

29 March 1982

LARGE MONDAY MEETING

On the platform: Dr. Roles, Professor Guyatt, Mr. Dunjohn

PART 1

Prof. G. Well this is the last meeting this term and the first Monday meeting next term will be a large one on the 17th May, and the groups will start that week. The Work Party will be Mr. Stern's and Mrs. Garten's group; and there won't be a Meditation meeting in April and the May meeting will be on the 11th – is that clear? No Meditation meeting in April, and the May meeting on the 11th.

Dr. R. Any questions about that? It's time for holidays.

Prof. G. Then there'll be a weekend Work-In on the 8th and 9th May from 10 am to 5 pm on Saturday and Sunday, that's on the 8th and 9th May. Please let us have your names if you can come and even if you don't write it down today you can always ring the office, which will be open most of the holidays but not for the week after Easter – so you can ring the office, but it will be closed the week after Easter.

If there's anyone else who wants to start the Turning training which begins on the 10th May, would they please go to the Blue Room immediately after this meeting when Pam Varley will be telling the new Turners about the course. So if anyone would like to start they can go this evening to the Blue Room.

Finally, many thanks to all those who worked very hard to make the Annual General Meeting such a success, our sound experts particularly because they had a very hard job with the projector.

Dr. R. Well, I very much want to hear how you found it at the Annual General Meeting and what you thought of the lecture and the film and all that and I want to *hear* rather than say anything because my hearing is so poor that I didn't hear nearly as much of what Cecil Collins had to say – although what I did hear I admired greatly. He made several epoch-making remarks. About people helping, there is only one slight thing which visiting Lecturers don't like very much and that is when somebody turns the lights out just as they step on the stair, and that happened I gather because the one whose job it was, delegated it at the very last minute!

But even that showed something rather wonderful about Cecil Collins. Bill Anderson rang me up this morning – he's in a plane over the Atlantic at the moment – and said that he had hold of Cecil Collins when the lights went out and he absolutely froze without any fuss at all, just simply stayed still and went on as if nothing had happened. So it greatly strengthened his already high opinion of the stature of the man.

Miss Scrutton. Is there any chance that the talk will be published? I couldn't hear very well, but it sounded fascinating.

Dr. R. No, I know. I'm afraid there's very little chance because the artist has the copyright – he is using it as the basis for a book and he doesn't want us even to reproduce it; but when it comes out as a book we'll read it.

Prof. G. I must say I was very impressed, myself, by the whole evening, I thought it was a rather marvellous climax to the term; but speaking personally I found the talk more interesting than the film.

Dr. R. Well, the orthodox Royal College of Art mightn't approve of the paintings?

Prof. G. It isn't the paintings – I rather love his paintings... I found the film very bitty – it was slightly old-fashioned really, the way it was put together... but the talk though gloomy in parts was jolly good.

Man. Gloomy to begin with, and then he seemed to lift up.

Dr. R. But no creative artist can be expected to lead an ordinary life and not suffer. Think of them, most of them died young – he's survived, just... Rembrandt died in a garret, you can't expect a real creative artist to look happy all the time, but that didn't lessen him in my estimation. Do let's hear some views.

Colin Johnson. I was very struck by what Cecil Collins said because I felt that the arts in England, especially the performing arts are in a degenerate state. I wonder if you could say something, Dr. Roles, about what can be done to lift the tone of the arts and to face artists in the right direction.

Dr. R. I can't – Good Lord! (laughter) Anybody who does a work of art has my unfailing admiration, I've been trying all my life – but (to Prof. G.) you might? (laughter).

Prof. G. Well having taught for thirty years at the Royal College I feel I failed dismally! But speaking seriously, I'd like to hear what you think, Dr. Roles. I've often wondered with all the energy in today's civilisation going into technology, whether really it's time for the arts... whether it must be a sort of quiet period for the arts.

Dr. R. Well I think it's the time when the arts may rescue us. But I would like to hear what anybody in the room has to say about this subject.

Prof. G. It is a fascinating subject, isn't it, because the arts do appear to have gone soggy and...

Mr. Eastop. Is it something to do with the arts, perhaps, following the climate of society, which is what has always happened... so you can't affect the arts, but change society – they reflect society.

Prof. G. Well I think there's a lot in that, yes.

Dr. R. Any more?

Mr. Dunjohn. An Oxford mathematician wrote in *Scientific American* a few years back that unless you have beauty in your equations they won't be satisfactory equations. (laughter)

Philip Smith. Dr. Roles, I think that probably one way that the arts could be faced in the right direction is by artists in this Society facing in the right direction through what we're taught and then the influence will come through the Work... and perhaps influence artists outside.

