

# That Matchless Veil of Colour

Andrew Campbell



“the key to all of this is love,-”

<http://www.dialogonleadership.org/indexPaintings.html>

Joseph Jaworski suite, circa 2002

Unknown Artist

# Introduction: Sotto Voce

This essay replaces another that I created.

There is more than *a little sadness* at the events surrounding those “movements” -

They both are far too *complex* to now *lie* before you, the reader.

I quietly go about, re-binding what was broken.

[In a short series of exchanges with an editorial colleague Russ Volckmann, I closed a small collection of “pieces” I’d made for him out of fragments as one, with the following lines, “He asked me what I did, I told him, *I am in the resurrection business*. He blinked and turned away.” It is now open for anyone with inter-*est* to ask Russ how that document, that ended thus, affected him and the *strange reality* that came about shortly after the exchange, concerning the “resurrection” of a friend, Mnr. A.M. de Lange, very shortly after he had apparently “*died*” to a *community of minds*. Russ may send a “copy” of that document directly, having my *per-mission*, so that “you” can discover how it affects you, *in your turn*.]

What substantially follows begins with some “words” about a river and “Source.” They open Gunnlaugson’s article (in this issue).

Then there are included some ideas of that author’s colleague - set down in small part, so as to make the connections. Again - you will recognise them, from a distance.

*(Dear reader, literally as I type the sun rises in my eye - at 6.07 am --)*

I am found joining some abiding ideas about “source,” “art,” “leadership,” etc., and it really focuses on a private exchange between Joe Jaworski and I. For that reason alone I have “altered” the private notes a little bit, as we exchanged, because I am deliberately and self consciously assuming I have his *gracious permission* to *draw on his work* as he is mine without expressly asking him for it, rather relying (falling) into the *minor graces* of our shared experiences and expeditions into the sp(l)aces of source and Source, as he falls occasionally and gracefully into mine. So, please accept there are a few changes in our exchanges to the original, for reasons of respect and friendship.

Running alongside this essay’s “main line” is another “branch line” offering a *train of thoughts* which I would like to just mention. It’s an idea from John Seeley Brown at Xerox Parc, concerning “Documents,” which can be described in the same way as imagery, as they also are a powerful *resource* for constructing and negotiating any broadly “social space.”

The idea of a document as a carrier is a “conduit” metaphor. People talking of information as being “in” books, files, or databases as if it could just as easily be “out” of them and ideas are “down on paper,” to “send them along,” and so forth. While that captures some aspects it simultaneously hides others (Brown & Duguid, 1995).

The first “opening” image is one that an anonymous (artist) person made during a workshop I led on the topic *Synchronicity* in 2002. It was then incorporated into a suite for Jaworski’s

interview with Scharmer. When Joseph saw them in his office he was very happy - and we have been in contact at various times ever since. We share many common inter-ests. This “document” makes reference only to the letter of a few weeks ago which ties in with “local” events at both ends and also an ongoing discourse of light and trees. The work of Rosch is also there, as she has an intuitive feeling for the extremely subtle power of art in this realm.

**The ultimate source of the Susquehanna River was a kind of meadow in which nothing happened: no cattle, no mysteriously gushing water, merely the slow accumulation of moisture from many unseen sources, the gathering of dew, so to speak, the beginning, the unspectacular congregation of nothingness, the origin of purpose. And where the moisture stood, sharp rays of bright sunlight were reflected back until the whole area seemed golden, and hallowed, as if here Life itself were beginning (Michener, as quoted in Gunnlaugson, 2007).**

*Dear Andrew:*

*Thank you so much for your note of March 26 (2007). I am so distressed that the wood from the heart of the yew has never arrived here at my house. I'm asking 'P' to check in and work with you to determine what has happened. I feel badly that you have done so much to get this to me, and for some reason it's never arriving.*

*On the subject of Source -- this is still at the center of my attention. I'm doing a lot of work in large systems, including organizational systems. I'm looking for the best way to describe Source and the experience of connecting to Source.*

*Thank you so much for reminding me of Otto's interview with Eleanor Rosch. I have read a number of Rosch's essays, and I must tell you I agree one hundred percent with you: I have always felt very, very connected to what she is saying. The very first time Otto mentioned her to me, I went and read one of the essays he mentioned and felt it was awesome. I was completely struck by it. She really gets it, and knows how to describe it.*

