao, without achieving union with it. Welch sees this return as a rather dismal prospect because the *Tao Te Ching* eschews any positive description of this state. Welch

says, "there is neither desire nor rejection of desire, neither ideas nor absence of ideas, neither ecstasy nor pain. There is in fact, neither self nor Being. There is simply consciousness that all these have ceased—consciousness one might say, of Non-Being." This description evades the question: what is it that is conscious of all this?

Welch's view is that the Taoist may move up the eightfold path until he assumes the attributes of the Tao and is completely in tune with the order of the universe. Therefore, when he has to die it is of no consequence to him, for he looks on everything impersonally and knows that his death will furnish physical and spiritual material for future lives.

Welch rejects, in Waley's translation of chapter 16, what he characterizes as superfluous insertions which suggest mystical union with Tao: "What has submitted to fate has become part of the always-so." Welch concludes that the insertion of the two words "part of" is a license of the translator and not in the text, which literally reads: "Return fate is called eternal." The second line, translated by Waley as "To be of heaven is to be in Tao," Welch says should read simply "Heaven [like] then Tao [like]." To Welch, neither line literally supports mystical union or the concept that, upon our death, there is something distinctly identifiable as us that will unite with the Tao.

Other translators have avoided the contradiction between the text in chapters 33 and 16, and thereby reached a different conclusion. By way of example, for Gia-fu Feng and Jane English, chapter 33 presents no problem. They translate it as follows: "He who stays where he is endures. To die but not to perish is to be eternally present."

Other translators also end chapter 33 with some notion of life beyond the end of the physical body.

Yi Wu: "He who stays where he has found his true home endures long. And he who dies but perishes not enjoys real longevity."

Brian Browne Walker: "Remain in the center, and you'll always be at home. Die without dying, and you'll endure forever."

John R. Mabry: "One who remembers his Source will endure. He embraces

death and so does not perish but lives forever."

What these translations have in common is a direction: "remember his source," "remain in the center," "stays where he has found his true home," and "He who stays where he is endures." To explore what this direction may mean, these lines from chapter 33 must be given a greater context. Chapter 13 in all translations contains two movements, outward and inward. The outward advice is practical, but the inward advice clearly has greater inherent value.

The complete translation of chapter 33 by John Mabry reads as follows:

One who knows others is intelligent.

One who knows himself is truly wise.

One who overcomes others has force.

One who overcomes the self has true strength.

One who knows he has enough is truly wealthy.

One who has discipline is sincere.

One who remembers his Source will endure.

He embraces death and so does not perish but lives forever.

The question remains, how does one "remember his Source" the source being the Tao, out of which all things arise. The method is *wu wei*, which is described as a technique, a way of letting go. It is sometimes translated as non-action, or the "action of non-action," that may create a state in which all actions are effortless—"do nothing and everything will be done." The phrase has baffled scholars studying Taoism. Some see it as a direction for a ruler or those in government, enabling one to gain more control over human affairs. They have difficulty, however, reconciling this with the likely practical results of such a course of non-action. Others see it as an inner attitude motivated by a lack of

desire to participate in human affairs. Neither of these seems to sit squarely within the context of Philosophical Taoism as a whole. It seems that Taoism requires one to employ a technique, meaning that one must work to return to the source.

Perhaps *wu wei* is similar to the Fourth Way's teaching of self-remembering, formulated for that time and place, just as G. I. Gurdjieff formulated self-remembering for this time in the West. William Patrick Patterson

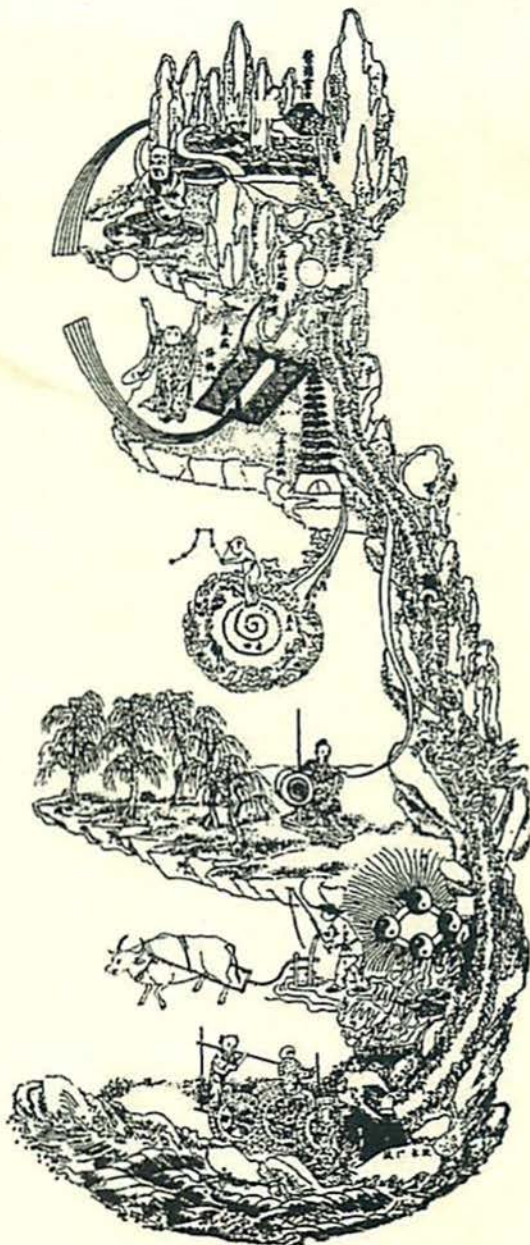


Illustration of Inner Circulation, 1800-1900, China, Qing dynasty ink rubbing. The *Nei Jing Tu* represents the transformations that occur within the bodies of Inner Alchemy practitioners, for the same forces that manifest as mountains, rivers, celestial bodies, animals, and plants are operating within the microcosm of the human body.

describes self-remembering this way in response to a student's question at a Fourth Way meeting:

The only movement that is not in the program [our internal software or our conditioned program] is to intentionally do nothing, because all actions are already discounted in the program. The only action—not a 'doing' in the usual sense of the word—is to remember oneself. It's completely inward, invisible. It disturbs nothing on the outside and therefore has no counter. Everything else is a doing of some type and all doings are in the program. Self-remembering is simply a relocation and redistribution of one's attention. Thus, one becomes embodied. In doing so, the attention is freed and elaborated and a new quality emerges.