Dr. R. It would be nice wouldn't it if you could do that and still remain an artist, because some people have in the past said that coming to meetings made the bird stop singing... that's what we'd like.

Philip Smith. Yes, I don't think artists have to be melancholy, Dr. Roles, I see no reason why an artist shouldn't be happy, especially artists in this Society with all that we have been given.

Dr. R. Fine, well let's get to it. Let's hear some more.

P.S. It *shouldn't* influence one's art negatively.

Dr. R. It *shouldn't*, no, but *does* it?... what about other artists here?

Hilary Randall. I found Dr. Roles that by teaching as well as sharing the joy that I've found with people who would otherwise not be involved in the arts, one not only gains a great deal oneself but is able to turn negative thinking by the people I teach into something more positive. Both in my own painting and in helping others.

Dr. R. Yes, I do think that trying to help somebody else gives a great boost to any creative ideas of one's own.

Mrs. Simpson. Isn't it true that in India art and religion are more one and we're going through a period when man is more his own measure?

Dr. R. Yes, well India is India and Mr. Ouspensky started this Society for the British working in Britain and for Britain. Britain was his second home and that's what he started this Society for, to certainly learn all we could about techniques like Meditation and have the guidance of Realized men and all this but to find an expression in the West, using Western language.

Mrs. Redfern. I found that the way Mr. Collins referred to modern architecture not having any secrets any more, being very valuable. I feel this is missing in all art... the secrets.

Dr. R. Yes, that was one of the gems. He certainly has progressed a long way since that film. The film (43 years old) is how I remember him when he came to see Mr. Ouspensky when I was there before or just at the beginning of World War II – I remember him just as a surrealist and Mr. Ouspensky didn't like surrealists at that time because they were Freudian in tendency and they spoke about the subconscious all the time; but Cecil Collins made it quite clear he's progressed a long way since that, he said that he discovered that surrealism was 'romanticism gone to seed' didn't he. (yes) Any more...

Bridget Redfern. I was also very interested in the way he was talking about today's educational system. There should be more constructive thought as to how this could be brought round to face the right direction.

Dr. R. Well you might go to one of his Life classes and see. They go a great deal further than just teaching art, it's a way of life and curiously akin to ours in some ways. You can't just turn on art can you – I mean you can't write poetry on Thursdays as Mr. Ouspensky used to say.

Mr. A. Bray. There were two ideas, Dr. Roles, that I think he mentioned on two or three occasions – one was the idea of the Fool and the other was the idea of the Child... was this in connection with creativity?

Dr. R. Yes. I admired what he wrote in his book about the Fool, what he meant by it, and of course one admires very much his use of the symbol 'Child'.

Mr. Torikian. In this connection he also wrote about symbols.

Dr. R. Can you remember something that struck you?

Mr. T. Well I wasn't quite sure whether he was on the same line as you were saying about symbols a couple of years ago.

Dr. R. I think he's got way ahead of that. But undoubtedly words are symbols but very limited symbols and the inward-looking side of our nature has its own tremendous scope for symbolism – there are symbolic expressions like the one in our system 'Give up your suffering and create moon in yourself' – that is a symbolic expression with a lot of meaning to it. And there are also the symbols like the symbol of the cross, they've played an enormous part in human life – anything else you want to say?

Mr. T. No, I was very impressed by the idea of symbolism because it did make a great impression on me when we talked about symbols and when we talked about the Enneagram.

Dr. R. Well whoever takes over will have to understand about our symbols of the triangle and the circle and all that develops from it in order to be able to do what Mr. Ouspensky said we had to be able to do, to be able to answer all questions.

Mrs. Mary Edwards. The world of the soul that Cecil Collins spoke of, in our terminology would that be the world of the personal psyche or the Causal, or what? This world that Cecil Collins spoke of, the world of the soul really, the individual soul...

Dr. R. I think it's probably the Causal level he was talking about. He has to escape himself from the variations and changeableness of the individual psyche and when he was in a creative mood I'm sure it was the Causal level he was talking about. What does anyone else think? John Buscombe, what do you think?

John B. Well I thought he was talking about what we sometimes call Soul or Conscience or even the Atman... He was very interesting on that subject I thought, because if I heard correctly, he was stressing the need to feed this soul, the spiritual side, and educate it.