*So I can't thank you enough for laying out Rosch's words in your email. I have reread them and will actually use them this week. If you know anything specifically she has written on this, let me know; otherwise, I will just go to the papers that I have and reread them.*

*Also, thank you so much for your mentioning Van Gogh's Chair. I was deeply touched by what you said there. I completely understand. I completely see.  
Thank you.*

*Love,  
Joseph*

## The Reply



Rain, Steam and Speed - the Great Western Railway, 1844 J.M.W. Turner

*Books are not absolutely dead things,  
but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active  
as that soul whose progeny they are*

John Milton, *Areopagitica*

[Dear Joseph]

This week I accompanied to Tate Britain a friend, he happens to have recently been elected a Professor in a Scandinavian university, teaching among other subjects 'leadership.' It was the first time he'd experienced historically significant international works of art in a capital City setting.

He/we found among many competent but dull impressions of life and landscape, two small and intense JMW Turner paintings, like the one above. [And from the same late 'period.']

As he stood among *all* the paintings he realised that the two Turner images contained the seeds of a deepening, even awakening appreciation, of what we might now describe as, 'how we find the grace to lead' - which, reflecting now, may be acts of both an 'opening' and a 'falling.' And he and I supposed that we do not 'find grace' we can only 'fall into it.' This is a very different path to the 'strivings' of up-hill and down again, characteristic of Sisyphus.

You wrote that you continue to search for "...the best way to describe Source and the experience of connecting to Source." So, I presuppose to make a connection in that general direction.

Amongst these (paintings) is a pair which he exhibited in 1826 and 1827. The subject or motif that appealed to Turner: the lawn of a house overlooking the Thames near his riverside home in Twickenham. The theme of the first to be exhibited was early morning, and the view is directed towards the sun which is throwing long shadows across the lawns, on which - the moisture is drying. But then when he came to paint the house in the glow of summer's evening for the next year's exhibition he did not, as a later generation of artists would have done, paint from the same angle. He turned his easel round, characteristically once again facing into the sun. (Reynolds, 1969). [Note: This pair is not the pair referred to as earlier viewed in the Tate Britain.]

It will be good, Joseph, if you can print this little image onto some white paper, and keep it with you for a while.

You will maybe see that the image contains effectively two main forces of travel for direction, one is nature's own and the other is mechanical. - Out from the *field of light* comes the train, the new 'messenger' - the [Black] Angel of the 19th century, and way below that hurtling and manifest 'dark object' is the river, and upon it a tiny boat. To your left, as you look at the image is 'upstream' and to your right is 'downstream.' The river is the Thames - a source of inspiration to both Turner and Will'm Blake, alike.

We might reflect how like the train we can become, when we 'manifest too much' our 'intent' to go upstream and/or even downstream in search of 'Source.'

Perhaps there is in this imagery, as in nature, an 'other' less 'manifest,' nearly 'invisible' means of 'carrying meaning'?

This painting fits the description of many others he made, '- of nothing and very like.'  
[Hazlitt 1816 in Graham Reynolds, Turner, Thames and Hudson, 1969]

I ruminate on the idea that source and its latent capacity is not anything more or less than what Turner 'placed' in *his* 'frames'...

He directed his interest toward the colour in the visible world, if needs be at the expense of its form. His always present fascination for the immaterial vehicles of colours, steam, smoke, mist helped him to make this choice. So, even in the later 'finished' pictures he composes in colour, dissolving, suggesting, and only half defining form... Graham Reynolds, Turner, Thames and Hudson, 1969.

In this way, it seems possible that ‘we’ the viewer and ‘now’ some hundreds of years later, may palpably discern that it is not the ‘elements’ of the picture surface as such that create the vision within us; it is rather that we are ‘opened’ by these creations, and this picture called ‘Rain, Steam and Speed’ there is this - a *case in point*.

It affords us just enough ‘information’ to enter into a new space within it and (our)self, *with-in-held* but undisguised *set- all- about* in its ‘bright shells’ of sfumato<sup>1</sup> and *apparently-lighted-chaos ...*

So by degrees it offers the opportunity to become a creator cum artist too - we may continually ‘co-create’ the object anew, as Milton saw of the written object, at every viewing, and that *secures* the subject, which is the point at which we might see how we are ‘like’ the stone bridge, standing in the river in the sky within the air supporting the train both being and not being, thus.

