

Meeting #005

EU Session Transcript

Only a partial transcript...

Attendees: Robin, Ronald, Gwynne, John, Ekant, Vanya, Michelle, J O'Donnell, James
(Where the speaker was not recognized they are referred to as A, B, C, D, etc.)

Gwynne: of of paragraphs. Do you think that may have something to do with the the talking about mentation by thought?

Gwynne: Well, the uh um I don't know. But I did, but in in this reading's comparison of the two kinds of consciousness, the as we've talked about before, one primary difference between the two is the second, uh, which is in our subconscious, um has active confrontation with the impressions that with life, with the confrontation the impressions that come in. It's that so, you know, active reflection again is at the core—one way of reading this is the climax of that whole series.

Speaker B: And in a way we could combine this with this passage of the grandma, yeah, that distinct to the outside, so what is outside, the mechanical impulses and so forth is not so important, what is important is the self- uh what do you say is self-observation, self-reflection, what happens inside actually. So I agree with you Ronald, that this is the point we here which he always that he always emphasizes, that there the true work happens in a way.

Gwynne: Um, there's two, there's probably more than two, but there is a major theme here of um warning against the fact that everybody around you is unconscious. And then the grandmother who, who, it seems like the core of what she says is be different than other people, which is linked. But um, she says, "Never do in in life never do as others do." And when he doesn't understand that, she rewords it and says basically the same thing: "Either do nothing or do something nobody else does."

Robin: Does anybody have any idea uh as to the two choirs that sit around the judgment seat? Because I can't find any reference to that anywhere as the, you know, it's like the all of the writings about angels insists that there's nine choirs differently composed according to the gradation of angel.

Gwynne: I guess he has got a throne, a throne full of light, you know, but that was just a an imagination about that the heavenly choir of eight of them, not two of them. Well, that's right. I couldn't find it's almost like one of those things that, you know, when he makes a reference like this, you would expect it to refer to something. It doesn't appear to refer to anything that I can um find a reference to.

Robin: Doesn't he talk about uh Seraphim and Cherubim as being on the son absolute with endlessness?

Gwynne: Well, yes, he does, but that isn't the judgment seat. And it's quite true that the um uh Cherubim and Seraphim he does mention that the description, or the whatever they are, the species, you'd have to say it's kind of species, wouldn't we? But not around the judgment seat.

Ekant: I again would bring it in connection to the principle of the law of three, which he might uh might want to exercise with his writing in in in this when he says two choirs, then the opposite two I see two opposite poles of something or the a judgment is actually usually the decision if it's am I good or not, am I right or wrong, you know. I mean, he does refer to the left shoulder angel and the right shoulder angel, the these angels that are sitting on your shoulder all the time, I'm sure you've noticed them. You know, you can almost see them when you're sitting in a mirror when you're looking at a mirror, that are recording your your good deeds and your not so good deeds. But they are not a choir, they are just angels, they are just scribes, you know. They are just lowly employees, they will probably get replaced by AI in a couple of years.

James: I guess he has got a throne, a throne full of light, you know, but that was just a an imagination about that the heavenly choir of eight of them, not two of them. Well, that's right. I couldn't find it's almost like one of those things that, you know, when he makes a reference like this, you would expect it to refer to something. It doesn't appear to refer to anything that I can um find a reference to. I just had an association. I used to I used to deliver uh Liverpool Echoes as a little boy.

Meeting #005

US Session Transcript

Attendees: Robin, Bobbie, Stephon, Sandra, Stephen, JD, Janet, John

Some speakers are simply referred to by a letter.

Sandra: I think the end is a good place to start. What do you think of grandmother's advice in life, either do nothing, just go to school, or do something nobody else does? And here's the way she says it in the 1931 version. Eldest of my grandsons, listen and always remember my strict injunction to you. In life, never do as others do. Either do nothing, just go to school, or do something that nobody else does. And I'll just start out by saying, I hear a lot of people in the work repeating this as basically their, uh, one of their guiding stars. I hear it repeated a lot over years. And is it an injunction for our personality?

Robin: When you say refuting it, you mean they don't, they don't accept the idea?

Sandra: No, I didn't, I didn't say refuting, I misspoke. I, I meant to say, I, I meant to say, they use it as one of their guiding stars. They adopt it and, uh, I hear it repeated a lot over years. And is it an injunction for our personality?

Stephen: He asked what you thought about the grandmother's perception of that. It seems I guess I was kind of middle road, um, or both sides of the road. Um, I didn't see why you couldn't do something nobody else does along with doing nothing by going to school. I didn't see why those are exclusive.

Robin: I don't think they are, but there's an implication in Gurdjieff's writings that going to school is pretty much the dead end of an individual in the way that education currently is. So it's, I think that's the implication.

Stephen: That perception you think applies today as well as then?

