

## TEACHING

In considering how and what to teach a new group it is difficult to think afresh about ideas that many of us have lived with for most of our lives. We might start by trying to be clear about the relation between the different teachings we use. In a letter in 1977, Dr Roles wrote that only the enneagram can connect:

1. Current scientific knowledge of man and the universe.
2. The Shankaracharya's teaching and questions about meditation and self fulfilment and:
3. The link between them which is our Western System (as expounded by P.D. Ouspensky) and its special language.

Leaving the enneagram aside for the moment, it seems that this statement is also the key to understanding how Dr Roles viewed the teachings in general: the Shankaracharya's teaching of Advaita speaking most directly of the truth about the Self; the System acting, as it was formulated to act, as an interface between the inward-looking tradition of the East and the outward-looking tradition of the West. Perhaps we could discuss this and come to some conclusions of our own.

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One way of investigating the relation between the teachings and how to teach them is to take an example on a large scale and to see what ideas are needed to understand it fully. The idea of the different influences we are under and the different impressions we receive, which we looked at y last week, opens up a promising avenue to explore the ideas of the System. There are (at least) six System ideas that are relevant.

1. The idea that we are exposed to influences of differing order (A, B, C) is a special way of discriminating between the multitude of impressions and ideas; in this case according to whether they derive from first-hand or second-hand contact with a school (or perhaps a realised man or woman), or are just street level and of no value in relation to the journey.
2. Another way of looking at the impressions we receive and the ideas contained in them is to ask how objective they are. Here is the original statement about objective and subjective art:

The difference between objective art and subjective art is that in objective art the artist really does 'create,' that is, he makes what he intended, he puts into his work whatever ideas and feelings he wants to put into it. And the action of this work upon men is absolutely definite; they will, of course each according to his own level, receive the same ideas and the same feelings that the artist wanted to transmit to them. There can be nothing accidental either in the creation or in the impressions of objective art.

In subjective art everything is accidental. The artist, as I have already said, does not create; with him 'it creates itself.' This means that he is in the power of ideas, thoughts, and moods which he himself does not understand and over which he has no control whatever. They rule him and they express themselves in one form or another. And when they have accidentally taken this or that form, this form just as accidentally produces on man this or that action

according to his mood, tastes, habits, the nature of the hypnosis under which he lives, and so on. There is nothing invariable; nothing is definite here. In objective art there is nothing indefinite. [*In Search of the Miraculous*]

3. Yet another approach to discriminating between impressions comes from the idea of triads, in particular as applied to the activities of man. There are just two categories of 'art': creative art at its highest level and professional work.

4. Then what about the *level* of the artist? It was said that there is art (and science etc.) corresponding to Man No 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on. However, it was also said that an ordinary human being can be a great artist through a one-sided development, and there are plenty of examples of that. So in certain respects an artist (or indeed any creative person) may possess something of the being of a much more advanced man or woman.

5. What about the effect on the beholder? An objective work of art, given a receptive viewer or listener, by definition has the same effect. But the intensity and level of the effect would depend on their level and their mental state at the time. At the other extreme, subjective work from someone with a low Being is the kind of thing that hangs on the railings of Hyde Park (or some might say in the Saatchi gallery). But there's a lot of valuable 'culture' in the middle between the extremes, and we know from experience that what we get from any work of art or from music depends on our state of mind. This relates to which of the Centres (Intellectual, Emotional, Moving) predominates.

6. One could take this idea still further, to consider the details of how incoming impressions are transmuted inside the observer, using the Food Table, and to ask if impressions of different intrinsic levels are 'digested' in a different way.

It is a bit of a shock to see how many different System ideas come into play, but for those of us who have studied the ideas of the System for many years, there is no need to refer to all these ideas by chapter and verse; it's more a matter that our neurones have become wired up in a particular way so that we see, hear and understand accordingly. But how should these ideas be taught nowadays? Would it work to take some big topic, show what is involved and then step by step introduce the ideas?

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How is this to be related to the knowledge from Advaita about the Self? It speaks of the necessity for a steady point of view, the Observer:

The states of consciousness experienced in deep sleep, dreams, the day-time state, spiritual awakening, Samadhi, etc., are governed by the influx of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas from people, situations and events. These all undergo change, but the Observer who sees them all as a 'passing show', always remains the same. This Observer never registers any change in itself; if any modification appears, then this must happen to the individual ego ('Ahankar') since change is its very nature. . . . For example, pure gold always remains gold while its uses and shapes and forms are liable to many variations. The sky remains the same, while storms, clouds, rain and snow keep on changing our view of it, and yet do not affect the sky in any way. [*Letter from HH 30.8.70*]

and

You mentioned the dream state - there are five states - the Samadhi state, the awakened state, the dreaming state, and then the deep sleep, and the fifth one is unconscious state. All these five states belong to the mysterious creative art of the Absolute. Each of these states is part of the manifested creation for the pleasure of the self, and in fact each state is a useful state for one or another purpose. There is nothing to choose between one or the other.

One doesn't have to choose anything, but stand at the middle and see both sides, the outer and the inner. Or stay in the present and watch the passing life - the play of 'past' and 'future'. Each state is part of the Absolute, and one does not have to select one of these situations. One has to become the impartial and silent observer of whatever happens, may it be Samadhi, waking dream or sleep. If that is achieved, it is beyond all these states of the world we live in, and in effect everything is Sat-chit-ananda the Absolute. Even the most humdrum work such as digging, then gives bliss or Ananda.  
[Record 3.10.72]

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