Finally, with Presencing, my experience is consistent with Wilber’s speculation that “presencing” evokes the “causal state” in as much as Presencing calls upon the spacious and vast causal Bodymind. Here participants begin to experientially make contact with the threshold of emergence, which gives rise to manifest thoughts, ideas, and intuitions that begin to crystallize in our awareness (Scharmer, Dialogonleadership.org, 2004).

This is perhaps an aspect about this particular painting, I mean its way of conveying ‘information’ and potential for ‘meaning’ and scope too for increasing our ‘capacity’?

Turner affords us just enough ‘spaciousness’ for a slip(ping glimpse) or a fall into a *aesthetic kind of grace*, a new understanding of how we manifest ‘awareness,’ bringing, as Senge says it somewhere, *the background for a moment into the foreground* or perhaps as Michelangelo wrote it, “How else am I to ascend to heaven except through the contemplation of beautiful things.”

This then becomes spoken and written as, *awareness-manifesting-us*. In a very literal way, the image has a ‘ground’ and in that ‘ground’ we may project an element of a deeper intent.

We have the opportunity (there is an affordance) to become alive, to live in(to), the image, so increasing our real participation in its own ‘wholeness.’ This is a ‘whole bridge’ between past, present and future - being and becoming, liveness.

In the context of your questions I will quote below from an upcoming paper written with the afore mentioned academic colleague, which is in a large part about ‘wholeness.’

...In the context of the impressions, images, concepts, feelings and memories that the first iteration has evoked. Simply note what arises, as it is all aspects of ever-present-wholeness. Allow all that arises to flow effortlessly through the stream of awareness, as they require no work on your part. There is no need, indeed no possibility to “figure it out,” or have it all fall into place within some epistemological order” (Reams & Roy, 2007).

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<sup>1</sup> Sfumato is the Italian term for a painting technique which overlays translucent layers of colour to create perceptions of depth, volume and form. [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sfumato](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sfumato)

Which passage I think fits and evokes this painting's largest inner purpose. As does this, some time later in the same paper,

“Who I am” reflects an ever-present-wholeness in that it is not about “realms beyond” or “something new,” but rather about a transformation of view. There is no way to point to a casual explanation for the occurrence of these views in any traditional sense. For both Starratt and Saunders, the events leading to these extraordinary states of grace, and the very “things” that played their parts, were themselves quite ordinary – a boy, a barn, a fence and its posts; a carnation, sky and ice, a scarf and a pony. For both Starratt and Saunders, the ordinary became extraordinary, because their way of seeing was transformed. Their way of seeing had to become whole for the wholeness that is ever-present to reveal itself in the normal and natural; for the place of grace, that “secret place,” is “where we have always been,” in the normal and the natural. We just need a new way of peering into the normal and the natural. We need a new kind of view (Reams & Roy, 2007).

This sense of a surrendering to involvement of an aesthetic experience of wholeness is echoed in a passage from Turner's life, in an epic painting with an equally epic title: *Snowstorm - steam-boat off a harbour's mouth making signals on shallow water, and going by the lead* has the impact of total immediacy about it. The title continues: *the author was in this storm on the night the Ariel left Harwich* and he was mightily indignant that someone told him that his mother had been through a similar experience and understood what he was getting at. He said,

I did not paint it to be *understood*, but I wished to show what a scene was like: I got the sailors to lash me to the mast to observe it; I was lashed for four hours, and I did not expect to escape, but felt bound to record it, if I did. But no one had any right to *like* the picture (Reynolds, 1969).

What I read and understand here, now, is that the image *Rain, Steam and Speed* reproduced above is a special “space,” a space of both doing and knowing in some important relational measure, some “Golden proportion” that requires some (in)action of the spectator—that both may bring each other forth, as the one reveals itself to the other, and that other to another is a potentially endless series of recursions, so that we no longer know if the source that is secured in and of this vision is in the viewer or in the object of his or her view or both.

There is a thought or saying; that the thoughts of a genuine mystic can become so intense that they may become actual physical form. Whether they become living form is another thing.