Robin: I think it applies even more so today. I don't, I mean, I had a particular education in the '60s. Um, I don't think you can get one of those anymore. I don't think they exist. Um, the, the educational system in so far as it exists now, appears to be a very strong degradation from what I knew when I was actually using it.

John: I wonder if he's contrasting um, uh, think independently and learning and wonder whether she's um, contrasting thinking for himself, advising Gurdjieff to think for himself, or simply learn by rote, which is the alternative.

Robin: Yeah, I think that's exactly what she's saying. Or what Gurdjieff's saying in a sense. You see, there are very few things that you can learn by rote that you actually know after you've learned them by rote. Because, you know, a tape recorder is very good at learning things by rote and it can repeat anything that has actually been given to it, and it doesn't know anything.

John: The times tables is a good thing to learn by rote.

Robin: Well, that's the point. And I think things like it's like there are certain things that have to become habitual for you to be able to um, absorb them. So I think the alphabet

is ideal. I think the phonetics or the approximate phonetics of how to pronounce words is ideal. I think in one way or another, you absolutely have to do that. I think that um, the way that um, people learn to walk and learn to talk, it is all done by imitation. I mean, there's just no question about it. And you know, you can observe it with your own children. Uh, and that's all taken on by rote. But there comes a point where you actually have to do you actually have to vary it in order for you to one way or another explore the capabilities within the sphere of whatever it is you're looking at.

John: I would argue with, I would argue with you about walking, because a child learns to walk. They aren't taught. Perhaps it is through observation. Um, but another thing to learn by rote which I'm seeing that my, um, that what I took for granted, um, being 65, is very few people know today. Um, it was really useful in my childhood to learn the Lord's Prayer by heart. Um, because then they can call upon it and ponder it. Whereas when people don't even know the those such words, then they don't even have to ponder about.

Robin: You, the, I mean, first of all, in terms of the way a child learns things, mostly they're using the moving center. I mean, when my daughter, um, was, I think, well she couldn't walk. So she was probably less than 12 months old. We had um, a, uh, uh, a hi-fi um, system which we had put on the floor. And if you lifted up the lid, um, if there was a record on, you lifted up the lid, you would then lift up the arm and put it on the um, on the record and play it. And I watched my daughter, who I, as far as I'm concerned, had never seen us even use this, although we did use it on various occasion. I've never noticed her. Crawl across the floor, go over to it, open the lid and try and put the arm across the record. She she had completely imitated what she'd seen others do, you know, which is my wife or me at the time. And that convinced me an awful lot as to the nature of how kids learn because the fact that she could just without even being able to walk, you know, like and they just absorb things. The moving center learns by imitation and it learns by repetition, and it perfects itself by continue repetition. And you could say that that was learning by rote, if you wanted to. It's it's probably a difficult set of words to discuss. Um, but the intellectual center doesn't do that. That is that the intellectual center learns how to manipulate um, uh, concepts and abstraction when it works, of course. If it doesn't work, as is often the case with many people, then it just um, repeats. So there are people who don't really have, let's say, opinions on a lot of things. They just repeat ones they've heard and pretend that they know something.

Sandra: I want to back up a little bit and just consider what's going on here. In the scene is really rather a sweet scene and one that you would almost think would be common. Uh, someone saying goodbye to a dying loved one. And that's not really common at all. At least nowadays, I don't think. Uh, we don't often get to say goodbye to our loved ones in such a lucid manner. So when you read this, it's like I wish it were real because it it really does seem like uh, great words of advice from someone who knows. And um, as I as I look at it and I think about it, there was something else I wanted to mention. Oh yeah, that it it also comes across for some reason. It makes me think about uh, about Kunderbuffer, about do something nobody else does because everybody else is doing it upside down and backwards. That's not brought up yet, but it still comes up in my mind because I've read ahead, I guess. So, I think it is uh, good advice that goes even beyond schooling and education and the misunderstanding of the chubby might.

John: Well, as Andrew you you've read it many times. So you're well aware of what's coming up. Um, but another thing that that she's doing is she's acquitting herself with great nature because um, she's doing her being duty of passing on wisdom to her, her,

uh, um, probably giving a good advice, either, either do something or don't do something. Uh, but it does, but does bring to mind the idea of um, um, acquitting herself with great, uh, uh, doing what she's she's bound to do, um, if to to have lived an honorable life is to educate her her children or even her grandchildren or even her, probably in this case, great grandchildren.

