

Meeting #5 Dec 10th

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Attendees: Robin, Paula, James, Ekant, Vanya, Sandy, Dirk

Sandy: Is it as complicated and inventive in German as in English. Didn't include some words in the German, like "Tut, tut, tut".

Vanya: Yes. Words that you have to look up in German.

Ekant: Very long sentences and more complicated than usual.

James: Einfaltspinsel

Ekant: Simple minded

Mistake on p24 philologizing. – using Philosophierens – philosophising

In German haven't the same word, but have something similar. We had this discussion at the beginning. No direct German translation ...

When in Rome, do as the Roman's do

Vanya: In German say you have to howl with the wolves.

Ekant: In different countries are different rules.

James: Different folks, different strokes.

Vanya: A professional fakir – can be professional? Repeats again and again. Lack of conscience ... of the bookseller – really struck me!

Sandy: Caveat Emptor

RB: Not talking about normal booksellers – almost certainly allegorical. "You'll be more of a simpleton than a fisherman if you let go of the fish which has swallowed the bait," Who is the fisherman? From the gospels – in essence. Pattern repeated throughout the book.

Vanya: Lack of conscience makes more sense then.

Cavil – not same in translation „sich sträuben – reluctant

“not to take the holy names in vain,”

RB: In England were not to blaspheme so used euphemisms. In 20th Century started swearing freely – think that is what he is referencing. Taking of oaths is religious – false taking of oaths – decay.

James: In Liverpool people would say “Jesus, Mary and Joseph” and people would make the sign of the cross!

Turning up her toes - Hier kam ihr kein anderer gleich... not the same

Means nobody was like her

RB: Probably attempt to make it rhyme.

Ekant: We take the name of God in vain in Germany ... after reading this started to be more careful. But in time it came back.

Sandy: Find it uncomfortable when people say “Jesus Christ” ...

Vanya: Young people use OMG in chats in German – even though there is no translation in German. Also LoL ...

Paula: I imagine the translation of the passage about soul and sole doesn't translate very well.

Ekant: He uses the English.

James: Elaborates on different consciousness ...

Last night had a reading of The Tales in Berlin. Around p600. Had an email this morning from a German ... started messing around with numbers of pages and ended up at the end of the book and ... verification of what we have been reading ... real consciousness. Was in almost a trance-like state for a few moments and verification of things we have discussed – think he was in touch with ‘real consciousness’ for some moments. He is quite young in the Work ... something in him.

We read in English.

Sandy: Barely understand in English ...

James: Went to a seminar in Cologne and were readings and movements by my old group. Also music by Gurdjieff quintet – all in German and could follow it for some strange reason. (Met Dirk there.)

Sandy: Parts of this that are poetic/lyrical for me in English. How is it in German?

Ekant: Basic understanding of conscious and sub-conscious are important and can follow but can't deeply understand. Triggers associations – when in The Work asked to become conscious of what is going on in sub-conscious that are often the cause of all our difficulties and behaviour. In this way we take something away from the sub-conscious because it is conscious.

James: Read the chapter on hypnotism and ponder it.

Dirk (translation by Ekant): Often so called waking consciousness that hinders us and he proposes to speak to our sub-conscious and place a seed there for our understanding – passing our waking consciousness.

RB: Some things just not true. P27 he says a novice at

writing, whose name has not even once been mentioned in the

newspapers, - just not true. He had been reported in the press of the time.

His grandmother's age – not possible – as the eldest child his grandmother is not going to be almost 100 years older than him.

G's Grandmother was a midwife – according to Tchekhovitch ... [RB will add text]

The term 'grandmother' is symbolic. G used it frequently – nearly always symbolic.

RB: He said you should turn the other cheek, but sometimes necessary to hit someone so hard that they forget grandmother. Idea that wisdom came through the grandmother. Not a very modern idea. Symbolises line of wisdom through the ages. I used to learn loads of sayings off my mother and grandmother.

Vanya: Want to be faster than the grandmother of God is also a saying.

Ekant: Bennett told a story of someone who claimed to have long period of consciousness ... and that was G's response.

Vanya: These two consciousnesses – feel that I miss something here and get nervous about it.

RB: I will provide some notes on this – fundamental. Really need to refer to ISOM when he talks about languages. Important to understand the common language we use is completely wrong. Nothing about it that is correct in the way we learned it. There is a language that uses your natural language that is correct. He gives more information here ... when he mentions the word 'consonance' he makes an important point – when you hear a word you will assign a meaning ... will be useless because comes from the closest word you heard. Especially in English no real coherence about how the word is structured. Soul – from Hindi will sound like Sole from Mexican language. German less poisoned ...

Chocolate is Aztec or Mayan – we don't even have the correct pronunciation – nothing to do with any English words. Bungalow – from Hindi. English is without principle in terms of acquisition of words and causes a problem.

