

Faculty Colloquia

Presentation by

Avrom Altman

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The Creation of Soul

Our human body is the ground - the field - in which phenomenological experiences occur that lead to individuation. This presentation demonstrates the relationship between systems theory, depth psychology, somatic mindfulness psychotherapy, stages of the alchemical process, and the convergence of Jungian implications regarding individuation with the experiential inner exercises of Gurdjieff regarding transformation. Additionally, the Gurdjieff Movements are explored as a vehicle for the study of ourselves demonstrating who we are, as we are, is perfect for the inner work of individuation. Beyond initial observations, the indication is that our work is to understand how to use the 'tension of the opposites' – the 'struggle between yes and no' – to blend with the 'subtleties' or 'sacred impulses' of the heart (the lataif-e-sitta) - in the moment – to coalesce soul.

The Body Mirrors the Soul



Opening Exercise

- 1. Contact the Breathing Body
- 2. Sensation of your clothes against your skin
- 3. Sensation of your body in your chair – the pressure
- 4. Relax your field of vision. Be aware of shape – right angles, curves
- 5. Sounds - In the Room and Outside the Room
- 6. Sensing inward into your body's life and outward into the surrounding world simultaneously
- 7. Stay with this sensation of life for a moment or two.

The Body Mirrors the Soul

“So long as we are in this world, the psyche is enacted through the medium of the body. The soul ... while it is on earth ... must have a body image as its home, as its primary medium of expression. The soul will not naturally reject its body image any more than the mother’s breast will reject her baby. The body mirrors the soul.”

Marion Woodman, (1985). *The pregnant virgin: A process of psychological transformation*, Toronto: Inner City Books

Systems Theory

Systems theory: Gregory Bateson

Bateson's six propositions describe **any system that has mind:**

The first proposition is that minds are made up of parts organized into wholes. Parts into wholes.

The second proposition: the parts communicate.

The parts organize into wholes through communication.

The capacity to self-correct (to heal) is a quality of all living systems. If you move with awareness, function improves “spontaneously.” The organism knows how to integrate.

Reorganization happens because the parts are communicating again. They are no longer isolated. They are in relationship. They are resonant. They start to operate as a whole.

Proposition five says that information is coded. You're taking your **experience and you're organizing it.** That's what is meant by coding. At some levels encoding is fixed; at other levels, you can change the way you encode your experience.

In psychotherapy, we're interested in high-level coding, such as theories about ourselves and about the world. A proposition like "I have to earn people's approval and love" organizes a lot of experience. People who are performance-oriented, who are not able to slow down and rest, often put that transformation on their experience. They are shaping their lives, judgments, and decisions around it. If someone says, "You did a good job," it can have a big effect on them. They also have muscle habits which deal with the ideas and thoughts around that issue. They mobilize their muscles for action and their minds are sharply focuses on the tasks to be completed. So this **proposition tells us that we organize our experience and, on a higher level, it implies that we can change the way we organize our experience.**