Stephen: When time is the simplest, uh, thing comes to mind, is, is she's saying don't follow. I mean, she's saying, you know, you're going to do something, get educated, learn. But learn without following somebody else telling you what is. It's very profound. But I find that in, in experiencing that we, we all sit here talking about this and we can see the virtue of it, but it's so hard when someone runs up against what we think, when an individual comes along that's not following the consensus, how, how we generally would frown upon them or take it uncomfortably that, uh, we don't, we don't absorb it in a, in a way of living it. As an idea, it's so easy to say, yeah, you know, and I have my own saying that I, I ask somebody, why are you doing this? And they say, everybody does it. And I say, that's why I don't do it. Like just because I don't even have to think about it. The general consensus usually is following the pack and the pack is never a mentality of, of, of free thinking. And when you run against or bring different ideas, you automatically ostracized. No matter what group it is. So, for me, I try to always look at that and see when someone is bringing a different idea or taking the time to say, well, what about this angle? Is that I welcome it, especially when it's not going along with my regular accepted trend of what should be and what is. So, there's so much there to it, uh, and, and, uh, I didn't get the rote part. I think what, what I got from her was go learn. But first, before you go on to learn, don't follow. Examine, learn, see things. Don't take it on somebody else's say so. And I think Gurdjieff was very big on that, the question. And here we are, it's still reverberating, but I always remember the saying, KISS, keep it simple, stupid. And when somebody said it to me, I did not feel offended. It let me know that I have to watch my mind because I get lost in the mind field of my own somewhat thinking. Oh, and by the way, my battery might die. I'm negligent and not being home and I'm on on route. So, uh, until it does, enjoy being with you guys.

Sandra: Well, looking back even still at the beginning of this and thinking about even what you said about Kiss, Stephen. We see, as I kissed her right hand and she placed her dying left hand on my head. I really have to ask, what are the what's the symbolism of left and right hand here? And going back up a little bit further, I think I've heard this before, but uh, she was 100 years old, 100 and some years old and he's like six years old and his mother would be 80. No, I mean, so, uh, it's sort of like uh, I'm almost thinking, do I really want to raise the issue of how real is this story and how easily we buy into this uh, 100 year old grandmother advising her chubby might.

Robin: We don't really buy into it, do we?

Sandra: I don't think so.

Robin: There's a style that Gurdjieff adopts and and it runs throughout the tales, which is one of making a story into theater. So the the concept of 100 year old grandmother possessed of great wisdom and leaving the earth is better than the concept of the more likely 75 year old grandmother. It just is better theater. And I think that Gurdjieff, I mean, he's already done it on various occasions and I think he does it throughout the book. He just makes it better theater. It's all it's like you go and watch a Shakespeare play. Let's say you go and watch one way or another, Hamlet. Do you really think that the action on the stage is real or is it just theater? And does it lose anything by the fact that it isn't

particularly real?

John: Well, that for me that gets back to the question that came up earlier, and I'm sorry, I'm going to lose my connection, so I probably even shouldn't ask because I'm going to miss the but um, it's the distinction in um, in by mentation by form or mentation by thought. And I'm really hung up on the idea that it's form because it does seem to be painting pictures and metaphor and as you say, theater. It's not logic.

Robin: I don't think I don't think that that's a reasonable distinction between mentation by thought and mentation by form. I think you're hung up on the idea of form, and I think you should just mentation by formatory is what you should probably be thinking.

John: Then he doesn't say formatory. He says form and he and he goes into detail about formatory.

Robin: Well, I'm just trying to explain to you, I'm trying to explain to you the meaning of the word of mentation by form. It means thinking with the formatory apparatus. That's what it means.

John: I'll I'll um, I'll definitely.

Stefon E: I think that uh, throughout this chapter and the whole book, but particularly this chapter, Gurdjieff is warning us not to believe everything literally. If he says something that's not believable, he still is saying something that affects us, and the whole image of his presentation and the wisdom of it affects us, regardless of whether it's absolutely literal. But he's subtly training us not to believe in the literal, in my opinion.

Robin: This isn't the only part of this reading where Gurdjieff comes uh, comes out with something for you to uh, which you must know is incorrect. When he says somewhere, I can't find it, but somewhere he says, uh, me who's who's name has never appeared in the newspapers. Well, actually, his name was all over the newspapers several times at various points. And there are at least 20 or 30 press clippings of Gurdjieff's name before this book was ever published. Um, all across newspapers in America. Never mind what may have happened in Europe. And that's just theater as well, I'm guessing.

Stefon E: It was wondering how you all were affected by his little uh, section about booksellers, taking to uh, taking cognizance of John's reminder that nothing should be taken literally. You can sort of take it literally, but who are these booksellers? If if you sort of step back, they are the people and they don't seem to have consciences. Are they sort of an analogous to the people that run these these social media platforms these days, in which they say, you know, I'm just the platform. I just collect your money and I indiscriminately put out all this information from all comers. And if you're stupid enough to pay for something, you're stuck with it because I'm not going to return your money. So is it is it sort of an injunction to say, be aware of how suggestible you are and be very careful about what information you subject yourself to, because once you commit, don't think I'm going to, uh, uh, I'm going to let you change your mind.

