

Arica Weeks 8-9.

234 East 23rd Street
New York City 10010
August 15, 1972

Richard H. Nolte
Institute of Current World Affairs
535 Fifth Avenue
New York City 10017

Dear Mr. Nolte:

The adage which warns against the danger of a little knowledge has occurred to me frequently while writing about certain features of the Arica Training. Gurdjieff maintains that understanding is the result of the simultaneous development of Knowledge and Being; that knowledge which is not in accordance with Being becomes theoretical and abstract, resulting in further complications or even calamities. The development of Knowledge without the simultaneous growth of Being creates a "weak yogi . . . a man who knows a great deal but can do nothing." Developing Being to the exclusion of Knowledge results in "a stupid saint, that is, a man who can do a great deal but who does not know what to do or with what object." ¹ Because Gurdjieff felt that knowledge in an attenuated or distorted form could be perilous, his students were sworn to secrecy until they had developed sufficiently to communicate his teachings objectively.

Arica imposes no vow of silence upon its students. This is, after all, the Age of No Secrets in which vast caches of previously esoteric or hidden knowledge have become the common property of an emerging class of American "seekers" and are an integral part of the New Consciousness initiated (at least in part) by psychoactive drugs. Moreover, many people are beginning to feel that the *raison d'etre* of psychedelics is to show them where they can go; to fortify them with the knowledge that the "higher" spaces really exist in the mind, and that they can and should be attained by means other than drugs.²

Arica employs various yogas to awaken us out of the sleep we know we are in. Psychoactive drugs serve merely to jossle you out of your slumber for a couple of hours. They cannot awaken you permanently.³ To become permanently

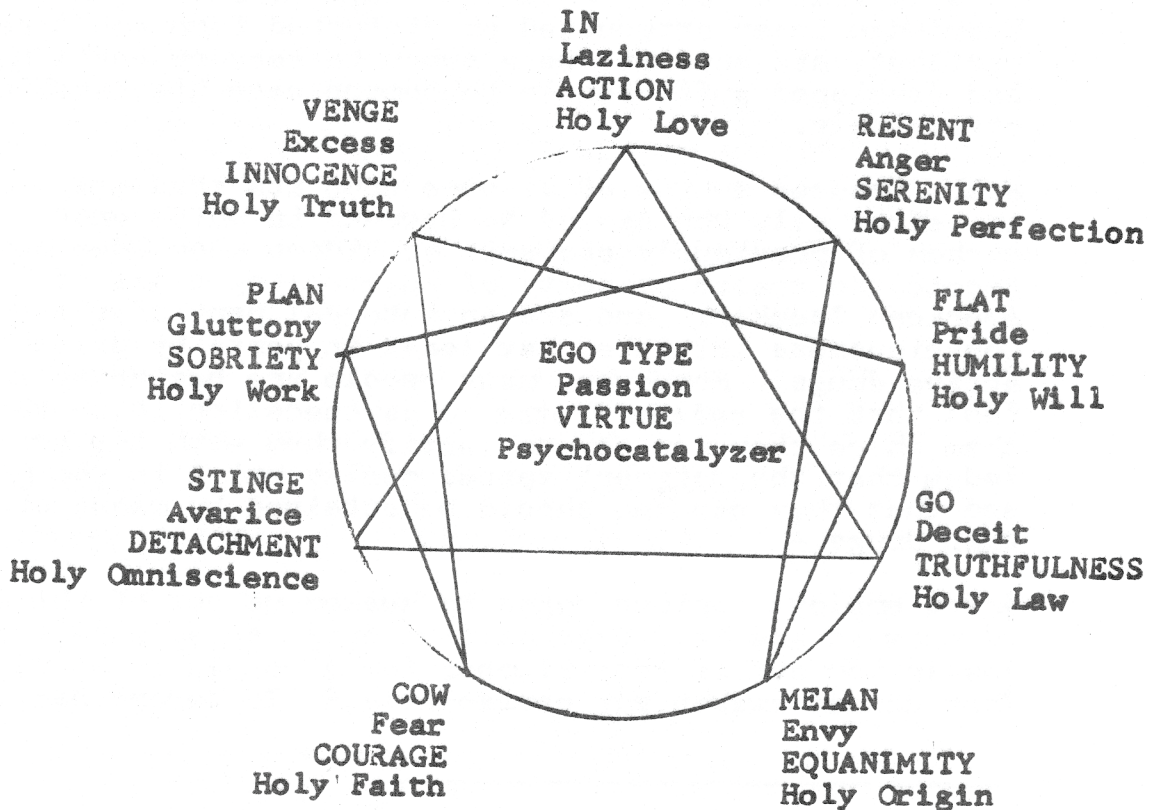
1. P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, N.Y. P. 67.

