

LIVING BEYOND THE BORDERS

a time of being

There are vast realms of consciousness still undreamed of
vast ranges of experience, like the humming of unseen harps,
we know nothing of, within us.

Oh when we escaped from the barbed-wire entanglement
of our own ideas and our own mechanical devices
there is a marvellous rich world of contact and sheer fluid
beauty
and fearless face-to-face awareness of now-naked life
and me, and you, and other men and women
and grapes, and ghouls, and ghosts and green moonlight
and ruddy-orange limbs stirring the limbo
of the unknown air, and eyes so soft
softer than the space between the stars.
And all things, and nothing, and being and not-being
alternately palpitant,
when at last we escape the barbed-wire enclosure
of **Know Thyself**, knowing we can never know,
we can but touch, and wonder, and ponder, and make our
effort
and dangle in a last fastidious fine delight
as the fuchsia does, dangling her reckless drop
of purple after so much putting forth
and slow mounting marvel of a little tree.

("Terra Incognita" by D.H. Lawrence)

Humankind lives and moves and has its being through great life metaphors. These metaphors tend to be poetic reference points from which we launch the adventure of our existence. They tend to be oases of refreshment and renewal along the Way. They give form to the style and mode of the journey, and the quality of day-to-day living. To a greater or lesser degree they shape the nature of the ultimate concern of our lives and the means by which we pursue it. In some ways they serve as guideposts which keep us from straying off the pathway of our life and times.

It is difficult, if not impossible, for one to grasp these metaphors while living in them. It is like a fish trying to describe what it is like to live in water and to be wet all the time! Maybe this is only possible in retrospect, for example, our seeing the guiding metaphor that "life is an act of serving the gods" from a past period of history. But maybe even this is not possible, for these are not merely rational categories or so-called "objective data" that can be analysed and thus understood. These metaphors are intimately intertwined with the deepest levels of our lives and thus can finally only be grasped in the quality of being present in our day-to-day living. And yet, it is possible for one to discern clues to this deeper, metaphorical realm of life. And it is possible, to a greater or lesser degree, to grasp the ebb and flow of this dimension, even though rational concepts and language finally fails. We can intuit this dimension of our life and attune our being to it.

This paper is an attempt to describe some aspects of the journey on which we find ourselves as 20th century people. We have said that we are living in a "time of being". What does this mean? How did we get to this point? What are the implications of this for our daily living?

When future generations reflect on the 20th century they may well talk about JOURNEY as the metaphor of our time--"Life is an awesome journey of consciousness!" The categories through which we have grasped this reality are knowing, doing, and being. We have struggled to articulate and understand the dynamical, interrelated nature of these three modes of the journey. Let us briefly review this work through three summary statements.

1. We are driven by the thirst for knowledge, by the profound desire to make sense of our fleeting, chaotic lives, by the quest to finally understand the true nature of things. And yet, all knowing finally meets its end in the knowledge that finally we know nothing. All knowing is circumscribed by ultimate, unknowable mystery. Herein lies transparent knowing.
2. We are driven by the impulse to action and work, by the profound desire for our lives to truly make a difference, by the deep urge to make a genuine contribution to our time. And yet, all doing finally meets its end in the passingness of every deed and the overwhelming fact of all that is left to do. All doing is circumscribed by the ultimate insignificance of every deed and act. Herein lies transparent doing.
3. When knowing turns transparent (i.e. encounters the abyss of final unknowness) one is driven into action to find some answers. It is as though we abandon knowing having clearly seen that ". . .we can nothing know." When doing turns transparent (i.e. encounters the nothingness of every deed) one is driven back to the quest for knowledge, to figure out what is the meaning of this absurd drama. It is as though we abandon doing, having lived its temporality and drown in the immensity of its demand. It is in the intensification of knowing and doing--when the bottom finally drops out of both--that the transparency of being itself appears.