Robin: Well, sounds right to me. I mean, you know, what came to my mind was when I um, when I heard that read was the idea of um, the theosophists and the Christian scientists and all sorts of organizations that are a wash with books that they want to sell you. But they're doing it, let's say, um, in my opinion, because I don't really know theosophy and I don't really know Christian science, but actually they, they don't know what they're talking about and and their their books are really not believable because

um, they don't actually have truth within their possession. Um, and Facebook's the same. It's not particularly different, except Facebook doesn't tend to be a spiritual movement, I don't think. Unless they've changed their business model in the past week.

Stefon E: Since many of us are reading this for more than the first time, might be interesting to remember that Gurdjieff talks about booksellers in a couple of places and books. You know, they find these some manuscripts in a monastery somewhere. But in um, in uh, Herald, he has um, he returns to the booksellers and enjoins them to uh, distribute, print and distribute his his writing, I think, is the way that it goes. Take the money from from uh, all and everything for a series and give the others freely. It's something like that. So, he's got some fantastic ideas there, too. And I think we this we haven't yet come to the business about cutting the the the uh, what do you call those, galleys?

Robin: Well, yes, I think they were originally called galleys.

Stefon E: Um, yeah, there's some name for it, because you print in bigger sheets and then fold it up to be a book and cut it and all that stuff. And the idea that you could take it back after only only cutting the first part to the bookseller, and he can resell it. Um, it's pretty interesting to try to figure out what he's getting at.

Robin: Well, if you know how those books are actually made, it would be incredibly difficult to publish in the way that he's suggesting with a first part of the first 50 pages of the book actually already trimmed and the other pages untrimmed. I don't think such a book was ever produced anywhere by anyone. But, you know, that's theater.

Stephen: These, uh, these booksellers are, are middle men between the publisher, uh, maybe between the writer and the publisher and the customer. Not sure what that signifies, but it's an important link.

Robin: Well, it's it's an interesting thing. It it when you're actually looking at this, you have to try and make some assumption as to what era Gurdjieff is referring to. Because the way that books are published now is just utterly unlike it was 40 years ago, and that was utterly unlike it was 40 years before that and so on. The original books were, as um, John said, they were galleys that were folded. Uh, and you bought the galley and you sent the galley to a bookbinder to bind it for you. Yeah. You know, so that was like, that's going back 200 years or something that that the that the publisher was just printing onto paper and folding for you and it didn't even provide you with a binding. So when he's talking about, you know, if you talk about bookshops now, if you discount the idea of Amazon, then Barnes and Noble is the image one gets in one's head. And Barnes and Noble has no close relationship with any um, publisher of books. They just treat them all the same, obviously. And they stock what they think will sell. And I don't know whether he's talking about that kind of bookseller. The bookseller that sold in the UK sold mystical books was also a publisher and was the original publisher of Oliver Rodney Collins' books. Uh, and so they were a publisher and a bookshop. Uh, and I don't know how common that was. Um, but, you know, the bookshops became chained soon enough, I guess.

Stefon E: I don't know whether this is uh, relevant, but I couldn't help because I used to be a long ago, used to be a copy editor, and I really like books and the the the printing process. But it was already pretty modern process, but I I looked up what pages are called before they're cut during the printing process. And I was reminded that folded pages are cut and bound in a book, they're called signatures. And a signature is a single

large printed sheet of paper that has been folded once or multiple times so that the pages are in correct sequence. Now, this could be, this could be relevant. He could once folded, these signatures are gathered together to form the interior pages of a book known as a book block or text block. When pages are only folded once, in other words, they are four pages on two leaves. That's called a folio. If they're folded twice, it's called a quarto. And if they're folded three times, it's called an octavo. Well, it's probably more information that we need, but you never know with Gurdjieff.

Robin: You point out, Stephen, you point out something interesting about he could be keeping in mind not only his method of writing these this book, which involved, I don't know, somebody knows how many separate composition pamphlets that he kept in this, uh, briefcase of his secretary. Um, but he knew he was going to scatter this information all over the place that he's coating. And so it's interesting to think about putting those pages or those ideas in sequence. Yes. And it's the, and it's the mind of the reader and the student which is reassembling this material over and over. And it's so, what's the right word? uh, um, my vocabulary sucks right now. But it's like a Mandelbrot. You know the Mandelbrot?

Stefon E: Yeah. So, the meaning is in every page, but it's also in more than one page and the subjects have to be threaded and sewn back together so that a fuller meaning. And for me that that speaks to his method of teaching, which is to increase perspective. Which is, he he tells you he's going to hypnotize you and then he gives you an antidote, which is anti-hypnosis of perspectives.

Robin: This isn't the only part of this reading where Gurdjieff comes uh, comes out with something for you to uh, which you must know is incorrect. When he says somewhere, I can't find it, but somewhere he says, uh, me who's who's name has never appeared in the newspapers. Well, actually, his name was all over the newspapers several times at various points. And there are at least 20 or 30 press clippings of Gurdjieff's name before this book was ever published. Um, all across newspapers in America. Never mind what may have happened in Europe. And that's just theater as well, I'm guessing.