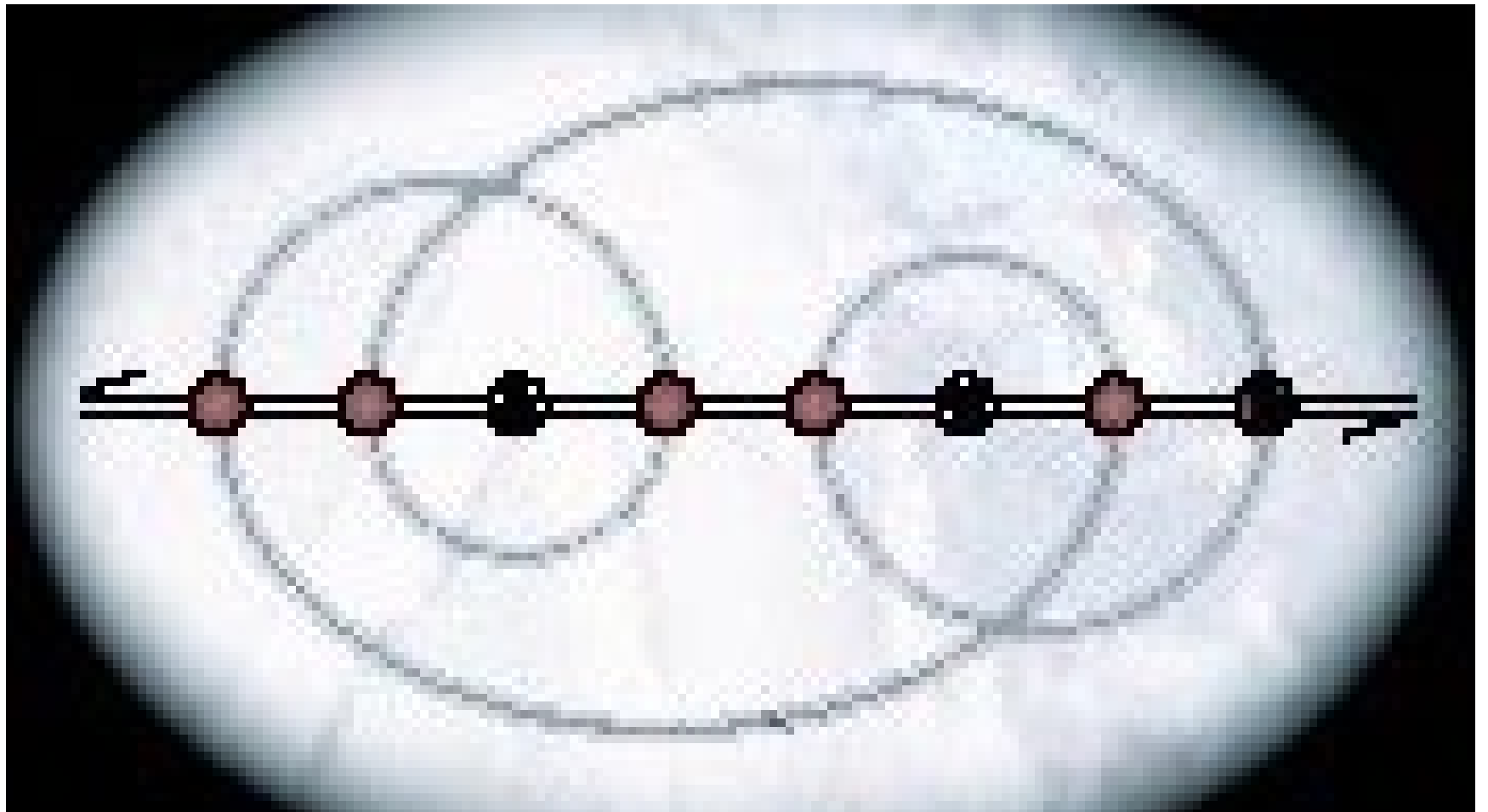
Proposition six states that these organizations are in some type of hierarchy. The whole self is a higher organizational level than either the mind or the body. A whole mind is a higher level than conscious or unconscious. It's important not to confuse one level with another. You are not your thoughts, you are not your body. You're all this and more than this. At some level you are the whole universe.

Hakomi: Somatic Mindfulness-Centered Psychotherapy

- Categories of experience
- Communication across boundaries of categories
- Exploring not explaining
- Management of consciousness of client
- Assisted meditation
- Tracking
- Contact
- Accessing
- Stabilizing Experience
- Taking Over Resistance
- Core Beliefs (Complexes) and Probes

“Body awareness is an important focus in my analytic practice because of my experience with both women and men who, despite earnest commitment to their dreams and to their won growth, are still **unable to trust the process**. Their **souls are dislocated in bodies so wounded that the ego’s willingness in itself is simply not enough**. The more quickly the ego moves ahead, the more terrorized the body becomes. The body, like the child, tells the truth, and tells it through movement or lack of movement. A trained observer can **discern whether the soul has taken up residence in the body, or whether the body image is so intolerable that the flesh is barely inhabited.**”

Marion Woodman, (1985). *The pregnant virgin: A process of psychological transformation*, Toronto: Inner City Books



The Alembic

The simultaneous experience of seemingly opposed forces or inner experiences.

Not allowing one to overwhelm the other or for them to cancel each other out.

Allowing the process to proceed when the tension of the opposites is maintained.

The Alchemical Process

Calcination

This is the first stage of the alchemical practice and essentially represents the process of burning. It represents a burning within the self, of energies repressed due to trauma, projection of others thoughts, ego, and feelings or emotions. Calcination allows us to bring the energy or feelings to the surface, experience them fully and cause the fires of calcination to burn the energy away. Once this step is complete, the process leaves us with a feeling of freedom from the energy.

