

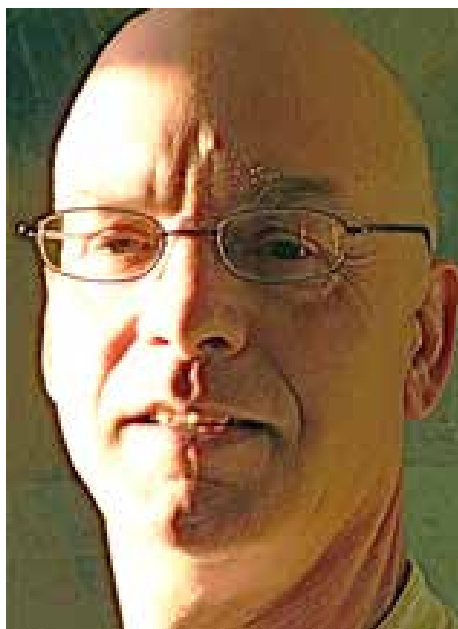
No Self, Universal Self

No self (anatta) is one of the three characteristics of existence in the dharma, or Buddhist philosophy. Here is an exploration of this concept from a variety of directions.

Imagine all the people of the earth. They have no names. Names are a convenience provided to interact with others, conventions. Six billion lights of awareness, each transparent mystery awakening into this life with no name. Each an original life experiment that evolves, gets confused, grows, contributes their passion to the journey, dies.

There is no particular reason that the light of awareness you experience as you is not an Inuit, a Moroccan, a city dweller, a king or a homeless person. No reason whatever that this experience you are having is, at this moment of evolutionary history, a thousand years ago or one hundred years ago. Wes Nisker says "Who we think we are depends to a significant degree upon when and where we are born...upon which wave we ride in the river of biological and cultural evolution." Any of us could have been born any of the current six billion humans. In a sense, when you face another human, you are facing your "self".

Alan Tower



Body

Many of the things we naturally come to rest upon in some way as being who we are, like our face, our body type, our height, sexual orientation, athletic ability, hair, skin, eye color, pheromonal attractions, food likes and dislikes, we clearly have no self making decisions determining these. We don't decide on the functioning of thousands of body processes, chemical, neurological etc. They all just continue on, coming from the original source of mystery awakening in us with our own particular style of awareness. There is no captain at the helm of the ship that goes by our name that we were given as a useful convention around birth. The heart beats, the lungs breath, the penis rises, the vulva wets, the thoughts arise (this one coming up next) without any self in command. There is no command central for these processes. If there was, we would be exhausted beyond renewal in the first few hours of our lives trying to keep up and keep track.

We are contingent beings, born and continually renewed by an unfathomably large set of circumstances and interactions. We are an evolving ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

The Dynamic Enneagram: *Fives, Stories*

A Five client of mine named Bob traveled to a resort town where I once lived. He wanted to work on some difficulties he was having related to his Fiveness and had structured a weeklong retreat for himself. I agreed to have several sessions with him. I didn't have an office at the time so we decided to meet in his hotel room at 11am each day.

Early in the first session we were talking about Fiveness and I told Bob about a news report that I had seen the previous night concerning the behavior of earthworms. Wondering why earthworms come out of the ground when it rains, a group of biologists had theorized that since the skin of an earthworm is not waterproof, the worm is at risk of drowning when rainwater seeps into the ground. If the worm stays underground it will gradually swell up and die, so it crawls out to escape saturation. The earthworm is then at risk of being eaten by birds but presumably that's better than drowning. This reminded me of the dilemma of Fives, who can

Tom Condon

have weak permeable boundaries which they then go to great lengths to compensate for.

The moment I finished my earthworm story, as if on cue, there was a knock at the door. Bob got up, opened the door to the housekeeper. She said, "I'm here to clean the room." Though we were in a session, Bob said, "Oh, okay."

The maid stepped in and promptly began vacuuming, flooding the room with sound. Bob said, "Well, since she's here, let's go out on the balcony. We can close the door until she's finished." We had essentially been driven from the room. We sat down outside. The balcony was small and overlooked a large river and a noisy waterfall. I couldn't hear myself think. "Are you comfortable here?" Bob asked, looking uneasy and shifting in his chair. At that moment, several wasps begin to circle above us.