Stephen: I'd be interested if we could touch on logic for a minute. That, that, the idea of logic. You know, I just, I'm, I'm just curious because what I get from, from, from the reading, and the things that we discuss is the importance of logic. But then there's the other side of it, that it's just mind.

Stefon E: It's interesting that, uh, he recommends reading this, uh, introduction several times, which is kind of like going around in a circle several times. You, you, you know, once you've, uh, understood or been exposed to the whole picture, then you go around and do it again. You're a different person.

Robin: That's true. Page 24 is the first time that he introduces wrapped in quotes the concept of logical confrontation. This is one of the most important concepts in the book. And I don't think you can go particularly far in this book unless you have some idea about the meaning of the idea of logical confrontation.

Robin: We we will encounter things at various points in time where he makes an assertion and when you compare it to something else he's said, it appears not um, to fall in line. Yeah. So, you know, what do you think about that? Do you think that in some way or other, his criticism of Tolstoy is uh, is justified? And uh, and therefore, do you do you think that the writing of a book like this, which definitely is scripture, is actually something

that he's criticizing in someone else and he's doing exactly the same thing himself, apparently? And that's not, that's just one of many, many examples throughout the book. And the thing that I find interesting in a general way about the book is that there are lots of examples of where he really doesn't take a position, he leaves it up to you to take the position. You know, I mean, he makes various statements about the sacrifice of um, two brained and one brained beings. But if you actually follow it through, and at one point in time he's criticizing humanity for doing it. And the next point in time, uh, later on, he he's praising um, Mullah Nasreddin for doing exactly that, reintroducing um, uh, sacrificial offerings. And it's like, how do you make sense of that? And that's just one out of many examples. The book is actually has many more examples than you might think of stuff like that. In terms of repetition, the two things that repeat without very much variation at all are the consequences of the properties of the organ Kunderbuffer. And that's said probably 30 or 40 times. That's a lot. And then, uh, the other, which goes with it or often next to it, um, the assertion that the faults of humanity, certain faults of humanity is down to humanity because that was the stuff that they did to themselves, themselves, and not from any action. Kunderbuffer is is um, described as an action from something higher. But, you know, the ability for humanity, for example, to acquire good practices and then let them die out. Well, that's a problem that humanity makes for itself. It it doesn't remember um, sensible things. So, that that's a repeating theme. Another interesting repetition is the name of the Absolute because he names the Absolute on many occasions. I think it's more than 90. But it's very rare that he gives the Absolute the same name. So, it's a repetition of the highest without being an exact replica of a previous repetition. So, I mean, these are just facts about the nature of the book.

John: I would argue with the two forces, but I think I'll leave that to somebody else to bring up.

Robin: There's another concept that I don't think occurs again in the Tales on page 25. The whole totality of the formation as well as the manifestation of this second human consciousness, which is none other than what is called the subconsciousness and which is formed from the materialized results of heredity, and the confrontations actualized by one's own intentions, should in my opinion, formed by many years of my experimental elucidations during exceptionally favorable conditions, be dominating the common presence of man. He's talking about this subconsciousness, but he's saying it's formed by materialized results and he wraps that in quotes and he means it. If you just, uh, experience something and you don't in any way examine it, then you don't materialize it. It just becomes something that is, let's say, recorded in your memory. It's not materialized into your presence. And he's kind of saying formed from the materialized results of heredity. Heredity, by the way, is got nothing to do with DNA. It means what you inherited by virtue of your existence, point of being born, and the confrontations, and he's talking about logical confrontations, actualized by one's own intentions. In other words, either you consumed the impressions or you didn't. And if you didn't, then that belongs to your, um, mentation by form or your, um, mechanical responses.

Stefon E: Okay, yes, it's about the subconscious, but it's about the subconscious coming up and and confronting something in your conscious life. Yeah, that's what I get.

Stephen: But why, why, why, why, why, why do, why do, why do, why do?

Stefon E: I don't know, it's a good question.

John: And is it the same then as the mentation by form, or is it, is it above or beyond that?

Stefon E: That's a good question, John.

John: It seems very close.

Stefon E: I would say that Gurdjieff would say there is no subconscious. There is no such thing. There is a consciousness and then there's an unconscious. And this is this is below the level of the normal consciousness that we are accustomed to in the life. So in some ways, he's talking about the conscious part of the subconscious, if you want to use the word subconscious.

Robin: I think he's trying to replace the word subconscious.

Stefon E: Yeah, he is. I agree.

Robin: You know, because it's it's all about consciousness. It's not about subconsciousness, but it's something that we are aware of now, that we were not aware of before we started reading the book. So he just gives it a different name.