Sole and soul sound exactly the same in English. If you hear the word "soul" you will assign the meaning you have acquired.

James: Sound form?

RB: I remember being in a Jewish study and someone came out with the word 'immanent' and I made the assumption it was like 'imminent' and I had a whole discussion based on an incorrect understanding and made no sense.

James: Must relate to mentation by form and formatory apparatus.

Scientists of new formation.

RB: Yes. From the PoV of the Work if we study objective science, we come to the conclusion that everything that is living is a cosmos. Necessary to view the world from that perspective. Form of the cosmos can be described in an enneagram or on Ray of Creation. You look the way you are because your DNA has your form written all over it. There are slight differences in our form. Identical twins will look the same but other parts of us will be different. Formatory apparatus – although spoken of negatively – is a positive thing if well-formed. Like a great athlete ... Exceptional actors – emotional part formed effectively. Mentation by form happens through formatory apparatus. It is fundamental and going to have to write about it.

Sandy: Word for formatory or formatory apparatus in German?

Vanya: Yes ...

RB: We learn the real meaning of words – Law of Accident as an example. We don't know what accident really is. You can look it up and find out the real meaning.

James: What does it mean?

RB: Accident means something that happens. You get up in the morning and decide to mow the lawn – you did something active. If your wife tells you to mow the lawn and you did it, is an accident, because it just happened. If you are in a car accident and lose your leg – just happens.

Sandy: Also second force?

RB: In the world where you are mechanical, you are second force.

James: Every time you perform a task you determine for yourself, not an accident. Active force.

RB: Get a sense of what is going on when I try to remember myself. I am looking at the computer screen and have a sense of myself – there are two things – something digesting what is out there and a feeling of myself – I equate that with active force.

James: Clear example of Law of Three.

Ekant: Can I intentionally take on the role of second force – allow something to happen.

RB: Consciously allowing probably being neutralising force. Children running riot in the living room ... parent opens the door and looks in and they stop. Parent didn't do anything – that is neutralising force.

Ekant: Passive second force. Circumstances when I decide to be second force

PS: Being actively passive – intentional

RB: If you do that you are allowing the part of you that is being passive. You are neutralising force in that case. Most people don't have the ability to decide ... What Jane Heap said you should do: should roll your triangle.

Ekant: Vivifying sources – very meaningful and took my attention. Grandmother was first and there were two other vivifying forces. Very compelling.

RB: Will probably discuss that – this is the theme of the whole chapter. He has given us the first one. Idea of not behaving in the way that is expected of you. We will meet the other two. We know that they create all three forces.

PS: I had an advent calendar and started working through in number order. Then I realised I didn't have to! Made me aware how much I am controlled by perceived rules.

AI Summary

Quick recap

The team discussed the concept of "pure waking consciousness" and the distinction between the fictitious and real human consciousness, with a focus on the importance of understanding the subconscious mind. They also explored the formation of two distinct consciousnesses within a person, the impact of formative experiences on personality, and the complexity and inventiveness of language. Lastly, they delved into the concept of 'active force' and 'neutralizing force', the role of the formatory apparatus in shaping abilities, and the importance of self-awareness and not behaving as expected.

Next steps

- Robin to share an excerpt about Gurdjieff's grandmother from Tcheslaw Tchekhovitch's book.
- Robin to write an explanation about formatory apparatus and mentation by form.
- Robin to send the group's best wishes to Bobby for her recovery.
- Ekant to continue correcting the German translation of the text for the first book.
- James to follow up with his Berlin reading group member about the insight related to page 1100 of the book.
- Vanya to offer translation assistance to Dirk for the meeting notes.
- Group members to read the chapter on Hypnotism as suggested by James.
- Robin to provide information on the law of accident and its meaning in the Work context.
- German speakers to identify more examples of Gurdjieff's neologisms in the German translation.

Summary

Reading and Book Handling Discussion

Robin reads an excerpt from a book, warning the reader to carefully read the first chapter before cutting the pages. The narrator expresses frustration with booksellers who refuse returns on cut books. The narrator also explains their habit of swearing by their "English soul" to avoid taking sacred names in vain. The excerpt is written in an unconventional style, with digressions and philosophical musings. Robin plans to continue reading in a way that will have an impactful effect on the reader, like red pepper pods on a Transcaucasian Kurd.

Exploring Consciousness and Subconscious Mind

Robin discussed the concept of "pure waking consciousness" and the distinction between the fictitious and real human consciousness. He emphasized the importance of understanding the subconscious mind, which he believes should be the real human consciousness. Robin also shared his unique perspective, formed from three specific data points from his preparatory age, which he believes sets him apart from others. He expressed his desire to awaken the consciousness of others and to challenge their existing notions and convictions.