Seeley Brown's (1995) thinking is re-inserted here to the original document for Joseph, now partially surrounding us,

New technologies take us through major transformations in the way we use ‘documents.’ We need to see the way ‘documents’ have served not simply to write, but also to *underwrite* social interactions; not simply to communicate, but also to coordinate social practices. In particular, new media like the Internet has allowed small or emerging communities to form, though their members were often few, and those few spread over large distances. Consequently, as never before, scattered groups of people unknown to one another, rarely living in contiguous areas, and sometimes never seeing another member, have nonetheless been able to form robust social worlds, some disintegrate; some of those

might all along have been more imaginary than either real or virtual. Anderson calls the resulting community an "imagined" one. This is no slight. An imagined community is quite distinct from an imaginary community. It is one whose members "will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each exists *the image of their communion* (Brown & Duguid, 1995).

My "thought" is that should a Source become such a form, a living thing, it would manifest itself as eternally recurrent cycling, like a field of grass in the morning, bending and swaying in a breeze - wherein light and water may rise and fall, rise and fall, rise and fall.

A vision: of the single raindrop standing still in the tumult of the storm that we are and at the center of all attention.

"We just need a new way of peering into the normal and the natural. We need a new kind of view."

*The ultimate source of the Susquehanna River was a kind of meadow in which nothing happened: no cattle, no mysteriously gushing water, merely the slow accumulation of moisture from many unseen sources, the gathering of dew, so to speak, the beginning, the unspectacular congregation of nothingness, the origin of purpose. And where the moisture stood, sharp rays of bright sunlight were reflected back until the whole area seemed golden, and hallowed, as if here Life itself were beginning. -- Michener*

For Joseph,  
Love,

Andrew Campbell: May 2007

## Endnotes --

London can be a cold and grey City and the Thames itself can be, at one end, like the Susquehanna River and at the other a sewer - and such a grey muddy creature was the *old father* when we saw those Turners.

My corporeal companion on that cold and wet day a few weeks ago was in the *company* of many more than he knew - or may ever now know.

A friend of Turner's near the end of his life asked him where he was spending most of his time and Turner replied, "You must not ask me."

In Cheyne Walk, not far from us as we walked down to Millbank, there lay, quite still now, a small, fragile and yet ferocious (Spirit)(man) -- who carried within himself the endlessly rolling tear in the endlessly rolling storm of Nature's Creationing -- Which man would wrest from God by twisting his arm? (Self and Mnr. AM de Lange, Private conversation, late May - Post Resurrection ;-)

The doctor who was present at his death, on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1852 wrote, “Just before 9.00 am the sun burst forth and shone directly on him with a brilliancy which he loved to gaze on. He died without a groan.... (Reynolds, 1969).

(Dear reader, the sun has just retreated, it is 07.20 am)

## All of you

Older than you know:

I once made a copy of a Michelangelo ink drawing of his great female 'love' Vitoria Colonna in 1976 at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. I made it on a green handmade paper and underneath I set by my hand in red ink, by a typographic method what he had exclaimed in writing a *document*,

"Vorrei voler, Signor, quel chio no voglio,  
Tra 'l foco e 'l cor ghiaccio un vel asconde,  
Che 'l foco ammerza ; onde non corrisponde  
La penna all'opra, e fa burgiardo 'l foglio..."

I would will, My Lord, what I do not will.  
Between the fire and the ice cold heart a veil is interposed,  
which the fire absorbs; meanwhile what I write  
does not correspond to what I do, and makes a lie of this page...

It is for you all now to find *the source* of that.

Dear reader, **I am finished**, it is 08.26 am.

...An Angel once imparted to me that “art” is to know the right part and measure of any disclosure of what is otherwise hidden, and when to disclose it. So, it is both about time and space. Turner’s titles were “epic.” and were essays or disclosure in themselves; he will teach you much—even in this tiny reproduction. When you see-saw ;- ) this Turner, in all its yellow, and the yellowness of the Jaworski image you will be moved and surprised. Why? Because these are the signs of true and deep emergences at the edges of what At calls “the ragged rising vortex.”

I dedicate this to all small children

## References

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*Andrew Campbell* is Integral Review's Arts & Creativity Editor. He trained under the visionary artist Leonard McComb, D.Phil., R.A. (Keeper of Pictures) at Oxford and London and studied as a pupil of Mnr. A.M. de Lange, M.Sc., Goldfields, Pretoria, RSA - the discoverer of the Seven Essentialities of Creativity. His artwork is an integral part of the project known as Presence and Presencing, viewable at the [www.dialogonleadership.org](http://www.dialogonleadership.org) web site. [ACampona@aol.com](mailto:ACampona@aol.com)