Now let us explore the differing modes of life each of these represents. We will first do a brief phenomenological comparison of the modes of knowing and the modes of doing, then then follow this with a more detailed description of phenomena related to living in a time of being. Of course, hard and fast lines cannot be drawn except for the purposes of analysis. In reality life is knowing-doing-being simultaneously; or maybe more accurately, life just is!

major methods and motifs of THE TIME OF KNOWING		major methods and motifs of THE TIME OF DOING	
KEY TASKS	waking people up to the meaning of their lives and the times--impacting with a new life and world context and calling them to responsibility for both.	showing people "how to" practically work in society so effective change happens--demonstrating new forms of society (usually in seemingly impossible situations).	
FOUNDATNL CONSTRUCTS & SCREENS	religious and cultural studies curricula concerned with <u>grounding</u> the life of faith in a post-modern scientific, urban, secular world.	human development curricula concerned with <u>conveying practical methods</u> for self-sufficiency, self-reliance and self-confidence in a local community.	
LIFE METHODS	corporate seminars, lectures, workshops and conversations designed to deal existentially with the way life is and the practical individual and social response required.	comprehensive global/local social analysis of trends and contradictions, and an indicative battleplanning approach to building practical plans of action and implementation.	
BASIC LIFE QUESTIONS	"Who am I?"--the profound question of the identity of the self in relation to all that has been, is now and ever shall be in the future.	"What do I?"--the profound question of the vocational thrust of one's life in relation to the overwhelming needs and unlimited possibilities facing the globe.	
EXISTENTIAL MOTIFS	<u>authenticity and selfhood</u> --the depth struggle with meaning and significance over-against a meaningless and absurd existence (task is to affirm the given life and to create meaning out of no meaning and thus posit the self in history).	<u>significant/strategic engagement and expenditure</u> --the depth struggle to forge effective responses to emerging historical trends and underlying contradictions (task is building systematic, tactical plans to address and change society in its thinking, organisation and action).	
S P I R I T T O P O G R A P H Y	THEO-LOGICAL IMAGE & DYNAMIC	the happening of <u>JUSTIFICATION</u> : the "You are accepted!" event (the smashing of illusions which brings the possibility of real life).	the process of <u>SANCTIFICATION</u> : the "You are the chosen one!" journey (the election to serve the needs of the world and the ever-expanding context of care's demands).
	ONTO-LOGICAL STRUGGLE	"simply accepting the fact of acceptance"--the concern with sustaining the awareness of unconditional forgiveness, absolution and acceptance in spite of the experience of separation and estrangement (anti-despair/unfaith struggle).	"responsible to God for the world"--the concern with taking care of oneself in the dark night of the soul the the long march of care for the sake of being forged into a perfect instrument of service for the world (anti-vocational burnout struggle).
	PRAC-TICES; EXER-CISES & DISCI-PLINES	1) corporate liturgical rehearsal of the way life is (e.g. daily office). 2) solitary reflective exercises dealing with life stance as solitary/corporate through knowing, doing and being journey (e.g. NRM charts). 3) embodied style of priest, pedagogue and guru (smashing illusions and beckoning to mystery, depth and greatness of life)	1) corporate ritualising of necessary task and vocational resolve (e.g. daily rituals). 2) solitary/corporate exercises dealing with vocational journey through internal states of being and external manifestations (e.g. PH, OW, VJC) 3) exemplary role of general, prophet and anointed (symbolising commitment and leading in victorious acts of service.)

Living in a Time of Being

"So you must be your own lamps, be your own refuges. Take refuge in nothing outside yourselves. Hold firm to the truth as a lamp and a refuge, and do not look for refuge to anything besides yourselves. A monk becomes his own lamp and refuge by continually looking on his body, feelings, perceptions, moods and ideas in such a manner that he conquers the cravings and depressions of ordinary people and is always strenuous, self-possessed and collected in mind. Whoever among you does this, either now or when I am dead, if you are anxious to learn, will reach the summit.

(The Tripitaka, "Buddha's Last Instructions")

The following chart is an attempt to describe some of the dynamics of living in a time of being. It is intended to be a comparative analysis of the phenomenological differences from living in a time of knowing or a time of doing. In some ways it can be said that being is but an intensification of knowing and doing at the point of transparency. However, from another perspective it can be said that knowing and doing are but illusions and that being is finally the only reality. This is not a philosophical statement, however, but an experienced and lived reality.