Dr. R. That's it. Is there anybody who goes to his Life classes who would like to say anything about that? Because that's where it is put into practice. Anyway, maybe not off the cuff. I don't see how a world based entirely on left-hemisphere science is going to develop the potentialities of the human race only. Science, of course, and all the discoveries play a part, but artists, creative artists of all kinds, play another part. Also a necessary ingredient. What did you think, Dame Edris?

Dame Ninette. Oh, I think it's very true. I think that one of the most important things about artists in general is that we'd know nothing about the Romantic era if it wasn't for what they left behind or the neo-classicism of the 18th century and if some of the work of today is eccentric, that they are supposed to be doing, ugly and everything else, it's entirely due to society, not to the artists. They are creative and they can only develop what's round them. It does become a part of history and it's terribly important. One shouldn't be too critical or severe about not liking certain forms of art. They can't help it... they are creative people and they must create what inspires them.

Dr. R. One shouldn't omit dancing as a creative art... and look at the way ballet has evolved since you started with Lilian Bayliss.

Mrs. Koren. Following what Dame Ninette says, if we've been going through a period of winter, I would say perhaps having heard such an important talk and I've been to his classes, that spring is definitely in the air and it is exciting times for the arts.

Dr. R. I've felt very much and especially at the Annual General Meeting that spring *is* in the air – 'Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer' – and that's what's going to happen. However uncomfortable and awful and perhaps dangerous the outside world is, a spiritual spring is in the air and this Society has a part to play in that.

Kaffe Fassett. I feel this very much too... I mean we started out this conversation by saying that the arts were in this terrible muddle. I feel very hopeful about the arts. I think there are a lot of very exciting things coming up.

Dr. R. Well, there's a painter talking, you see, (laughing) which is good!

Mrs. Macowan. I feel very impressed by the work that the National Trust is doing. It seems to me that they are waking a spirit and an interest in beauty.

Dr. R. Yes, that is sure. I feel that many, many people whether we recognise it or not are making a contribution towards the new look that all the Western free world is going to have to have in the near future, or over the next generation or two.

Miss Cullinan. I was very moved by Cecil Collins' description of the process of his art as a search for the Real, in life, and also how he depicts the search for the Real in his painting. I find it very touching.

Marie Harvey. I was very impressed with his simplicity – because a lot of art today is very much just a personal type of expression and I felt that he didn't have that... it came from the real Self.

Kenneth Dunjohn. I thought it was very interesting the urge to face the sun. That was the one light moment that came up several times.

Dr. R. Many people felt that his final picture of the Sun in the film getting closer and closer was very moving. (Yes)

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PART 2

Dr. R. Well, perhaps there will be more opportunities at your small meetings and so on after your holiday, of returning to the subject of the Creative Arts because the artists don't get sufficient chance, sufficient voice in our affairs, I think. But now I just want to say various things about this our last Monday meeting of the term.

First of all I had in my pocket at the Annual General Meeting a letter from the Shankaracharya got to me by special messenger, giving me courage and advice about how to prepare for my own 'next journey' – and that's going to be my target now, however long it's going to take. So I am leaving it to the Society, the people who are going to take over, to find their own way through without somebody standing over them, making them think that he is doing their thinking for them, because he isn't! You've got to do it yourselves, and you'll only do it from necessity. That's the first thing.

But secondly, I would like to remind everybody that this is Mr. Ouspensky's house. That he got it for us from the Russian Ballet and that he had certain reasons for starting this sort of Society which was all about the 'psychological transformation of man' – the possibility that man was only an incomplete being but *could* by endeavour, if he discovered the right lines, complete his possibilities. And that's what our Society is really for. There are very few people left who were with him at the end of his life. Dr. Connell here and I were looking after him and one or two other people were with him at the end when he outlined his aims. He undoubtedly found his own target at the end of his life, there's no doubt about that. But I want you to realise first something about our background at that time, 35 years ago. Most of us I suppose were brought up in some form of Christianity and certainly my wife and I were not very great shakes but we were supposed to be Christians. Mr. and Madame Ouspensky were Russian Orthodox. They were doing what Stalin's daughter said the other day on television here – all the oppressed peoples of Russia and the Communist block in the East are doing to this day, and three generations of tyranny have not stamped it out. And the thing which is keeping them all alive – in Poland it's probably mainly the Roman Catholic Church with the Pope – Pope John Paul – who is to my mind a fully Realized man; but in Russia it's the Russian Orthodox Church and in Mount Athos also, the Greek Orthodox, which are accumulators of energy keeping things alive, and every Easter we used to celebrate Russian Easter. The Ouspenskys kept to the English calendar and we had a whole day from work on the farm at Easter, English Easter; but we all used to go to Russian Easter service just as we went to Russian Christmas and many of us sang, were trained to sing by Madame Rabeneck, now nearing the end of her life in New York, to sing airs and parts of the service. And so a little later we want to play to you some authentic music from the Russian Orthodox Church in Ennismore Gardens, because it really is very uplifting. But in the meanwhile, we'd like to meditate and perhaps lead up to that. So now let us lift ourselves up to another level by simply finding peace... peace on the subtle level. We have peace at night on the physical level, we sleep; but on the subtle level we get very little peace nowadays, and meditation is precisely for that. So let's see if we can just relinquish and get our minds quiet because two people who have just seen the Shankaracharya have brought back some very valuable material which is going to make a lot of difference to us when we have time to assimilate it. So now let's just meditate for 5 to 10 minutes...