As Gurdjieff says, the one truth that has come down to us through time is that we are the images of God. But, as Patterson explains, we are undeveloped images of God. We must work to realize our true Self. A critical aspect of that work is self-remembering. In this way, Taoism and the Fourth Way are similar in that they both state that we must work to grow a soul. Blofeld describes Taoism's aim this way: "Cultivation of the Way is a lifelong process of refinement of the adept's consciousness. Bringing to bear his fully integrated powers of body and mind, he gradually discovers his real self—which in a sense is no-self."

Origins of Taoism

While many assume that the *Tao Te Ching* is the original source of Taoism, its origins are said by some to be much earlier, to grow out of what is called the Golden Age. If so, it further supports the possibility of Taoism's connection to the Fourth Way. Taoism's origin may have been before Atlantis disappeared. The Yellow-Emperor, Huang-ti, one of the Five Emperor Sages, said to have lived around 2500 BCE, is considered by some to be the founder of Taoism.

According to tradition, in the era of the Five-Emperor-Sages men dwelt in harmonious accord with nature's laws, knowing well how to remedy sickness and attain ripe old age. Intercourse between heaven and earth was close. Virtuous sages sitting rapt in

stillness and tranquility communed with that which is formless, undifferentiated, eternal. Cultivating the Way, they drew upon the very source of divine wisdom, the gods delighting to hold converse with mortals so worthy of their high regard. The precious knowledge thus received was transmitted to posterity, clothed in a language that would guard its secrets from the profane.

In *All and Everything*, Gurdjieff writes that King Konuzion, a descendant of the learned society of Akhaldans, went to China (Maralpleicie). Gurdjieff tells us that his teachings were eventually distorted so that the concept of morality grew out of them, an apparent reference to Confucianism. Nevertheless, there was in China a source of knowledge for the ancient practices and teachings of what we now call the Fourth Way. As Gurdjieff relates, before Atlantis sank beings on the Earth had the same duration of existence as all other three-brained beings in the Universe. This is *Foolasnitamnian* existence, in which three brained beings transmute cosmic substances necessary for the common cosmic Trogoautogocratic-process and live until they develop within themselves a Kesdjan or Astral body.

Chuang-tzu explained the wisdom of this earlier age: "There is one respect in which the understanding of the men of antiquity reached the highest point. Wherein did they excel? They believed that things did not exist. This is the highest point, the culmination; nothing can be added to it. Next below this is the state of believing that things exist, but that there are no distinctions between them."

There was during that era a single divine tradition among the Chinese. This era was followed by the decline of civilizations, leading to differentiation beginning in the fifth century BCE with the emergence of Confucianism. Taoism, however, is seen as being connected to this Golden Age. The *Tao Te Ching* itself refers back to this era. Lao Tzu writes:

In the highest antiquity (the people) did not know that there were (their rulers). In the next age they loved them and praised them. In the next they feared them, in the next they despised them. Thus it was that when

faith (in the Tao) was deficient (in the rulers) a want of a faith in them ensued (in the people).

The *Tao Te Ching* was written, in part, to help reverse the societal decline, not in the way Confucius went about it, by trying to instill a moral code in the rulers and the masses, but by teaching individuals to live in harmony with the Tao, recognizing that changes in society must come from changes within individuals.

In addition to having the potential to impact society, the Taoist adherent who develops a soul experiences an afterlife. What is it that survives and, to the extent that it can be described in words, what is experienced? Ancient Chinese ideas about the soul were based on the belief that each of us has two kinds of souls, the *hun* and the *p'o*. Each person is said to have three *hun* souls and seven *p'o* souls. These are made of the same vital material as are all things, *ch'i*, but there are different manifestations of *ch'i*. The *hun* soul is made of *yang ch'i* and represents the spiritual and intellectual aspects. The *p'o* is made of *yin ch'i*, which is the bodily animating principle. Upon death the *p'o* sinks to the ground, and traditionally Chinese families performed certain rituals to settle it peacefully into the grave. The *hun* soul departs the body and ascends. Once the person dies, these souls cannot be reassembled.

Taoism teaches that these souls will linger in the upper and lower regions for some time until they disintegrate and lose forever the opportunity to achieve immortality. "If this state is not attained while life remains, though the twin souls may survive in spirit form for a period of time, they will ultimately fade into extinction. The golden leaves of autumn do not survive separation from the parent tree for long." It is generally held that Taoists do not believe in reincarnation. Thus, one who during his or her lifetime follows the Tao and develops a soul will unite with the Tao upon the death of the physical body. This does not, as Holmes Welch concludes, mean a loss of identity, rather it means an experiencing of one's true identity:

Since the Tao is all and nothing lies outside it, since its multiplicity and unity are identical, when a finite being sheds the illusion of separate



Two Panels from a Sarcophagus: Tiger and Dragon, Northern Wei dynasty, c. 500-534 CE. Today the symbol of yin/yang is the taiji diagram, but it did not appear in a Taoist context until the Song dynasty (960-1279). The tiger and dragon are ancient symbols of the forces of yin and yang respectively: this convention dates at least from the Zhou dynasty (c. 1050-256 BCE) and probably from the Neolithic, and are often found as a paired motif in Taoist iconography.

existence, he is not lost in the Tao. By casting off his imaginary limitations, he becomes immeasurable. Plunge the finite into the infinite and, though only one remains, the finite, far from being diminished, takes on the stature of infinity. Such perception will bring you face to face with the true secret cherished by all the accomplished sages. The mind of who returns to the Source thereby BECOMES the Source. Your own mind is DESTINED TO BECOME THE UNIVERSE ITSELF.

[Emphasis in original.]

Religious Taoism: The Quest for Physical Immortality

Religious Taoism or Neo-Taoism emerged in a relatively formal sense at the beginning of the first century by exploiting the ambiguities and inconsistencies of the Taoist philosophical texts. The initial impetus for this shift was provided by Chang Tao-ling during the Eastern Han dynasty (25-219 CE). He claimed that his teachings were revealed to him by Lao-tzu, who also gave him the powers to heal and ward off evil spirits. He gained a large following using talismanic water to heal the sick. He also deified Lao-tzu. Religious Taoism thereby became linked with Philosophical Taoism, despite the wide gulf between them, as exemplified by Chuang-tzu's perspective that there is no difference between life and death,

and Religious Taoism's quest for physical immortality.

This connection between the two was facilitated by Wang Chung's book *Lun Hêng*, written in the first century CE, in which he repeatedly associated the quest for immortality with cultivating the Tao. The practices that form its basis are called "the way of hsien." The methods employed were varied and included alchemy, ingesting herbs or drugs, gymnastics, yogic practices, breathing techniques, diet, virtuous living and sexual practices. Religious Taoism divided into various sects each with differing emphases. In some sects physical immortality was apparently available to one already deceased through resurrection, as well as to the living. For others, the immortality had to be achieved during one's lifetime, because the three *hun* souls and seven *p'o* souls cannot be reassembled after the death of the physical body.