Dissolution

Dissolution is the process of adding the element of water to the ashes of what has been burned by the fires of calcination. This is an emotional stage where the person takes themselves back to “the womb” of childhood where some of the impurities (repressed feelings) were attached and need to be washed away. The feelings, reactions, opinions, thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes must be examined for reality, to find whether they are based on repressed feelings or present facts. This is a stage of anxiety, fear, denial, illusion and possible mental breakdown. When a person moves through this stage they can then look at what is real because feeling all of the negative feelings has now penetrated the illusions.

Separation

In this stage of the alchemical process the individual is able to see himself in two parts or the opposites within. The two worlds represented are the world we have created -- fueled by what we come from -- and the world of consciousness and reality-- a world much different from the one we ourselves created. Repressed feelings cause a veil to be produced that causes reality to be skewed. Separation is a process of being able to see and separate the ego self that has been burned in the fires of Calcination and the feelings expressed and released in Dissolution and choosing what is now important to keep of you.

Conjunction

Conjunction gives us our first look at the higher realms of existence such as spiritual connection, concept of God, or something greater than ourselves that is outside of and connected to our self. This stage is described in the Emerald Tablet, “That which is Below corresponds to that which is Above, and that which is Above corresponds to that which is Below, to accomplish the miracles of the One Thing.”

Fermentation

Fermentation is also known as Putrefaction or decomposition. This decomposition is the rotting of the dead self. There is realization on a deep level of ones deficiencies, and a possibility of mental depression at this stage. To look into the dark shadows of one's self is to look at what most deny. Jung spoke of the importance of embracing one's shadow so that the darkness of it could be illuminated. When the shadow is embraced it can be healed with the introspection and understanding of what gave it birth. Regeneration and growth begins to take place during this stage.

Distillation

Distillation is another wash of the parts of the personality that no longer work with the new self that has been uncovered. Human beings grow attached to the material world along with their thoughts, beliefs and opinions. This stage of the work calls us to release attachment to everything and feel detachment as a true form of love. This form of love is from a higher level and not a form that is usually practiced until we have let go of our attachments to end results or the future. Distillation helps wash away the dark matter of attachment and reveal the deeper intuitive self in its purest form-- light and Oneness.

Coagulation

This is the last stage of the alchemical process. The balance of the opposites creates a balance and harmony necessary to easily move between the two realms of matter and spirit. The person that has successfully accomplished this stage has completed unification within themselves on all levels. They have been able to join spirit and soul with the body, separating them from everything that would hinder them ascension into the union with the Divine. This is the stage of the phoenix rising from the ashes and the complete resurrection.

Edinger, E, (1991) *Anatomy of the Psyche: Alchemical Symbolism in Psychotherapy*

Soul Making: Transformation not Change

Jung: The Tension of Opposites

Gurdjieff: The Struggle of Yes and No

The 2nd Conscious Shock

J.G. Bennett:

The Reactive Self > Divided Self > The True Self

The Lata'if

Transforming Poison into Honey

- Wish
- Hope
- Faith
- Acceptance
- Love

Inner Exercise

- Close Your Eyes
- Follow Your Breath
- Sensation: Sense the Whole Body
- Feeling: The Lata'if
- Blending: Sensation and Feeling

The Gurdjieff Movements



The Gurdjieff Work

- The potential the work with the Gurdjieff Movements provides is to use the energy of seeing and the material seen to bear the 'tension of the opposites' or, as Gurdjieff would say, 'the struggle of yes and no.' The work of transformation is to stay suspended within the force field of the observed inner and outer manifestations and to let arise the impulse of Wish – the Wish to Be - while not changing anything. Gurdjieff said, 'the measure our being is what we can bear.' It is here, in the retort of the temenos of our psyche that the alchemical process can take place and metaphorical lead can be transformed into gold or, from the Gurdjieffian perspective, the 'second conscious shock' can take place transforming poison into honey - transforming negative emotions into positive feelings or 'sacred impulses.' The Gurdjieff Movements generate pure observations and the Work is to bear what we see and, in our seminar, to open to the lataif-e-sitta, or 'subtleties', introduced through the Naqshbandi Sufi order to J.G. Bennett and integrated into his approach to the Gurdjieff Work.