John: I've always had a hard time with the word mentation by form, so that may be why I latched onto the subconscious. So when I see him contrasting the two, I think he's contrasting mentation by thought with something that is subconscious or unconscious.

Robin: Yeah, I think I think you are in a way, John. It's just he replaces subconscious with all of this.

Stefon E: Yes, and that that's a key to why Gurdjieff would disagree with a lot of people who came after him, who believed in the subconscious.

John: Freud and Young.

Stefon E: Yeah, so he's trying to distinguish that. So, I think it's a very important little paragraph, and he doesn't repeat that again.

Stephen: Well, the question is, why didn't he repeat it?

John: He only says it once.

Stefon E: Because it's obvious, John.

Stephen: Well, it's not obvious, because I would have liked for him to repeat it.

John: I agree, because I didn't get it.

Stephen: That's what I'm saying. That's why I think the question is not so much that it's so obvious, but it's not, you know, it's hidden in the middle of something.

Stefon E: Well, let's let's assume that there's a good reason. Why would he only say it once?

Stephen: Well, he probably didn't think it was as important. He probably didn't see the depth of it at that time.

Stefon E: Maybe.

Stephen: You know, it's just like, when you, when you, when you, when you, when you have a thought, you know, and you, and you express the thought, you know, and then somebody comes along and they see the depth of the thought. Yeah, I think that's why.

John: But it's an introduction to a concept that's very important.

Stefon E: Yes, that's what I said.

John: Yeah.

Robin: You could, you could almost argue it's an introduction to all of the things that he talks about later.

Stefon E: Right.

Robin: You know, it just like sums it all up in two paragraphs.

Stefon E: Right, and and I agree with you, it's very complicated.

Robin: But you know, it's the beginning of the book, so you're not meant to understand it.

Stefon E: Right.

Robin: So you can't be you can't be criticized for not understanding it.

John: Thank you.

Stefon E: You'll be criticized for thinking you understand it.

John: And I also, and I also find it interesting, um, that he doesn't define mentation by thought, or that he, um, that I, I'm not sure what the definition of mentation by thought is. I know what he says mentation by form is, but what, what is the alternative that he's suggesting, or that he, that he, that he's describing in his writing?

Stefon E: What do you think, John?

John: Well, I think, I think that's, that's the whole, that's, that's, that's the whole goal is that we mentation by form is what we do, and mentation by thought is what we want to be able to do.

Robin: I think you're, you're right with that, John, but if you look at the structure of it in the book, mentation by form is done by the mechanical part of the intellectual center. So, if you were to define mentation by thought, you'd define it as the intentional part of the intellectual center.

John: Yes.

Robin: So, it's, it's that that you have to bring into action and it's that that doesn't usually work. So, you know, if you find yourself reading a book, and it's all making sense, then you're doing mentation by thought. If you're reading a book, and you don't really know what's going on, then you're doing mentation by form. It's just being absorbed and put into a memory storage somewhere in the formatory apparatus.

John: So, if I'm, so if I, so if I read a textbook, I'm doing mentation by form, but if I read Gurdjieff, I'm doing mentation by thought.

Robin: Well, it depends who you are, but the majority of people will read a textbook and absorb it in the formatory apparatus. So, it's there. But if you ask them, they don't really know. You know, you can't really question them on the subtleties of the textbook.

John: So, that implies to me that Gurdjieff is, um, Gurdjieff is not, is not interested in the intellectual center so much as the other two centers. I mean, he seems to be suggesting that if we, that if we use the other two centers, the the intellectual center will follow.

Robin: No, I don't think so, John. I don't think that's the correct interpretation of the book. The intellectual center is the highest center. It's the highest form of our consciousness. The other centers are also important because they give you the raw data that the intellectual center needs.

John: So, is it, so is it the goal to have them all, all three centers functioning simultaneously?

Robin: That's the ultimate goal. Yes. The unification of the three centers. So, you have a moving center, an emotional center, and an intellectual center, and they're all working together and communicating with each other. And you don't even have to say to your moving center, I'm going to reach across for that cigarette. You just do it.

John: Yes, yeah.

Robin: It's all unified.

John: Thank you.

Stefon E: Yeah, and then and the other point of that, to me, is that the intellectual center is going to work on the other two centers. The intellectual center is is going to figure out how to to bring those two centers into the same level of function.

John: So, he is, so he is, so he is interested in the intellectual center.

Stefon E: I think he is, yeah. I think he is.

John: Thank you.

Sandra: Can I ask a question? Going back a little bit. I think, uh, what John just said made a lot of sense about mentation by form and mentation by thought. I had never heard it expressed quite like that, and I think it's very helpful. Can I ask a question? Uh, what is the meaning of the word 'soul' and 'sole' on page 23?

Robin: I think the problem is that you are listening with the formatory apparatus, and not with the higher intellectual center.