The origins of Religious Taoism are shamanic, and its emergence before it was linked with Taoism can be traced back to the fourth century BCE. The link to philosophical Taoism was apparently made to increase its respectability. Religious Taoism, however, cannot be pigeon-holed, as it includes aspects of Philosophical Taoism, as well as Confucianism and Buddhism. It is a tapestry of approaches and perspectives, its adherents including "both ignorant religious fanatics and highly cultivated scholars."

Religious Taoism is further removed from Philosophical Taoism in that it incorporates the concept of Hell, which is unknown to Philosophical Taoism. Adherents seek longevity or immortality to abbreviate or avoid the tortures of hell. Religious Taoism also believes in the existence of a spiritual hierarchy in heaven with the spirit world being replicated inside the human body. A *hsien* who goes to heaven takes the lowest place, as he has no seniority, and (apparently having brought his ego to heaven with him) may prefer to stay on earth for that reason.

Taoism: The Effect of its Devolution from Esoteric to Pseudo-esoteric

If the theory explored in this article is correct—that Philosophical Taoism's origins are esoteric—the history of Taoism demonstrates that the rise and decline of esoteric teaching takes place in the same manner in the East and in the West. Eastern esotericism is just as susceptible to devolving influences as is esotericism in the Western world. Yet the pseudo-esoteric schools that result increase the opportunities for those who are seeking the truth, providing them with the possibility of learning that they need to grow a soul. As Gurdjieff says, "The very idea of esotericism, the idea of initiation, reaches people in most cases through pseudo-esoteric systems and schools; and if there were not these pseudo-esoteric schools the vast majority of humanity would have no possibility whatever of hearing and learning of the existence of anything greater than life because the truth in its pure form would be inaccessible to them." ✍

—Ron & Claire Levitan

Notes

1. "Taoism." Jeaneane Fowler, *An Introduction to the Philosophy and Religion of Taoism: Pathways to Immortality* (Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), pp. 4-5.
2. *The author's name.* Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 295. The traditional thinking is that Chuang-tzu lived about two centuries after Lao Tzu, or after the *Tao Te Ching* was written. This chronology has been put in question recently and some scholars believe a strong case can be made that Chuang-tzu preceded the *Tao Te Ching*. It

- is widely believed that Chuang-tzû probably authored only the first 7 chapters, called the Inner Chapters, of the extant text, which has 33 chapters. The others are later developments and interpretations of the essential 7 chapters penned by Chuang-tzû.
3. *Thus, even its basic emphasis.* Compare for example, D.C. Lau, trans., *Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 32. Because of the numerous references to rulers, such as "lord of men" and "lords and princes," the text "is through and through a work on the art of government," to John Bright-Fey, *The Whole Heart of Tao* (Birmingham, AL: Crane Hill Publishers, 2006), p. 287: "Throughout the *Tao Te Ching*, the metaphor of government is used to describe the individual. Much has been written about Lao-tzu's fascination and disgust with the politics of his era. Unfortunately, most translators over-emphasize those aspects and neglect the central Taoist theme. From an ancient Taoist perspective, an individual who embraces the Tao Way of Life naturally influences the people."
 4. *The earliest attempts.* Izutsu, p. 288.
 5. *Those who have concluded.* Arthur Waley, *The Way and its Power* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1958), p. 97, a perspective with which Holmes Welch is in agreement. Holmes Welch, *Taoism: The Parting of the Way* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), p. 179. See also, Alan Watts, *What Is Tao?* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2000), pp. xvi–xvii: "the consistency of the style and the rhythm of the arguments presented in both parts suggest otherwise. It seems more likely that this book of sage advice was the work of a single author drawing upon the prevailing folk wisdom of the day." Izutsu, pp. 292–93, concludes it is the work of a single author based on the personal unity of the text. Compare, Herrlee G. Creel, *What Is Taoism?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 1–2: the *Tao Te Ching* and the *Chuang-tzû* "are really collections of Taoist writings and sayings, made by differing persons in different times, rather than a single work of any one person."
 6. *The principle that can be enunciated.* To read the 112 translations in English, as well as translations in a variety of other languages, go to: http://home.pages.at/onkellotus/TTK/_IndexTTK.html.
 7. *Be experienced.* Waley, p. 59.
 8. *Something formlessly fashioned.* Waley's translation, quoting from Welch, p. 53.
 9. *The child of something else.* Waley, chapter 4 of the *Tao Te Ching*.
 10. *The Tao that can be Tao'd.* Welch, p. 56.
 11. *The Tao and the Something Else.* Welch, pp. 55–56.
 12. *The Tao gave birth.* John Blofeld, *Taoism: The Road to Immortality* (Boulder, CO: Shambala, 1978), p. 4, chapter 42 of the *Tao Te Ching*.
 13. *The [nameless] Tao.* Blofeld, p. 4.
 14. *Yogic practices.* Taoism involves work with the body in a way that any student of the Fourth Way would recognize. An example attributed to Hsi Wang Mu, a Taoist divinity, is the following: "Practice in the middle watches of the night, not troubling about special postures [implying there is work with postures at other times]. Just fold your hands together, relax your limbs, banish idle thought, *let your own body be the sole object of awareness.*" [Emphasis added.] Blofeld, p. 150.
 15. *In Tao the only motion.* Welch, p. 68, quoting chapter 40 of Waley's translation of the *Tao Te Ching*.
 16. *The structure of reality.* Izutsu, p. 322. This is akin to the involuntary and evolutionary process described by Gurdjieff as the Ray of Creation, though without the vibrational levels of the various worlds between the Absolute and the Moon, World 96.
 17. *Unnameable Tao.* Izutsu, p. 322. The phrase "creatures under heaven" excludes the ones in heaven. Based on ancient Chinese beliefs about ancestor spirits, Taoist references to heaven are said to include the spirits of the departed living in heaven. Waley, p. 21.
 18. *Once I, Chuang Chou.* Izutsu, p. 312.
 19. *Everything is a phenomenal form.* Izutsu, p. 316.
 20. *True Men are those.* Izutsu, p. 315.
 21. *This physical form.* Izutsu, pp. 317–18, fn. 15.
 22. *Whatever the soul may be.* Welch, p. 67.
 23. *Welch sees.* A perspective shared by John Blofeld, p. 47.
 24. *Neither desire nor rejection.* Welch, p. 68.
 25. *Material for future lives.* Welch, p. 67.
 26. *Unite with the Tao.* Welch, p. 67.
 27. *Presents no problem.* Feng and English translate chapter 16 as follows: "Being at one with the Tao is eternal. And though the body dies, the Tao will never pass away." Gia-fu Feng and Jane English, *Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972).
 28. *He who stays.* All translations appear at: <http://home.pages.at/onkellotus/index.html>.
 29. *John Mabry reads.* http://home.pages.at/onkellotus/TTK/English_Mabry_TTK.html#Kap33.
 30. *Baffled scholars.* Creel's book *What Is Taoism?* contains an essay called "On the Origin of Wu-wei," pp. 48–78.
 31. *The only movement.* William Patrick Patterson, *Spiritual Survival in a Radically Changing World-Time* (Fairfax, CA: Arete Communications, 2009), pp. 182–83.
 32. *Cultivation of the Way.* Blofeld, p. 40.
 33. *According to tradition.* Blofeld, p. 21.
 34. *Reference to Confucianism.* G.I. Gurdjieff, *All and Everything*, p. 342.
 35. *As Gurdjieff relates.* Gurdjieff, p. 106.
 36. *Foolasnitamnian existence.* Gurdjieff, pp. 130–31.
 37. *Distinctions between them.* Creel, p. 28.
 38. *Back to this era.* Although the text is devoid of proper names, places or dates, the author makes it clear that at times he is referencing words of earlier sages. F. Max Müller, ed., *The Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), p. 2.
 39. *In the highest antiquity.* Müller, pp. 60–61.
 40. *Changes within individuals.* Eva Wong, *Taoism* (Boston: Shambala, 1997), p. 23.
 41. *Ancient Chinese ideas.* Welch, p. 112.
 42. *Golden leaves of autumn.* Blofeld, pp. 138–39.
 43. *Since the Tao is all.* Blofeld, pp. 163–64 (quoting Taoist Master Ts'eng).
 44. *Exploiting those texts.* Creel, pp. 6–7, 16.
 45. *Wang Chug's book.* Creel, p. 19.
 46. *Increase its respectability.* Creel, p. 19.
 47. *Highly cultivated scholars.* Creel, p. 7.
 48. *A hsien who goes.* Creel, p. 9.
 49. *Very idea of esotericism.* P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 313.