Robin's Grandmother's Impact on Life

Robin shared a story about his grandmother's death and its impact on his life. When his

grandmother was dying, she whispered to him to never do as others do, either do nothing or do something nobody else does. This made a powerful impression on Robin, and he became unable to endure anyone around him. He then spent time in a pit, thinking and pondering. On the 40th day after his grandmother's death, he started skipping around her grave and singing, which led to him always wanting to do things differently from others. He shared examples of how he would do things differently, such as catching a ball, sliding down a hill, and eating pastries.

Distinct Consciousnesses and Shaping Factors

Vanya discussed the formation of two distinct consciousnesses within a person, one being the result of experiences and the other being the innate consciousness. Vanya also shared their unique personality, which was shaped by three specific factors that emerged during their childhood. These factors, according to Vanya, were the primary driving force behind their entire being and were further nourished by two other factors. Vanya emphasized the importance of understanding these consciousnesses and their interplay to gain a deeper understanding of oneself and the world.

Vanya's Childhood Experience and Eccentricity

In this segment, Vanya recounts a profound experience from his childhood when his dying grandmother instructed him to either do nothing or do something that no one else does. This left a deep impression on young Vanya. He describes how he began exhibiting unusual behaviors that went against social norms, such as dancing and singing at his grandmother's funeral instead of mourning. From then on, Vanya developed an irresistible urge to imitate others' actions in unconventional ways, like throwing a ball down before catching it or smelling treats before eating them. The segment illustrates how this formative experience shaped Vanya's eccentric and contrarian nature.

German Language Complexity and Allegory

The team discussed the complexity and inventiveness of German language, comparing it to English. They identified some neologisms and discussed the translation of certain words, such as "philologizing" and "philosophizing". They also discussed the translation of "mit den Wölfen muss man heulen" and its meaning in different countries. The team also discussed the allegorical nature of some phrases in the book, particularly those related to religious or spiritual ideas. They concluded that the language used in the book is often allegorical and often refers back to the Gospels.

Exploring Religious Expressions and Translations

Vanya and Robin discuss the meaning and origin of certain English expressions involving religious terms, such as "gadzooks" and using "God" or "Jesus Christ" as exclamations. Sandy expresses dislike for the phrase "OMG" (oh my God) being overused. Ekant explains that saying "mein Gott" (my God) is common in everyday German speech as well. The group explores how certain phrases lose their original blasphemous meaning over time. They also discuss potential issues in translating wordplays and puns from English to German.

Reading Group Discusses Consciousness

James shared his experience with a small reading group in Berlin, where they discussed the book and one member had an insight that led him to read the end of the book. James found this intriguing and wondered if it was related to the concept of real consciousness. Sandy asked if the group read in German or English, and James confirmed they read in English. The group also discussed the concept of subconscious and conscious, with Ekant expressing difficulty in

understanding the difference but finding the topic important. Dirk suggested that sometimes our waking consciousness hinders us from understanding, and it's better to speak to our subconsciousness. The group agreed with this perspective.

Clarifying Gurdjieff's Background and Teachings

In the discussion, Robin clarifies several inaccuracies about Gurdjieff's background mentioned in a book. He states that Gurdjieff was not a novice writer as claimed, and provides evidence of newspaper mentions in the 1920s. Robin also debunks the claim that Gurdjieff's grandmother was over 100 years old, as that would be implausible given Gurdjieff's age. Robin explains that Gurdjieff often used the term "grandmother" symbolically to represent ancient wisdom passed down through generations, citing an excerpt describing Gurdjieff's remarkable grandmother who was a midwife. The group discusses the significance of this symbolic grandmother figure in Gurdjieff's teachings.

Understanding Word Meanings Beyond Consonance

The transcript discusses the importance of understanding the true meaning of words beyond their consonance or sound similarity. Robin explains that people often assign meanings to unfamiliar words based on their consonance with familiar words, leading to misunderstandings. He emphasizes the need to grasp the actual meanings of words as intended, not just their sounds. Vanya expresses difficulty comprehending certain concepts, and Robin suggests referring to Gurdjieff's work "In Search of the Miraculous" for deeper insights into language and meaning. The discussion highlights the challenges of effective communication and the pursuit of true understanding beyond surface-level interpretations.

Exploring Eminence and Formatory Apparatus

Robin discussed the concept of 'eminence' and its relation to the absolute, emphasizing that despite the absolute being imminent, it cannot be contacted due to the law of faith. Robin also explained the role of the formatory apparatus in shaping our form and abilities, using examples of athletes, actors, and academics. The group also discussed the term 'formatory apparatus' and its translation in German. James and Sandy raised questions about the meaning of certain terms, highlighting the importance of understanding the correct meaning of words in the context of the work.