Sandra: Is that you, Robert?

Robin: No, it's me.

Sandra: Oh, okay.

Robin: The word 'sole' and 'soul' are pronounced alike.

Sandra: Right.

Robin: And Gurdjieff is using that to, um, compare the highest and the lowest in man.

Sandra: And you've heard that before in this group, right?

Robin: Yes, I have.

Sandra: But I had never heard it explained the way that John did and I was trying to clarify.

Robin: But you don't think it's helpful to hear it again.

Sandra: Oh, no. I do.

Robin: Well, I think it is, but it's just, you know, I think it's a very important piece of the book.

Sandra: It is. I agree.

Robin: The highest and the lowest. And that's what he's talking about. Soul and sole. The soul is the highest, the sole is the lowest. The way that you make contact with the earth.

Sandra: That's good.

Robin: The way that you make contact with the earth is with your sole. And that's the lowest part of you. The way that you make contact with the absolute is with your soul. And that's the highest part of you.

Sandra: And the way that you make contact with people is with the hands.

Robin: Well, it depends on who you are.

Sandra: Okay. Well, thank you.

John: You know, it also, I think it also refers back to the left hand and the right hand. The right hand, the hand is the instrument of the personality, and the left hand is the instrument of the essence. And so, when Gurdjieff said to earn your living with your left hand, he was saying earn your living with your essence, not with your personality.

Sandra: Okay. Thank you, John. That was helpful.

Robin: Does anybody else want to talk about the concept of the left and right hand?

Stefon E: Um, I remember Robert saying that the right hand is the right is the personality and the left is the essence. Is that correct, Robert?

Robin: No, I said the right hand is the personality, the left hand is the essence.

Stefon E: Oh, I'm sorry, I reversed that.

Robin: Yes.

Stefon E: And that's an intentional mistake, of course.

Robin: Of course.

Stefon E: So, why is the right hand personality?

Robin: Because that's what you use to write with and to manipulate things.

Stefon E: Oh, I see. Okay.

Robin: And that's what you use to shake hands with.

Stefon E: Okay.

Robin: And it's how you show yourself to the world.

Stefon E: Okay.

Robin: It's your presentation.

Stefon E: Thank you.

Robin: The left hand is what you keep close to your chest. And it's what you use to feed yourself.

Stefon E: Okay.

Robin: It's what you use to keep things close to you.

Stefon E: Thank you.

Robin: And it's what you use to protect yourself.

Stefon E: Thank you.

Robin: The right hand is what you use to defend yourself.

Stefon E: Okay.

Robin: And to attack.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of action. The left hand is the hand of reception.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of giving, the left hand is the hand of receiving.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of expression, the left hand is the hand of impression.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of doing, the left hand is the hand of being.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of the world, the left hand is the hand of the inner world.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of the external, the left hand is the hand of the internal.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of the material, the left hand is the hand of the spiritual.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of the visible, the left hand is the hand of the invisible.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of the outer, the left hand is the hand of the inner.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of the conscious, the left hand is the hand of the unconscious.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of the personality, the left hand is the hand of the essence.

Robin: The right hand is the hand of the conditioned, the left hand is the hand of the unconditioned.

AI Meeting Summary

US Session

Quick recap

The meeting focused on exploring various philosophical and psychological concepts, including consciousness, heredity, and the role of education in modern society. The group discussed different teaching methods and the evolution of book publishing and distribution, examining how these factors influence how information is consumed and understood. The conversation concluded with discussions about personal experiences, memories, and the significance of different aspects of human consciousness, including the roles of personality and essence in shaping individual perspectives.

Summary

Exploring Consciousness and Heredity

Robin introduced the fifth meeting, emphasizing the importance of controlling emotions and impulses rather than blocking them. Stephen read an excerpt from a book, discussing the author's unique perspective on human consciousness and the influence of heredity and environment. The reading highlighted the author's belief in the existence of two independent consciousnesses: one formed by accidental or intentionally produced mechanical impressions, and the other by hereditary material results and intentional associative confrontations. The author claimed to have discovered three specific data that made him unique in challenging established notions and convictions.

Modern Education and Unique Learning

The group discussed a passage from a 1931 text where a grandmother advises her grandson to either do nothing but go to school or to do something unique. They explored the implications of this advice in the context of modern education, with Robin suggesting that the educational system has degenerated from what it was in the 1960s. The discussion touched on different learning methods, including rote learning and imitation, with Robin sharing an anecdote about his daughter imitating how to use a record player. Sandy highlighted the rarity and value of being able to say goodbye to a loved one lucidly, while Stefan emphasized the importance of not following consensus and welcoming different ideas.