they have had no other purpose than to record my attitude, which in itself stood in need of change if it was to become active instead of passive. Altogether, I've been not only a mere camera, but I've been a selective camera and a selective camera without a creative principle. And, like everything unconscious, the result has been evil."

"Well, and what is your new plan?"

"To widen first the scope of my camera, and then to employ it for a conscious purpose—that of representing life not merely as it appears to a certain attitude, but as it appears to another and different attitude, a creative attitude."

"What do you mean by a creative attitude?" I asked.

"You must help me out, Orage," she replied, "if I miss the words. But I mean something like this. Life can be made to appear anything by presenting only one aspect of it; and every attitude in us—every mood, I mean to say—sees only one aspect. Assuming that this attitude is more or less permanent in any

given writer and unsusceptible of being changed by his own will, he is bound to present only the correspondent aspect of life, and, at the same time, to do no more than present it. He is passively victimized by the partial vision imposed on him, and this, in its turn, is without dynamic quality. Such reflections of life have the effect of reflections in a looking-glass of real objects; that is, none whatever."

"Your idea is, then, to affect life and no longer just to reflect it?"

"Oh, that is too big," she said.

"You must not laugh at me. Help me to express myself."

She continued with occasional suggestions of words, and finally completed the sketch of her new attitude.

"There are in life as many aspects as attitudes toward it; and aspects change with attitudes. At present we see life, generally speaking, in only a passive aspect because we bring only a passive attitude to bear upon it. Could we change our attitude, we should not only see life differently, but life itself would come to be different. Life would undergo a change of appearance because we ourselves had undergone a change in attitude. I'm aware, for

example, of a recent change of attitude in myself: and at once not only my old stories have come to look different to me, but life itself looks different. I could not write my old stories again, or any more like them, and not because I do not see the same detail as before, but because somehow or other the pattern is different. The old details now make another pattern; and this perception of a new pattern is what I call a creative attitude toward life."

"You mean," I said, "that while the details of life—the forms, colors, sounds, etc.—remain the same, the pattern under which you arrange them is now different owing to your change of attitude? Formerly, for example, being yourself in a mood, say, of resentment, you have selected and presented your observations of life in a pattern of, say, a cross of amused suffering? Your present attitude, being creative, and not, like resentment, simply reactive, arranges the same details, but in a different pattern; in a pattern to present, say, the descent from the cross?"

"I wish I dare mean half as much as that," Katherine Mansfield said: "but really my idea is much smaller. Perhaps

Bavarian Babies.
The Child-Who-Was-Tired.
By Katherine Mansfield.

Sue was just beginning to walk along a little white road with tall black trees on either side, a little road that led to nowhere, and where nobody walked at all, when a hand gripped her shoulder, shook her, slapped her ear.

"Oh, oh, don't stop me," cried the Child-Who-Was-Tired. "Let me go."

"Get up, you good for nothing brat," said a voice, "get up and light the oven or I'll shake every bone out of your body."

With an immense effort she opened her eyes, and saw the Frau standing by, the baby bundled under one arm. The three other children who shared the same bed with the Child-Who-Was-Tired, accustomed to brawls, slept on peacefully. In a corner of the room the Man was fastening his braces.

"What do you mean by sleeping like this the whole night through—like a sack of potatoes? You've let the baby wet his bed twice."

She did not answer, but tied her petticoat string, buttoned on her plaid frock with cold, shaking fingers.

"There, that's enough. Take the baby into the kitchen with you, and heat that cold coffee on the spirit lamp for the master, and give him the loaf of black bread out of the table drawer. Don't guzzle it yourself or I'll know."

the first time that morning out of her dreadful heaviness, and thrusting her finger into the baby's mouth.

"No," he said grimly, "another baby. Now, get on with your work; it's time the others got up for school."

She stood a moment quite silently, hearing his heavy steps on the stone passage, then the gravel walk, and finally the slam of the front gate.

"Another baby! Hasn't she finished having them yet?" thought the Child. "Two babies getting eye teeth—two babies to get up for in the night—two babies to carry about and wash their little piggy clothes!" She looked with horror at the one in her arms, who, seeming to understand the contemptuous loathing of her tired glance, doubled his fists, stiffened his body, and began violently screaming.

"Ts—ts—ts." She laid him on the settle and went back to her floor washing. He never ceased crying for a moment, but she got quite used to it and kept time with her broom. Oh, how tired she was! Oh, the heavy broom handle and the burning spot just at the back of her neck that ached so, and a funny little fluttering feeling just at the back of her waistband, as though something was going to break.