The reflections presented in this section are based on where this author is presently standing in his own experimentation with this dimension of life. It represents insights learned in actual experience and is in no way intended as a theological or philosophical discourse. It is really more like a sharing of my reflections on the actual state of my journey at this moment.

THE TIME OF BEING

KEY TASK	The attunement, surrender and union of the individual (mind, body and spirit) to co-creative living with the ultimate Force of Creation in the intensifying evolutionary process of consciousness: the dynamics of an ever-changing, dynamic universe, the quantum transformative process, the continual detachment from the "self-image" and the release of higher and higher levels of synergy throughout all systems of the universe.
FOUNDAT'NL CONSTRUCTS & SCREENS	NONE--the realm of being is based on the <u>direct, unmediated experience</u> of reality (i.e. the Mystery behind the mystery of all things). This encounter is beyond rational interpretation and articulation. It is the immediate (i.e. in the NOW moment) awareness and personal contact with the ultimate Oneness and interrelatedness of all things, with the insubstantiality of all that we normally call "the real" and with the final Ground and Source of all being (i.e. Mind, absolute, pure, true Self, cosmic consciousness, eternal Logos, etc.)
LIFE METHODS	The key method in this realm deals with altered or higher states of consciousness (i.e. awareness which transcends our so-called "normal", waking consciousness), with transpersonal dimensions of our experience (i.e. beyond preoccupation with the individual psyche and fulfillment of the self) and with the direct experience of reality (i.e. the Void, eternal Silence, final Nothingness, etc.). The particular tools are many; however, the underlying methodological dynamics are essentially the same: 1) <u>active attention--intense/relaxed alertness</u> to what is NOW (inside and outside), 2) <u>stopping--suspension of thought, conceptualising, objectification and "mental chatter"</u> and 3) <u>passive awareness--a special "seeing into nothing"</u> (no dualism of subject and object, above space-time in the absolute NOW).
BASIC LIFE QUESTION	"Where/ What is the true self?" The "self" is not an entity separate from all other things. It has no definite boundaries, no substantial existence, no distinct identity. It is rather a dynamical part of the ebb and flow of all that is. Every image we have of the self is relativised moment-to-moment by the ceaseless changingness of all things, by an ever-expanding awareness of the vast, formless, emptiness of being. All of our space-time concepts about reality are nothing more than that--our concepts! And they are illusions; for reality cannot be contained for even an instant in conceptual or rational form. Even the quest for the "true self" is an illusion, for there is nothing to be found--no where to go--nothing to be achieved. THAT WHICH IS ALWAYS ALREADY--strictly speaking, we cannot enter Eternity since Eternity is ever-present. Any state we can enter is a purely temporal state. We find it NOW, or we find it not at all.
EXISTENTIAL MOTIFS	Non-dualistic thinking and forgetting the self. The depth struggle here is with utter surrender to what is, which leads one to live <u>beyond ego</u> ; that is, beyond carefully constructed images, presuppositions and beliefs about reality--beyond the boundaries we seek to impose on existence so we can maintain at least a semblance of control. It is a situation of total risk, total "letting go" of self identities and images--a situation of "not in control" but being led we know not where. Nothing to defend--nothing to protect--nothing to hang on to--all is in a state of continual change. Yet what we perceive as change is in fact the unchanging ISNESS of Being. The regular thinking process carefully divides life into neat categories: internal/ external, mind/ body, subject/ object, self/ non-self, life/ death. In the real of being, reality is grasped as One. Ordinary states of consciousness are illusory when taken as ultimate reality. And yet, from the standpoint of universal mind, they are one with the eternal process of being. When one practices "letting go" one likewise participates in the dynamic of "letting be"--i.e. becomes a willing participant in the process of being in the particularity of <u>NOWNESS</u> of what is.