MEDITATION

Well, the Shankaracharya has proved to us that in every human being, whether they know it or not, the Divine Self is present and that when several human beings are together, as they are in this room, then the Param-Atman, the Self that lives in the hearts of all, takes over. Having got that proved to ourselves over the years, since the 20 years we've been meditating, I'd like you to realise that we won't get far without the contribution made by Mr. Ouspensky and I just want you to hear one such. Prof. Guyatt will read from one of the Psychological Lectures (with which most of us started) to see if it doesn't make an even greater impact today than when we had it in the 1930s. One of his main contributions was the following:

Prof. G. (reading)

To begin with *in the emotional centre there is no natural negative part*. The greater part of negative emotions are artificial. They do not belong to the emotional centre proper; they are based on instinctive emotions which are quite unrelated to them but are transformed by imagination and identification.

Dr. R. 'Imagination' is where Manas (the undisciplined human mind) is running by itself without control and usually over the surface of things; and 'identification' is where it has stuck like a fly in some train of thought, as the fly is stuck in flypaper, and the mind cannot get out of it. So what he is talking about, negative emotions, are an artificial phenomenon.

Prof. G. (cont.)

At the same time positive emotions such as love, hope, faith, in the sense in which they are usually understood – i.e. as permanent emotions – are impossible for man in the ordinary state of consciousness.

Dr. R. Right; but he didn't know about the Meditation then. He looked all through India for this system (the Advaita system) which we have been lucky enough to find, because he had sent us out to find it. So now looking round at humanity at large, how does this seem to you to apply today?

Prof. G. (cont.)

These negative emotions are a terrible phenomenon. They occupy an enormous place in our life. In many people it is possible to say that all their lives are regulated and controlled and in the end ruined by negative emotions. At the same time negative emotions do not play any useful part at all in our lives. They do not help our orientation. They do not give us any knowledge. They do not guide us in any sensible manner. On the contrary, they spoil all our pleasures, they make life a burden to us and they very effectively prevent our possible development, because there is nothing more mechanical in our life than negative emotions.

Dr. R. That is something which we have to practise much more here just in this house where outwardly we have whitewashed our sepulchre but if you scratch a person through the whitewash we at once find something else! And that's a big part, of course, of what we could be doing for our country today. Time moves on and one of the ways of doing it is through a real understanding of whatever religion one was brought up in; as well as art there is also religion, in the sense that the Shankarcharya uses an inward religion with God which everyone possesses. So let's now hear some of the Easter music taken from a record which could go on three or four hours, couldn't it Ian. This is just the part that I remember – my wife and other people at Gadsden, Lyne or Mendham singing.

MUSIC

from: Ikon Records IKO 2 – Russian Orthodox Church Music, Vol.2: Selected Hymns of Great Saturday and Easter by the Moscow Church choir
(about 7 minutes)

Well you heard that – Christos voskrese iz mertvih – which is the Easter message – 'Christ

is risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the Resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive'. And when we met each other on Russian Easter morning we would always give the Easter greeting – Christos voskrese.

So now I'm going to get us all to stand up and give this greeting to each other and to all those admirers of Mr. Ouspensky throughout the world, particularly Mr. and Madame Rabeneck in New York and the group there, and Tanya, Mr. Ouspensky's granddaughter and her husband in the States, all admirers... shall we stand up and say to ourselves and everyone else:

CHRISTOS VOSKRESE! – CHRIST IS RISEN!

Dr. Dewey. Christ is risen indeed!

Dr. R. And a Happy Easter in English!

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