The clock struck six. She set a pan of milk in the oven, and went into the next room to wake and dress the three children. Anton and Hans lay together in mutual attitudes of amity which certainly never existed out of their sleeping hours. Lena was curled up, her knees under her chin, only a straight, standing-up pig-tail of hair showing above the bolster.

Shortly after meeting A. R. Orage, Mansfield's stories began to be published in his journal, *The New Age*.

not, though, if I come to think about it. Do you think it is very presumptuous of me?"

I reassured her, and she continued. "An artist communicates not his vision of the world, but the attitude that results in his vision; not his dream, but his dream-state; and as his attitude is passive, negative, or indifferent, so he reinforces in his readers the corresponding state of mind. Now, most writers are merely passive; in fact, they aim only at representing life, as they say, with the consequence that their readers for the most part become even more passive, even more spectatorial, and we have a world of Peeping Toms with fewer and fewer Lady Godivas to ride by. What I am trying to say is that a new attitude to life on the part of writers would first see life different and then make it different."

"Have you come to any practical conclusion as regards the writing of stories?" I asked. "Do you see the possibility of a new kind of story? How will your new idea work out in practice?"

Katherine Mansfield showed me some fragments of beginnings of stories, all of which she tore up.

"I have begun many times," she said, "but I am not yet ready, it seems. However, the idea is clear enough, and I shall carry it out one day. Here is an example. I won't say it is one I shall ever write, but it will serve as an illustration. Two people fall in love and marry. One,

or perhaps both of them, have had previous affairs, the remains of which still linger like ghosts in the new home. Both wish to forget but the ghosts still walk. How can this situation be presented? Ordinarily a writer, such as the late lamented Katherine Mansfield, would bring her passive, selective, and resentful attitude to bear upon it, and the result would be one of her famous satiric sketches reinforcing in her readers the attitude in herself. Or, peradventure, some didacticist would treat of the situation, and present us with a homily on the importance of sacrifice. Others would treat it pathetically or solemnly or psychologically or melodramatically or humorously, each according to his own passive attitude or normal mood.

"But I should represent it as my present attitude sees it, as a common adventure in ghost laying. Thanks to some change in me since I have been here, I see any such situation as an opportunity for the exercise and employment of all the intelligence, invention, imagination, bravery, endurance, and, in fact, all the virtues of the most attractive hero and heroine. Think of the subtlety necessary on both sides to maintain a mutual state of love which both naturally and sincerely wish to maintain, as, of course, everybody does. Think of how they would try to lay the ghosts in each other and in themselves. Suppose them to be jointly competing for the divine laurel and living and

loving as an art. I can see such a scope for subtlety of observation that Henry James might appear myopic. At the same time, no quality need necessarily remain unemployed but every power of the artist might be brought into play."

"You would not necessarily have a happy ending?" I asked.

"Not by any means. The problem might prove to be too big. Heroes and heroines are not measured either by what they passively endure or by what they actually achieve, but by the quantity and quality of the effort they put forth. The reader's sympathy would be maintained by the continuity and variety of the effort of one or both of the characters, by their indomitable renewal of the struggle with ever-fresh invention. Usually our 'heroes' flag in their resources; they sulk after their first failure, or simply repeat the tactics which have already failed. And we are asked to admire their endurance or sympathize with their suffering or laugh at their ineptitude. I wish the laugh to be with the heroes. Let them anticipate the passive spectator and act as if the problem were theirs only to solve. That, roughly, is my new idea."

"And you really see your way to writing stories with it?"

"I see the way, but I still have to go it."

Only a few weeks later Katherine Mansfield was dead. I saw her a few hours before her death; and she was still radiant in her new attitude. ✍

The Aim of Self-Observation

The aim of self-observation, apart from its results, is clear: to see ourselves as others. When I can be, for myself, my neighbor, and my neighbor, for me, myself, I shall have attained the objectivity of a normal human being. Thereafter the development of the spirit and soul will be as normal as is now the growth and development of the body. After all, it is very strange that we do not grow spiritually as a matter of course and time. We have to make no effort to mature bodily from infancy to adulthood. Why does not the same law govern our psychic development? Gurdjieff's reply is the old religious reply: it is because Man has fallen, i.e., has become psychically abnormal; and hence it is that in his psyche the laws governing bodily growth cannot apply. Self-observation is simply (!) a means of attaining normality, and this as a prime condition of subsequent normal development. Once normalized the psyche can take care of itself; its normalization is the stumbling block. Therefore, said Paul, "I labor till Christ be born in ye."

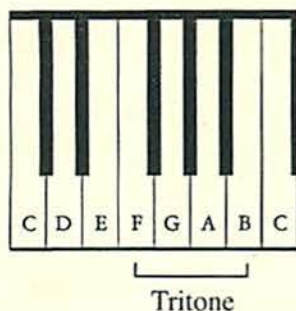
—A. R. Orage

The Devil's Interval

Continued from page 8

The Seventh Note of the Scale

There is a second way of illustrating the interval. The augmented fourth also occurs naturally within the octave also occurs naturally within the octave between the notes F and B. Using the note F as the referent and counting four notes to B we can see the augmented fourth interval. This has the same number of steps (or half steps) as the interval between C and F#, but here it can be seen using only the white notes on the keyboard in the scale of C.

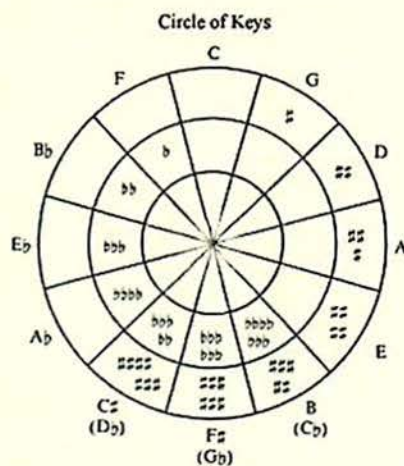


This is where the ambiguity and dual nature of the tritone can be seen. Assume that we're playing the F and B together on the piano keyboard and we have not established a key or tonal center. Looking at the note B first and, assuming its location within the scale of C, we can see it is the seventh note, *si*. Musicians attribute an additional meaning to the seventh note of the scale; it is referred to as the "leading tone." The "tendency" of the leading tone (*si*) is to move one half step higher to *doh* which completes the octave. If we sing *doh, re, mi, fa, sol, la* and *si* we can feel the urge to sing the second *doh*, thereby completing the octave by moving one half step higher. We're also establishing the possibility of starting the next octave above the first octave.