S P I R I T U A L P R A C T I C E S & D I S C I P L I N E	THEO- LOGI- CAL IMAGE & DYN- MIC	The PERPETUAL ADORATION of being: The "You are the Oneness of all things" consciousness. This consciousness of ultimate consciousness is to allow the egoistic self to die, thus discovering the true Self--life as it is beyond illusory boundaries and limits. It is to live in perpetual affirmation of what is in its totality of unique particularity and cosmic unity, both of which are finally the same.
T O P I C	ONTO- LOGI- CAL STRUG- GLE	"Take refuge in nothing outside yourselves." We are forever looking for something external to guide us in our journey--a screen, a set of signs or symbols, another person to act as guide, a doctrine or belief system. And yet at every juncture one is again and again thrown back on the self and its own radical process of consciousness; and it is as though a voice is heard saying "What is NOW is enough!" The Void of ". . .nothing outside yourself" is itself the state of radical, unbounded freedom. The so-called "self-identity" explodes into <u>everything</u> that is experienced. At least two practical struggles or issues arise in this intensified state of consciousness: 1) how do I allow the presence of this "YES" to imbue or permeate every level and dimension of my daily living? and 2) how do I articulate and/or communicate this reality to others when I know that it is finally inarticulable in its essence (i.e. every attempt to commit this experience to language and rationality seems to reduce it to abstract, "airy fairy" drivel)?
G R A D U A T E D P R A C T I C E S & D I S C I P L I N E	PRAC- TICES, EXER- CISES & DIS- CIPLINE	<p>1) <u>The practice of solitary and corporate meditation.</u> On the solitary pole this is not simply the dynamic of rehearsing the way life is. Given the fact of the <u>direct</u> experience of reality, no such rehearsal is needed. The experience of being-itself needs no mediation; therefore, there is no need for external symbols, rites or mythologies to remind one of the ultimate Source and Ground of being. Nor is any sustenance required or possible. The practice of meditation directly and indirectly deepens and intensifies one's effectivity in daily living in that it is living NOW in direct relation to that which is--i.e. reality itself. From the perspective of the corporate there is indeed a dynamic of rehearsal connected to meditation; namely, a powerful statement is made and embodied when a group of people dares to risk throwing itself before being itself, hanging on to nothing else. From a more esoteric perspective, the sustaining, enabling resonance present in group meditation profoundly assists the individual in the practice of plumbing the depth of consciousness itself.</p> <p>2) <u>The exercise of maximising full human potentiality and creativity.</u> There is a thrilling variety of experimental approaches to this arena of life today which is often referred to generically as "the human potential movement." At the core of most of these approaches is the method/tool of <u>creative visualisation</u>. Visualisation as a tool increases our capacity to utilise the unconscious dimensions of our personalities in solving and dealing with problems and issues which face us in our day-to-day lives. In other words, it enables us to gain access to a whole realm of knowledge unavailable to us in our normal, time-space conscious level of existence. Most of these techniques are concerned with activating currently unused portions of our brain. Many of them are concerned with establishing new, vital links between mind and body. Others are focused primarily on releasing the mind-body healing powers innate within us. All are concerned with the process of human and societal transformation. All presuppose that quantum leaps can and do occur in the transformative process. All presuppose a fundamental unity (holism) at the heart of all things. These tools give a way to use insights/breakthroughs from knowing and doing in new and unexpected ways to enable the journey.</p> <p>3) <u>The life disciplines in a time of being.</u> This may well be one of the arenas of greatest unclarity and thus an arena in which new experimentation is indicated. At minimum it can be said that the regular practice</p>

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of meditation is required and the self-conscious training of ourselves to increase our creative potentiality. There is likewise an arena of establishing what has been called "mind linkages" with others across the planet who are committed to the transformation currently underway, thus the social discipline of releasing the dynamics of synergy and inventing new modes of social relatedness, and new ways for the individual to participate in the act of CO-CREATION with the evolutionary process itself.

4) The emerging stylistic manifestations. Some images relative to the new style implied by living in a time of being may be helpful. These are more on the dynamical pole, rather than the substantial or static. The shaman acts as guide into the profound, unexplored dimensions of being. The shaman helps people use the full creativity each one is both to care for the self and to serve others. The shaman guides at the point of methods and process not in terms of specific outcome and/or accomplishment. The yogin embodies the necessity of solitary spiritual discipline. The yogin helps people discover a path that is appropriate for them, given the uniqueness of each, in tension with the universality of the journey to the centre and the return to service. The yogin is capable of helping others precisely because of the personal experience and grounding in her/his own solitary life. The artist interprets and gives form to knowing and doing which wells up from the encounter with being-itself. This is almost the dynamic of the "oracle" which articulates key learnings from the depths of being and then draws forth practical implications of such experience for civilisation.