2. See particularly Andrew T. Weil's *The Natural Mind* (Houghton Mifflin) coming out in September.

3. Psychedelics, incidentally, are forbidden during the Training.

awake, to live in Satori, one must begin to detach oneself from the mechanical responses of his ego, to clear the mind of its subjective voices so that it can serve its proper function which is to witness objective reality.

Each of the nine Ego Fixations has a corresponding Virtue--a "real" or "essential" energy which one can learn to plug into. The ego's Passions are really the negative spaces created by the absence of the essential energies of the Virtues. Thus, EGO-IN's Virtue is Action, EGO-FLAT's Virtue is Humility, EGO-COW's is Courage, and so on. Because battling the ego head-on only serves to lend it energy with which to create defences, we focus instead on getting into the positive spaces by calling on each Virtue's specific "Psychocatalyzer"--or psychic element which, when used mantrically, can cause a transformation in other elements without being itself transformed. Psychocatalyzers are the means by which one can be brought closer to his essence, and it is the experience of essence which causes ego to wither away practically of its own accord.



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EGO-RESENT's main preoccupation is with Perfection, and its Anger is a result of its failure to achieve it. The Virtue which is lacking for the RESENT is Serenity, that is, the reverse of Anger, and the Psychocatalyzer for that Virtue is Holy Perfection; the realization that reality itself is a process of moving toward perfection; that each moment within the process is connected with that goal and is therefore perfect.

EGO-FLAT's Passion is Pride, the wish to impose its will on the universe. Humility can be gained through the realization of Holy Will, the awareness that reality flows in accordance with fixed, natural laws and that the easiest way to be in reality is to flow with it.

All the Psychocatalyzers are, once again, expressions or flavors of the Psychocatalyzer in the ninth point on the enneagram, Holy Love, or the sense of an all inclusive, universal spirit flowing through the cosmic order.

"Working" the Virtues and Psychocatalyzers is a form of prayer. Each Virtue has its specific mudra or physical position which calls upon that essential cosmic energy. When we were learning the mudras I was reminded of a section in The Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis. Screwtape, a senior tempter, is writing to his nephew, Wormwood, an apprentice devil, on the subject of prayer and the best way to neutralize the prayers of Wormwood's "patient." "At the very least," advises Screwtape, "they can be persuaded that the bodily position makes no difference to their prayers; for they constantly forget what you must always remember, that they are animals and whatever their bodies do affects their souls."



The Mudra of Action

Although the ego cannot be attacked conventionally, it can be "reduced." After a week of intensive work with the Virtues and Psychocatalyzers, we began a series of exercises known as "Ego Reductions" which lasted for about ten days.

Before beginning Reductions we were taught a complicated mantram consisting of two words, Shutati Shumawi, which are repeated in an intricate series of repetitions and alternations. Shutati Shumawi is supposed to work as a shield, protecting the mind from the intrusion of inessential thoughts or words. The inessential or subjective word patterns which go on in the head and form the substance of most verbal interchange, are known in Arica as "chich," a word derived from the Spanish Chicheraro meaning "the chirping of crickets."

The Reductions performed at this stage of the training are aimed at the ego's three primary Passions, Fear, Deceit and Laziness. The ego's greatest fear is of words. To reduce this fear, we read lists of some three hundred and fifty stinging insults to one another. The person receiving the Reduction, or hearing the list of insults, would have the Shutati Shumawi mantram going internally. Whenever an insult caused him pain or broke the rhythm of the mantram, he would signal to the attacker to repeat it until all vestiges of associated feeling had vanished.

Of all the Reductions performed in the Training, this was by far the mildest.

Ego Reductions are sacred ceremonies; rituals with clear objectives and strict formulas. The group first arranged itself into two concentric circles, the inner one facing the outer with a candle burning in the center. The ceremony began with an "Om" salutation. Objective, non-participating witnesses were present. All Reductions involved a one to one confrontation between two people whose only purpose was to do battle with their common enemy: the ego. To perform a Reduction is an act of love, and only as such can it be effective.

The Deceit Reduction was generally considered the most painful of all. After the salutation and some chanting, the person being reduced would begin chanting Shutati Shumawi internally. His partner would then commence an attack on six points. He would:

1. Attack the person's face.
2. Attack the person's body.
3. Attack the movements of the body.
4. Insult the person's relations with his family.
5. Insult his relations with his friends.
6. Attack his social level and background.