Since the tritone inverted is the same interval, the note F can also be used as the leading tone. The F would resolve one half step higher to F#, establishing F# as the key. As André VandenBroeck states in his conversations with Schwallier de Lubicz, "Hence two resolutions are possible, both occurring with equal ease, each as compelling as the other to the ear. One single dissonance leads to two different resolutions . . . representing extreme instability."

Movement from one key or tonal center to another in music is called

modulation. The key of C at the top of the circle has no sharps or flats. Moving clockwise around the circle we come to the key of G which adds only one sharp; this is the most closely related key to the key of C. When we reach the key of F#, which has six sharps, we are at the most distant point on the circle at the bottom, directly *opposite* the key of C. So the key that is possible by taking either F or B as the leading tone can be one of two extremes; one extreme leads to the key of C when B is taken as the leading tone, the other extreme is to the key of F# when F is taken as the leading tone. The ambiguity between the two extremes can be resolved equally to the key of C or the key of F#. (The flat-ted keys can be constructed by starting at the top of the circle, going counter-clockwise, and adding one flat at a time to modulate from one key to another.)



The most consonant interval occurs first between a note and its octave, for example playing the key C on the piano keyboard and then playing another C one octave higher. The next most consonant interval would be between C and G, this is *doh* and *sol*. Consonant intervals between notes in the scale establish and maintain the feeling of a key or tonal center. The music of consonance, with its lesser attributes of dissonance was the predominant type of music heard in the West during what is called the "common practice period" from about 1600 to 1900.

Dissonance Adopted

The greater freedom coming from the use of the *diabolus* and other

dissonant intervals influenced composers to jump from one key to another, eventually from one key to more distantly related keys within a given piece of music. There was also an increased use of "chromaticism" during this period that added to the dissonance. In our scale of C, not only were the white notes in the keyboard used, but the black notes were being "added" into the music also.

As the dissonance used in music increased, it eventually led to such an excess that a sense of key or tonality was entirely lost. In the early part of the 20th century composers such as Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern and Alban Berg explored what came to be known as "atonal" music. Atonal music eliminates any sense of key or tonal center, the feeling of *doh* does not exist, only dissonance and uncertainty remain. About this eventuality Schwallier de Lubicz said, "What else can this devil be but the destruction of a rational structure, incorporated into that very structure from the beginning, as a price of beginning, so to speak?"

In the early 20th century there was also an effort to eliminate music altogether by subjugating it to sound. "Futurism" in music started with the 1913 manifesto *The Art of Noises* by Luigi Russolo. Bored with the music of the past, he felt that the noise of machines would replace music and that it could eventually become a source of pleasure for listeners. He sought to replace music with the sound of machines that were a reflection of the Industrial Revolution. His "noise-sound" music was a direct consequence of the extreme dissonance in the music of his time.

Later in the 20th century John Cage attempted to integrate music with sound. He asked listeners to take in the "whole" experience of sound. This included music in which sounds occurred randomly and also the silence when the music was not heard and the listener was left with the ambient noises present at that moment in the concert hall.

But there is a third option or "resolution" that is available in the Work, an option that allows us to reconcile the extremes. This pertains to how the lateral octave corresponds to the descending octave of the Ray of Creation when the two are placed side by side. Gurdjieff said, "The sun, sol of

the cosmic octave, begins at a certain moment to sound as doh, *sol-doh*." If the Ray of Creation is "spelled out" in the key of C, this would mean the sun is sounding G on the descending scale; for the lateral octave this sol at G is doh. The ascending octave establishes itself in the key of G. There is a problem, however: the leading tone below G on the lateral octave must be an interval of a half step just like the half step that occurs between doh and si in the Ray of Creation when moving downward from C to B. A half step below G is not the F on the Ray of Creation but F#, the note that must occur at this point in the key of G. Now we have the si-doh of the ascending octave.

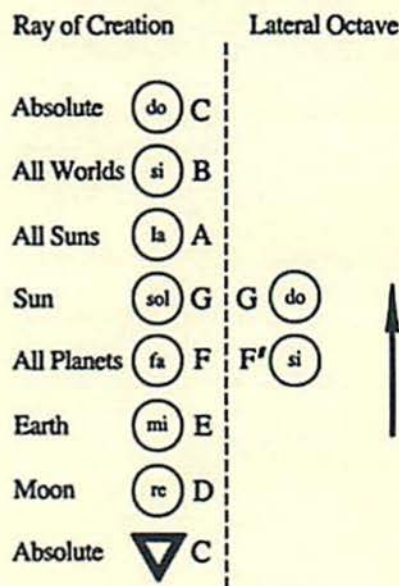
What the descending octave of the Ray of Creation and the lateral octave seem to indicate is that the devil and his sonic equivalent are necessary if one is attempting to reach sol of the Ray of Creation. The F# that divides the octave in the key of C indicates a reversal as we work against the down-flow of Nature; we see there are two—"I" and "it." The F# on the lateral octave then sounds as a dissonant interval against the F on the Ray of Creation. These two notes produce an interval of a half step which, for this writer, is the most dissonant of all intervals in music. Therefore to ascend to the doh on the lateral scale demands the experiencing and transformation of this dissonance: the dissonance created by the objective fact of our place relative to the Ray of Creation.

When the F# is reached in the lateral octave it takes on the role of the leading tone in the key of G; but a tone leading to what? A tone leading to the doh of the lateral octave which is the note G. This G resonates simultaneously with the note G in the descending octave of the Ray of Creation at sol. Both notes sound in unison, and this is, for us, the primal consonance. It was Gurdjieff who said, "Never forget that every stick has two ends. The devil can lead you to paradise, and God, directly to Hell."

People most often project the idea of duality outside of themselves; we see the contradictions of others. But, there is a devil that resides within us that rules through our lack of discrimination between our own extremes. The evil that men do is based on our not being aware of ourselves, not being embodied, not self-aware, as is said in Gurdjieff's ballet scenario *The Struggle of the Magicians*. The body and the head

are divided; they are not connected.

Could this division into two, rightly used, be seen as a tool for transformation; can we step out of the ambiguity and reconcile the extremes? And, in this



reconciliation, realize that we humans are the only ones who can restore the harmony between the higher and the lower—Heaven and Earth.