Some Practical Implications

1. A great service could be rendered, both to the movement and society, by a cataloguing of the varieties of emerging tools and methods of the New Age. This needs to include analysis of phenomenological intent and function, and practical description and use of each. These represent the "kitbag" or "artists palette" helpful for living in a time of being.
2. We need to rearticulate, for a time of being, our understanding of the one journey to the centre and the return to a life of service. All people consciously or unconsciously participate in this dynamic life journey. Some new work is needed, however, in articulating the many pathways to the centre and the return, given the one journey. This is not a matter of rigidly mapping out some new journey screen into which every one must fit their journey. It is far more a matter of getting on top of all of the pathways available that do in fact lead to the centre of being and then learning how to point people in a specific direction that may be in tune with their own unique needs at given times in their journey.
3. New approaches to the whole arena of human relationships, both within and outside the Order are needed. Within the Order, we need to find ways that people can talk at depth levels (i.e. from the heart) with each other at the point of their own solitary and family journeys. We need to experiment with some unusual groupings of people and structures which foster a kind of caring conversation that does not normally occur (e.g. clusters of families, single and married, assigned to spend a weekend together). Likewise, we need to encourage people to establish swirls of relationships with edge thinking outside of the Order so that our own thinking is continually being enlivened with many perspectives different from our own.
4. A very radical, new look at our time designs and our space models is needed in order to maximise our care for each other in a time of being. Time designs must reflect ample time for individuals to pursue the solitary, spirit exercises and pathways they have chosen. We must overcome the image that this should occur

"around the edges", or that it is somehow other than "the mission." The exploration of consciousness is as much our work as facilitating a programme, doing self-support for the Order, caring the the E.G. or going on a fund-raising call! Finding ways to symbolise the importance of an "experimental mode" is crucial to releasing people to follow their own heart, even if it leads them in non-conventional directions. The last thing we need now is conformity to some pre-mapped out direction, with those who question this branded as "kooky" or "having a deep spirit struggle." We need to move radically into some new life style experimentation, especially in the arena of holistic approaches to health. The space in our houses and programme centres needs radical rethinking. How much space do families really need to allow them room to be family and authentically be the individuals each are? What is needed in terms of corporate space for meditation and other solitary practices? What about corporate space for physical exercise? What kind of decor is needed to reinforce and encourage intuitive thinking and to provide an atmosphere that maximises the creativity of each person?

- 5) The establishment of a process approach to our work on myth, rite and symbol is very important at this point in our journey as an Order. We need to radically experiment with the cultural (i.e. Ur-mode) grounding of our total symbolic life and all of our practices. We cannot afford, at this point, to be attached to any doctrinal presuppositions regarding what a ritual, symbol, etc. must be or what it must do. We are moving into the realm of the intuitive and the non-verbal. Previous evaluative screens may not apply to judge the adequacy of our experimentation here. Nothing that demands a substantialistic approach is adequate to what is required by the new paradigm.
- 6) The time of being may required major and minor "turns of the dial" on some of the methods we have developed over the years. Following is some brooding on initial directions that may be indicated:
 - *intellectual methods--training people in non-linear, non-mechanical thinking processes; using methods which force use of the right brain (i.e. intuitive, artistic modes of thinking); learning how to see things in their wholeness (i.e. learning how to think and act holographically).
 - *social methods--researching and developing workshop and planning methods based on a systems approach to social change; depth training in the skills and philosophy of networking; serious training in media/communication methods for social impact.
 - *spirit methods--moving into serious experimentation with the non-discursive approach (i.e. with approaches that push beyond the rational/thinking process); dealing very self-consciously with methods that promote unity of mind, body and spirit; both of these will require detachment from the product/accomplishment/goal-orientation approach to spirit method.
- 7) The development of a wholly new, open-ended approach to training that is "journey-responsive" rather than "pre-packaged." This approach is focussed on equipping people to live and operate effectively in the new paradigm. It might mean something as radical as naming the dynamical pillars of a training construct and letting the participants design the specific content that most meets their needs. This obviously has profound implications for our thinking on Order forms and for serious journeying of people within the Order:Ecumenical.