The attack lasted approximately twenty minutes. It was frequently ruthless, although its object was not to cause pain. Whenever the subject of the Reduction felt "hit" he was supposed to signal the attacker to stop, lie down with his hands over his Kath, take deep breaths and attempt to empty his mind. Initially, peoples' egos tended to dissemble, and it was only with repeated attacks and continual reminders from the observing trainers that we gradually understood how the deceit mechanism worked and why it was so necessary to react honestly. There were times when people would sit unflinching through a whole Reduction only to collapse, sobbing, a comment or two into the next round.

The purpose of this, and all Reductions, is to describe the mechanism which is keeping the person out of essence. It is an amazing process at the end of which one feels literally sickened by his ego. One does not really learn anything he didn't already know, but is horrified to discover that everything he has always secretly detested about himself is written boldly across his face, etched into the musculature of his body, embossed in neon over his behavior and social relationships. Having one's mechanism thus exposed allows one to see it as something apart from himself; as a collection of painfully obvious "numbers" he is compelled to repeat due to his subjective illusions about the nature of reality.

Reduction sessions usually served to create an intimate bond between the participants. The Truth, it seems, gets people high.

A third Reduction, practiced according to the same formula, but taking only ten minutes, was directed at the ego's Indolence towards the essential self. For the first six minutes the person speaking would attack how the person "was" in the past, how he "lived" in the past, and how he "did" things in the past. The recipient listened with his mantram shield up, protecting himself from inessential comments and from his own "chich." The attacker would then address himself to his partner's Path, repeating the question, "what are you now?" for an interval of two minutes. The person being reduced would stop the mantram at this point and attempt to witness the word patterns coming across his mind in response to the question. After two minutes there would be a brief silence during which the receiver took three

deep "misogi" breaths in order to get into his Kath. Then the attacker resumed his inquiry, now addressed to the person's essence.

For ten days we worked the Reduction exercises for about six hours a day. The three and a half hours of morning work we did at home; meditation, gym and two hours of Tantrayana, a yoga designed to awaken specific energy centers known as Chakras preparatory to raising the Kundalini--or "serpent power"--which resides at the base of the spine. Upon arriving at school we would spend perhaps half an hour doing "pneumorhythmic" breathing exercises; an hour or two of Reductions; some theatre; more Reductions; then chant some mantrams; eat a quick dinner; and return for more Reductions. By ten at night, our egos frazzled, eyes bleary and stomachs somewhat woosey, we would attempt to center ourselves by working the Virtues and Psychocatalyzers.

At the end of the ten days, we began a three day exercise known as "The Desert" which took place in an empty (preferably white) room from which all pictures, decorations and furnishings (except a bed) had been removed. The windows were draped or covered with sheets, and candles provided the only source of light. We entered our deserts with supplies of food (dried fruit and nuts for example) and were assigned eleven and a half hours of exercises to do each day.

At midnight on the third night, a trainer arrived to take me out of the desert. The room was dark and rather close. The candle, which smoked slightly, illuminated only a small circle in the center of the floor, leaving the corners in shadow. We sat opposite each other, the candle flickering between, and saluted God and our essences with an "Om," chanted three "Uh-Toh's" to get us into our Kathas, and commenced an exercise called "Tresspasso" wherein each person looks with both eyes into the left or receptive eye of the other. While the Tresspasso was going on, we both kept the mantram "Holy Love" going internally, while putting our attention in the Kath and emptying the Path so as to be clear channels for the reception and transmission of pure energy.

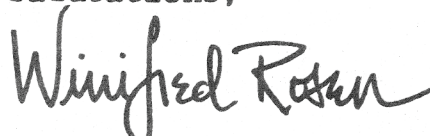
Perhaps I should note that the trainer, a rather tall, imposing man, came equipped with a black hood which fitted around his face, hung over his shoulders, and projected a weird shadow onto the wall behind. The purpose

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of the hood was to render the trainer anonymous. Its effect was to make me feel slightly giddy, embarrassed by the hocus-pocus, and a bit disconcerted by the ominousness of it all. I thought of Masonic rituals, the Ku Klux Klan, torchlit processions of monks, secret brotherhoods.

The trainer's eyes neither blinked nor teared. I succeeded in staring doggedly ahead without blinking, but after three or four minutes my eyes began to tear profusely. The Tresspasso lasted for about ten or twelve minutes whereupon I moved my hand slightly and he signaled for the exercise to end.

Salutations,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Winifred Rosen". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned between the typed salutation and the typed name.

Winifred Rosen

Received in New York on August 18, 1972