So, our search into this interval directs us to nothing less than the key to the soul itself, a path that can only be realized through the "devil in the mirror." And, remembering that Gurdjieff chose none other than Beelzebub, the Prince of demons, as the hero of his magnum opus *Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson*, who himself worked for the payment of his own redemption, we can see to what he was pointing. ✍

—Lowell Thomas

Notes

1. *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*. Don Michael Randel, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 874.
2. *The system now called solfege*. Traditionally, solfege is taught in a series of exercises of gradually increasing difficulty, each of which is also known as a "solfege," www.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/solfege.
3. *Any two of these keys on the keyboard*. P. D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 126. Gurdjieff uses the term "interval" in what he calls a

"cosmic" sense, referring only to the intervals mi-fa and si-doh.

4. *Natural division*. André Vandenberg, *Al-Kemi* (Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1987), p. 69.
5. *To emotions and energies*. Fred Gettings, *The Book of Tarot* (London: Trewin Copplestone Publishing Ltd., 1973), p. 81.
6. *The two incommensurates*. Mitzi DeWhitt, *Aristoxenus's Ghost* (Xlibris Corp., 2004), p. 19.
7. *This third force*. Mitzi DeWhitt, *Gurdjieff, String Theory, Music* (Xlibris Corp., 2006), p. 17.
8. *The anvil*. Giorgio de Santillana & Hertha von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1969), p. 238. The anvil in Greek mythology is said to represent the bottomless pit or abyss of Tartarus. Tartarus is both a deity and a place.
9. *It is the principal motive force*. Ouspensky, p. 254.
10. *Established a key or tonal center*. In music, the key refers to the "key note." The key note is 'doh.' When 'doh' begins on C, the music is being played in the key of C. The key also implies the seven notes of the scale of C.
11. *Two resolutions are possible*. Vandenberg, p. 71.
12. *When F is taken as the leading tone*. In the key of F# the leading tone is actually E# and not F. However, they are the same key on the piano keyboard.
13. *What else can this devil be*. Vandenberg, p. 63.
14. *The sun, sol of the cosmic octave*. Ouspensky, p. 139.
15. *The note that must occur at this point in the key of G*. Mitzi DeWhitt, *Nearly All and Almost Everything* (Xlibris Corp., 2005), p. 89. In this book DeWhitt gives a complete explanation of the development of the lateral octave.
16. *The si-doh of the ascending octave*. William Patrick Patterson, *Eating the "I"* (Fairfax, CA: Arete Communications, 2007), p. 209. Patterson comments on the si-doh interval being the place of aborted consciousness.
17. *Never forget*. J. Walter Driscoll, "Gurdjieff, the Secondary Literature: A Selective Bibliography," 2004, www.gurdjieff-bibliography.com/Current/index.html.

KULTUR

FIRST HELL, THEN HEAVEN. THE ILLEGAL PARTY DRUG ECSTASY, OR MDMA, is a potentially safe way of treating patients with post-traumatic stress disorder, says a study in the *Journal of Psychopharmacology*. It seems to reduce fear among long-term patients, enabling them to get more out of therapy sessions. The trial studied only 20 patients but the doctors have gained approval to complete a larger study on military veterans. . . . **Facts & Beliefs.** We think facts have the power to change our minds. In fact, quite the opposite. A series of studies by researchers at the University of Michigan found that when misinformed people, particularly political partisans, were exposed to corrected facts in news stories, they rarely changed their minds. Instead, they often became even more strongly set in their beliefs. Facts, they found, were not curing misinformation. Like an underpowered antibiotic, facts could actually make misinformation even stronger. . . . **Don't Tell Me What to Do.** According to the National Behavioral Surveillance System's 2008 report, 19 percent of active homosexual/bisexual men in U.S. cities, or 1 in 5, are HIV positive. Among African-Americans, it is 28 percent; Hispanics, 18 percent; Caucasians, 16 percent. . . . **Sperm Alert.** The average sperm count among Western men has dropped to half of what it was 50 years ago, with nearly 20 percent of men between the ages of 18 and 25 having sperm counts abnormally low. In the 1940s, men had an average of about 100 million sperm cells per millimeter of semen (m/ml). Today, the average is around 60m/ml. Worse, nearly 20 percent of men 18-25 years old have less than 20m/ml. The cause? Culprits include environmental toxins, synthetic food and water additives, and estrogenic substances in food. However, the biggest cause, according to Professor Richard Sharpe, fertility expert at the British Medical Research Council, may be prenatal exposure of mothers to toxic chemicals. . . . **Fruits & Veggies Ain't Like They Used to Be.** Chemicals that speed growth impair plants' ability to absorb soil's nutrients, according to Donald Davis, a former researcher with the

Biochemical Institute at the University of Texas, Austin. Davis led a team that analyzed 43 fruits and vegetables from 1950 to 1999 and reported reductions in vitamins, minerals and protein. Using USDA data, it was found that broccoli, for example, had 130 mg of calcium in 1950. Today, it is down to 48 mg. Davis believes it's due to the farming industry's desire to grow bigger vegetables faster. . . . **Body Fat.** The National Institutes of Health defines obesity as more than 25 percent body fat in men; more than 35 percent in women. Man's waist should be less than 40 inches; woman's less than 35. An oversized abdomen is symptomatic of too much metabolically active visceral fat, which increases the risk of heart attack and premature death. . . . **To Have & to Hold.** The divorce rate is at a 30-year low at 3.5 divorces per 1,000, down from 6 percent in the last five years, 16 percent since 2000, and an amazing 34 percent since divorce peaked in 1979. Roughly 20,000 fewer couples are divorcing every year as compared with a decade ago. This according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Huh? Why them? . . . **Gender Neutral Housing.** In the 70s, many colleges moved from single-sex dormitories to coed housing, males and females on alternating floors or wings, which paved the way for coed hallways and bathrooms. Now, Pitzer and Harvey Mudd, two Los Angeles liberal arts colleges, offer gender neutral housing, a way to accommodate gay, bisexual and transgender students. Officials at the Assn. of College & University Housing say the trend is accelerating, but they don't expect most schools to adopt it, noting that students prefer a same-sex roommate. And some colleges are reluctant to antagonize parents, donors and legislators who view the option as immoral or even dangerous. . . . **Google Says.** "Every two days now we create as much information as we did from the dawn of civilization up until 2003," according to Google CEO Eric Schmidt. "That's something like five exabytes of data." . . . **Sun Time.** "As a species, we do not get as much sun exposure as we used to, and dietary sources of vitamin D are minimal," says Dr. Edward Giovannucci, nutrition researcher at Harvard School of Public Health. He recommends adults take a daily supplement of 1,000 to 2,000 units. . . . **Mineral Outlook.** According to *Scientific American*, given current

production levels, there are about 20 years left of easily mined gold; about 19 years' worth of silver remains in the ground; 18 years of indium; and the good news is known reserves of copper and lithium. There are 540 million metric tons of copper left with perhaps an additional 1.3 billion metric tons in the Andes, and even ignoring the vast supply of lithium in seawater, known reserves are big enough to supply the world for five centuries. . . . **Yoga Ain't Christian.** Southern Baptist Seminary President Albert Mohler objects to "the idea that the body is a vehicle for reaching consciousness with the divine. That's just not Christianity. I'm really surprised by the depth of the commitment to yoga found on the part of many who identify as Christians." Other Christian leaders have said practicing yoga is incompatible with Jesus' teachings. Pat Robertson has called the chanting and other spiritual components that go along with yoga "really spooky." California megachurch pastor John MacArthur called yoga a "false religion." Muslim clerics have banned Muslims from practicing yoga in Egypt, Malaysia and Indonesia, citing similar concerns. *M*

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The Meaning of Human Life

Continued from page 4

"ideology walks." The animal is up out of the cellar, on parade in the streets and boardrooms and pontificating in the halls of Congress and the Senate.