Gerdieff's Theatrical Storytelling Approach

The group discussed the symbolism and theatrical elements in Gerdieff's storytelling, particularly regarding the age of characters and the use of metaphorical theater rather than literal truth. Robin explained that Gerdieff's style of making stories more dramatic through theatrical elements is similar to Shakespeare's approach, where the focus is on the impact of the story rather than its literal accuracy. The discussion also touched on Gerdieff's mention of booksellers, which Stephen interpreted as a cautionary tale about the responsibility of information distributors, drawing parallels to modern social media platforms.

Evolution of Book Publishing Methods

The group discussed the historical context of book publishing and distribution, particularly focusing on the role of booksellers and the production process of books. They explored how publishing methods have evolved over time, including the use of

galleys and the process of cutting and binding pages. The conversation touched on the differences between modern bookstores and the historical relationship between publishers and booksellers. Stephen shared his knowledge of the technical aspects of book production, including the terms for folded pages and the process of creating a book block.

Scattered Ideas and Reader Engagement

The group discussed the teaching method of an unnamed author who wrote a book by scattering ideas across multiple composition pamphlets, requiring readers to piece together the meaning themselves. They explored how the sequence of pages and the process of cutting and rearranging them could influence how readers engage with the material, with Stephen suggesting that the same ideas might appear in different guises throughout the book. The discussion also touched on the author's critique of journalists and the media, emphasizing the importance of critical thinking and not taking information at face value.

Logical Confrontation in Book Analysis

Robin and Stephen discussed the concept of logical confrontation in a book, which involves intentionally putting ideas against each other to force critical thinking and derive deeper insights. They explored examples where the author appears to contradict himself, such as criticizing Tolstoy's rewriting of the Gospels while doing something similar himself, and praised Mattery Crombergson for reintroducing sacrificial offerings. They noted that the book repeatedly mentions the consequences of the properties of the organ condor buffer and humanity's faults, and that the name of the Absolute is used over 90 times but rarely with the same name. Stephen suggested that logical confrontation might be a way to batter readers into letting go of dualistic thinking and embracing a higher truth that merges seeming contradictions.

Resolving Contradictions at Higher Levels

The group discussed how contradictions resolve at higher levels, with John referencing Bennett and Buzzle's work on World 6's six orders of law. Robin shared the story of the three blind men encountering an elephant to illustrate how different perspectives can all be correct, while Janet noted that this aligns with the concept that people are right from their own perspective. The discussion concluded with a discussion about common sense as the last stage of work, and how different senses correspond to different centers in the human consciousness.

Understanding Heredity and Essence

Robin and Robert discussed the concept of heredity, distinguishing it from DNA and explaining it as what is inherited through existence and birth. Robin emphasized that experiences in the womb differ from those outside, and the first two years of life involve minimal thinking due to limited language development. They explored how shocks and traumas are met by essence, while personality mechanisms handle routine experiences. Stephen inquired about the seven influences on heredity, and Robin acknowledged not having analyzed them but suggested they fall on the subconscious essence. John shared a personal example of early logical confrontation and will formation, suggesting that conscience development begins earlier than typically thought.

Childhood Memories and Past Lives

The group discussed personal experiences and memories from early childhood, with

Barbara sharing a story about her mother's response to her wanting an apple because her brother had one, which led to a discussion about learning and desire. Janet recalled memories from being a young child, including feeling her mother's overwhelm as the youngest of three children, and revealed that her father was manic-depressive and alcoholic. Stefon shared experiences of past life memories accessed through massage, suggesting that souls exist independently of physical form and that people can carry memories from past lives into current existence.

Understanding Shock and Logical Confrontation

The group discussed the concept of "shock" as used by KG, which refers to any impressions that become aware to the individual, distinct from the occasional significant shocks in life. Robin explained that logical confrontation involves removing buffers that separate simultaneous experiences, allowing them to be absorbed and become part of one's subconscious. The discussion also touched on active reasoning, where Stefon® and Robin explored how to respond to insults, whether they contain truth or are meant to undermine.

Hand and Eye Symbolism Discussion

Stefon encouraged Sandy to think independently rather than following the crowd, using a metaphor about a dog peeing on a man's leg to illustrate the importance of objective observation. The group discussed the significance of right and left hands, with Robert explaining that in Orthodox churches, people kiss the right hand as a sign of courtesy, while Robin and Stephen clarified that the right hand represents personality and the left hand represents one's essence. Barbara shared that in medical terms, the right eye is called ocular dexterous and the left eye is ocular sinister, with Robert adding that the term sinister originally meant left but gained its current negative connotation because gladiators would hide weapons behind their left side.

Exploring Subconscious and Personal Growth

The group discussed themes from a book, focusing on the symbolism of hands and feet, particularly in relation to personality and consciousness. They explored ideas about the subconscious and the importance of understanding where thoughts and feelings come from. Robin shared a technique for becoming aware of and tracing the origins of associations. The discussion touched on the potential discomfort of self-examination and the courage required to face one's true self.