Bob seemed to think the situation over. ...CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

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Learning is an ongoing process that happens regardless whether it's through painful or pleasant experiences as long as it leaves a lasting impression, the kind that is capable of altering our world view. For example, the depth of an impression may depend on how radically different and yet convincing or unsettling a new insight is. If we perceive an insight as unsettling it's likely that we popped a bubble of misconception we had for a long time and now our biased world view is threatened. Or else, more mature people who successfully worked on themselves, may respond with openness and delight at the opportunity to reduce their ignorance.

So, if we feel pain, stress and resistance, it probably means that we have identified with our bias to a point where we see any attempt to mess with it as a personal attack — we may contract and put up a shield. If on the other hand we are fortunate to experience a pleasant “aha” moment, it may lift us into a state of expansiveness and connectedness with our environment.

We are surely familiar with both situations, the painful and the delightful, and spend most our effort towards getting more “carrot” and less “stick.” That's fine, but it can keep us so busy that it overshadows the more subtle ways of acquiring wisdom as recommended by the sages of most religions.

Giving up some of our focus on the “stick and carrot” ride would free us up to approach life with a sense of equanimity where we are neither depressed nor exhilarated by what we learn—just understanding. Such a state of mind would require the ability to see life and the world as “just so,” understanding that, however crazy life gets, we don't have to identify with it. This brings to mind a story from Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*, where he reports that he once had a spiritual experience during World War I where he was suddenly transported into a fearful scene in the trenches. This both shocked and amazed him. But then a voice told him, “Look intently! You will see that these scenes now being enacted in France are nothing but a play of chiaroscuro [light and dark]. They are the cosmic motion picture, as real and as unreal as the theater newsreel you have just seen—a play within a play.”

So if the images projected aren't quite real, then what is? The screen itself—the consciousness upon which the images are projected. But it can be hard to distinguish the two. (*Maybe* we need Yogananda's experience for it to really sink in!) Even so, it's not easy to arrive at a place of truly “non judgmental” awareness (not to be confused with political correctness or mindless conformity)—the kind of state where we would be extremely sharp, aware of nuances and differences, yet able to hold an underlying awareness that allows us to distinguish the screen of our consciousness from the impressions—good, bad and indifferent—projected upon it. Not easy, but definitely desirable.

Some may think this would be like turning catatonic and becoming non-responsive to life. Quite the contrary, we would be more likely to be deeply understanding, appreciative and connected to what we do. Our actions now would be motivated by something different than the passing scene of projected images. Is it possible? I think so; to me, it's one of the benefits of working with the enneagram: the ability it gives us to see the same thing from nine different points of

From the Editor

view—which expands (or ought to expand) our vision to include the notion that while the screen remains unaffected and stable, there is no limit to the variety of images that can be projected on it.

In this issue:

I'm very pleased that we have several articles placing attention on the foundations supporting the enneagram theories. The nature of Self vs. self in a large context, expanding the enneagram structure to include broader influences, teasing fixation/pathology away from type and establishing it as separate and unrelated, revisiting fuzzy concepts of instincts and subtypes....

Alan Tower brings a broad and lofty perspective to exploring “who we really are” in “No Self, Universal Self.” It is less about the familiar and more specific descriptions of the nine types of personality and more about that which gives rise to the types. Staying in tune with the theme of our essential Self as the movie screen upon which all our impressions and experiences are projected: it's easy to lose track of whence all that stuff comes from. Alan paints a superb picture that captures the vastness of history, of infinite events and actions that preceded us, to make us what we are in this moment. He opens up to the wonder and complexity of creation and the loving benevolence that holds us tenderly in life and breathes conscious awareness into us, which manifests as innumerable involuntary, reflexive and voluntary actions, movements, pursuits, efforts and dreams. Stop and think for a moment what a miracle it is to be able to lift a finger by a simple act of volition: first, the intention has to arise out of the dynamic ground of being as a thought. The intention then triggers a command to physical neurons, which pass it on via cytoplasmic extensions. The nerve fibers or axons then trigger muscles and tendons to move into configuration which cause precise contractions in a synchronous way so as to move our finger exactly as we want. And all that happens in a fraction of a second without us even being aware of each step in the process.