And what is to be done? Society gone sick with systemic corruption on all levels is pulling apart, rage and depression mounting, the financial debacle, the foreclosures and loss of jobs growing, 44 million people living in poverty last year, up 14 percent from the year previous, gold at record highs, the devaluation of the dollar imminent, the American Dream of progress, higher education, owning one's own home, living a better life than one's parents all now broken. What is to replace it? No one knows, but demagogues are out on the hustings. . . .

And so deep down the concern of everyone is understandably of survival, of pulling in, getting through it. And the meaning of human life? That seems so abstract. Sophomoric. And even if answered—what good would it do? We don't have the time.

But what is it that will survive? That is, who am I that is going to survive? What is this "I"? And how can "I" know "I"?

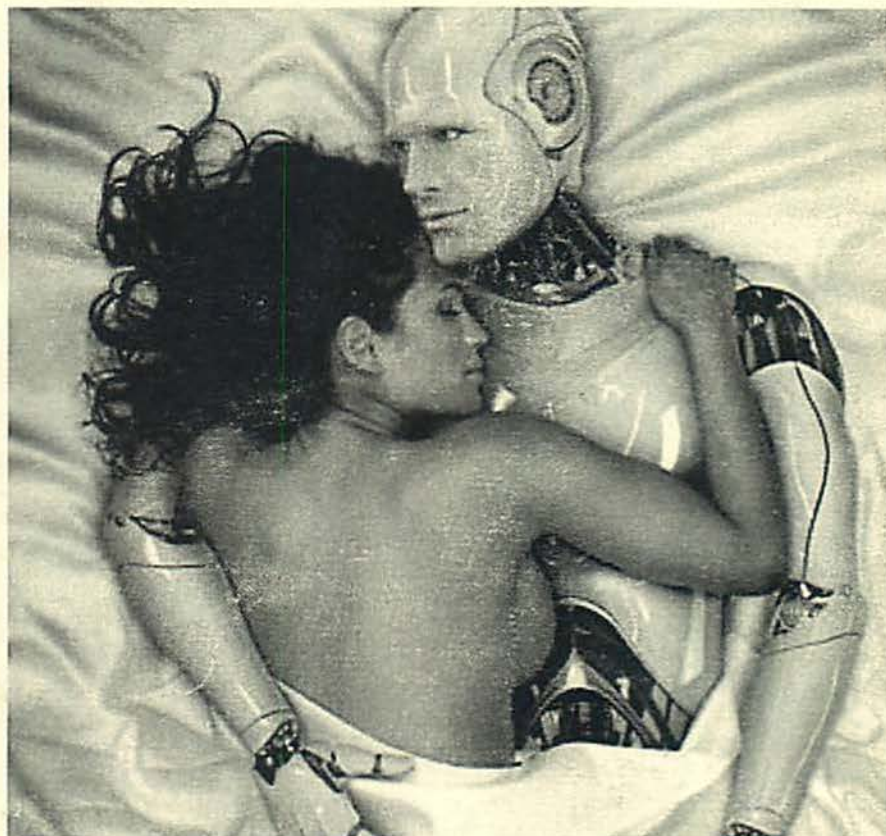
And so we come not just to survival but to the question of spiritual survival in this Technological World-Time. If human life is to have any meaning beyond itself—mere eating and breathing and socializing and pleasuring and perhaps procreating—then there must be a higher meaning, a spiritual meaning.

If we let Technology answer for us:

It will seem natural that we exist merely as bioplasmic machines, a form of worker ants, each stamped with a bar code, totally enframed in a sterile, Technological World-Time. Such a machine world running on its "oil"—water to keep it cool and electricity for power—would impoverish all humanity. The human experiment on Earth would be over—a human and spiritual catastrophe, a binary hell world, from which there would be no escape. *A*

—The Editor

Part II will appear in the next issue.



Robots now have skin that responds to the pressure of human touch. They can converse, play games and are programmed to be moral.

Notes

1. *World-Times*. Passing from the Hunter-Gatherer to the Agrarian and then the Industrial it was comparatively easy for societies to assimilate as the change from one World-Time to another moved at a glacial pace. But the demands of assimilation changed with the dwarfing of time between the advent of the Industrial in the early 1800s to the Scientific-Industrial in the early 1900s, the former noted for factories, furnaces and city life, the latter for scientific-management techniques and assembly-line production. The first stirrings of our Technological World-Time began with the computer in the 1940s, the semiconductor and discovery of DNA in the 1950s, quickly followed by the microprocessor, Artificial Intelligence, and now ends its infancy with the Internet, robotics and nanotechnology.
2. *The First Church of Robotics*. Jaron Lanier, *New York Times*, 9 August 2010.
3. *We will transcend all of the limitations*. Ashlee Vance, "Merely Human? So Yesterday," *New York Times*, 13 June 2010. With Singularity still a ways off, 62-year-old Kurzweil hopes to avoid old age by taking 150 pills a day and having regular intravenous procedures.
4. *David Gelernter, "Dream-Logic, The Internet and Artificial Thought," Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 22 June 2010, Frankfurt, Germany. Gelernter, professor of computer science at Yale University, made seminal contributions to the field of parallel computation. His right hand and eye were permanently damaged when opening a mail-bomb sent by Theodore Kaczynski, the "Unabomber."
5. *A commodity like soybeans*. Steven Greenhouse, "In Mott's Strike, More Than Pay at Stake," *New York Times*, 18 July 2010.
6. *F***k buddy*. This is just a level above masturbation, a waste of being-exioehary, an off-loading of tension.
7. *It will seem natural*. William Patrick Patterson, *Spiritual Survival in a Radically Changing World-Time* (San Anselmo, CA: Arete Communications, 2009), p. 6.