Active Force and Neutralizing Force

The meeting revolved around the concept of 'active force' and 'neutralizing force' as discussed in the book. Robin explained that active force is about making decisions and taking actions, while neutralizing force is about allowing things to happen without interference. The group also discussed the idea of not behaving as expected and the importance of self-awareness. The conversation ended with a discussion about sending best wishes to a colleague, Bobby, who is recovering from an accident.

Excerpt from Gurdjieff, A Master in Life, by Tchekhovitch

In order to understand the roots and influences that determined Gyorgi Ivanovitch's destiny, we must devote some words to his grandmother. Her renown, both as a midwife and as a woman of remarkable qualities, was so great that, not only pregnant women, but people with all kinds of illnesses came even from the most remote parts of Transcaucasia for her advice. At that time, as people travelled by horse-drawn vehicles, it became necessary for her to buy the large field in front of the house to accommodate all those who came.

Mr. Gurdjieff remembered this very well. In the field there was always an enormous encampment filled with entire families of various cultural origins, waiting their turn to see 'Sophia Padji' ('Sister Sophia' in Turkish), which was how she was known to everyone. She had earned this title of 'Padji' by virtue of her devotion to others, and her never refusing the least service to anyone. Though famous, she even took on a particular obligation to devote the greatest part of her time to the poor, sick, and suffering. She never put off a visit till another time, but each day fulfilled what fate had decided was her duty. From the rich, she asked; to the poor, she gave. Such was her view of justice. It was the poor who had baptized her 'Padji', sister of kindness and charity. The more fortunate willingly brought her their old clothing and what they no longer had any use for, which she redistributed to those in need. This further increased her popularity and authority.

Gyorgi Ivanovitch's sister told me, "All we had to say was that we were the grandchildren of Sophia Padji for people to give us their seats in public places, in the hammam, or even in theatres. Everywhere Sophia Padji was revered."

Despite there being many qualified and respected doctors in Alexandropol, Sophia Padji's prestige was unequalled. Many stories, such as the following one, contributed to her renown.

One night, the wife of a high official began feeling contractions, and the doctor was urgently summoned. Around noon, the delivery of the child was imminent, but the labour was difficult, and various interventions were of no avail. The exhausted wife could not continue her efforts, and the baby, as if disappointed, withdrew. In the evening, as the situation became critical, the servants and neighbours demanded the intervention of Sophia Padji, but the family would not lower themselves to ask for her assistance.

As for the doctor, he was categorically opposed to this suggestion. However, when the doctor finally admitted that he was powerless, they did decide to call Sophia Padji, who came immediately. The doctor, wrapped in his dignity, retired to a corner, not admitting that one should have recourse to an 'illiterate' woman. Addressing the husband with a disdainful reproach, he said, "Look! Your wife is in agony. She is already quite ashen, and you're going to let that sorceress make her suffer more."

Sophia Padji did not lose a moment, and did what had to be done. To the astonishment of everyone, she quickly brought the baby into the world, provided the necessary care, and put the child in the cradle. Then, approaching the mother's bed, she picked up the placenta and flung it at the feet of the doctor with these scathing words: "Here, eat this! And go on with your deadly ministrations!"

The new mother recovered her colour and, as soon as she was out of danger, Sophia Padji left. According to witnesses, the doctor emerged with genuine dignity. Confronted by Sophia Padji's evident knowledge, he recognized her true value, and in spite of her offensive gesture, asked her not to be angry, assuring her of his sincere admiration. "Well done, Sophia Padji. Well done!" he repeated.

This professional exploit further increased her renown, as from then on her abilities were recognized by the medical authorities. She gave the considerable sum she had received to the poor, stating that she exercised this profession only to help others, not to earn a living.

Such were the strong roots of our Babushka. When she felt her end approaching due to cancer of the liver, she devoted herself entirely to prayer, wishing to remain conscious and lucid in the face of death. After several days, sensing that her final hour was imminent, she prepared her body for death, dressed herself in a gown that would serve as her shroud, and quietly lay down to await the end. Even as her body was getting cold, she chanted the words of her favourite prayer, "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name..." sometimes looking at those present as if to assure herself that she was still here on earth, sometimes singing more loudly, "Thy Kingdom come ..," as if to let the mystery resound more deeply in herself.

Her last words, spoken in Armenian, had the character of a Japanese poem;

**The bird is silent.
It has flown away
To the other land.
The flower has faded.
It has left this life,
But the wind will scatter its seeds.**

And looking at those around her, she added, "And you! Laugh or cry. Do as you wish. It's all the same to me. I am already elsewhere."

After uttering these words, she closed her eyes, never to open them again.

From these women, whose characters were forged in steel, the young Gyorgi Ivanovitch would certainly have received unforgettable impressions and an exceptional preparation for life.