The existence of such wondrous abilities ought to inspire gratitude, but we are so used to them that it's hard to appreciate them on a daily basis (which is why it's nice to be reminded from time to time). Life has bestowed oodles and oodles of abilities upon us, as well as a lot of redundant systems. That is a good thing, because we sometimes overtax ourselves in the process of wear and tear called “living,” and need to have alternative resources we can fall back on, should others get compromised. How else could a Helen Keller achieve what she did, given the hand she was dealt at birth?

Tom Condon delves into the “Dynamic Enneagram: Fives Stories” These are stories of individual issues he has encountered with his Type 5 clients. He shows us how knowing the enneagram type structure with its interrelations is an effective tool to cut

through many hours of trial and error. Imagine coming into life's situations that feel like you are lost in a strange forest. It's nice to have a good compass like the enneagram to keep us oriented in a steady direction.

In “Enneagram 2.0: *The Deep Structure of Personality — Part 2*,” **Jean Adeler** continues to elaborate on her model with its six perspectives based on three combinations that create the nine personality structures and eighteen type-wing structures. Although this scheme may sound complicated, it's really not, because the author presents it in a way that makes it accessible. What is interesting to me is the emphasis on the idea that we have access to the core characteristics of all types, not just our own. Although we may be most at home with our specific structure, Jean makes the case that our type structure actually covers more than just our type—that we operate within a range that encompasses several types. So our type is more like a constellation of types. From her point of view, this understanding provides us with a much more precise and rich picture of the dynamics that motivate us.

“The Retro-romantic Ideal and the Enneagram” is a substantive critique **Susan Rhodes** based upon the work of Ken Wilber regarding the relationship between ego and essence. She wrote the piece a few years ago and, in spite of my urging, preferred not to publish it because of the sensitive nature of the material. It was a piece ahead of its time and it was necessary to lay a foundation first. Well, over the past three years Susan laid a foundation in the *EM* with dozens of articles followed by two books.

Summing up her point in a thumbnail, it's that most of the original teachers of the enneagram accepted the original premise taught by Ichazo and Naranjo that type is essentially a blemish superimposed upon our essential selves, which thereby smothered it. So although we are born with essence largely intact, it is subsequently displaced (or at least made unavailable) as our type forms. When we believe this, our enneagram work tends to focus on trying to undo the negative effect of type, in order to once again connect with our “lost essence.” Wilber's point—echoed and applied to enneagram teachings by Susan—is that while we may be reveling as babies in some oceanic state of undifferentiated being, the subsequent development of the ego (rationality) represents a step towards super-consciousness, rather than away from it. By letting go of the idea that our type blocks our ability to experience essence, we free ourselves to appreciate our rational gifts and use them as the basis for continued growth and development.

Gloria Davenport has been working diligently and for a long time composing an epic of the history of the Enneagram Movement from it's earliest days to the present. Gloria is a perfectionist and she keeps going over her opus updating and adjusting. The *EM* has been a frequent beneficiary of this process and we had several articles over the years. The “Confusion Over Instincts and Subtypes” has irked Gloria as a psychologist and this article represents

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her latest word on the subject. It's interesting to see how certain misconceptions slither through history undetected or purposely avoided. The instincts and subtypes are much too important to be allowed to just sit there partially understood. Gloria is right to urge us to find a level of agreement on some of the basics; until and unless we do so, it will be hard to go deeper into this issue.

"Two New Ways of Holding the Enneagram" is a

review of the IEA Pre-Conference Day held by Don Riso and Russ Hudson in San Francisco on July 29. **Gayle Scott** was kind enough to put together a summary of that day which drew the largest attendance ever for an IEA pre-conference day of about 500. The subject was "The Nine Domains and the Nine Journeys."

"What's Positive about The Positive Enneagram? — A Reply to David Hall and Katy Taylor" is a very

brief reply to an extensive review of **Susan Rhodes'** first book, *The Positive Enneagram*, that appeared in the most recent edition of the *Enneagram Journal*. While it's not customary to reply to a review, Susan felt a need to set the record straight about a couple of points that did not accurately reflect her ideas. Since the *Journal* is published just once a year by the IEA, she published it in the *EM*. (If you do not currently receive the *Enneagram Journal*, you can order a copy from the IEA 513-232-5054.) •



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