

Towards Integral Man: Key Indices and Processes of Development in Gurdjieff's “Man Number Five”

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Introduction

This paper has two contributions. The first contribution is to elaborate upon key indices, that Gurdjieff describes, that may be used to identify “man number five” as a distinct conception. Much has been written about work related to “man number four” in Gurdjieffian secondary literature, but far less about man number five. The second contribution is to elaborate upon the process of development that realises a transition to man number five. These descriptions may serve to help elucidate ambiguous or confusing notions pertaining to spiritual development described in Gurdjieffian literature. A number of the descriptions are based upon personal experiences of the author. These descriptions are contextualised within the theoretical framework of Gurdjieff, as presented by Ouspensky (1949). Hence it is necessary to be familiar with Ouspensky's text in order to fully benefit from this paper.

Although I present this account in a systemic form, I do not expect to convince anyone outright of the strange-sounding phenomena that I describe. This is despite the large and growing body of publications supporting these accounts. I attribute this outcome principally to the variety of construed worlds we inhabit. How we perceive and cognise our reality is contingent upon our epistemic appreciations, which, under favourable circumstances, may undergo revolutionary change. The conceptions and world view that Gurdjieff presents exemplify a high order logic and cosmology that has yet to be formally accounted for. And although much has been written about Gurdjieff's metaphysical and systemic unit of analysis depicted in the form of the enneagram, this literature is, in my view, typically presented at several logical tiers below its appropriate epistemic level. This reflects an “epistemic law” of involution that Gurdjieff recognised (Ouspensky, 1949, pp. 72-73).

Background

Pyotr Ouspensky's “In Search of the Miraculous” (1949) is, arguably, the most coherent and direct formulation of the communications of the 20th century mystic, George Gurdjieff. Ouspensky's account is also more direct than the writings of Gurdjieff himself, making it the most accessible document for apprehending at least part of Gurdjieff's formulations.

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A unique quality of the communications presented by Gurdjieff, in Ouspensky's narration, is their systemic coherence and compatibility with western philosophical, psychological, and technological perspectives and ideas. These include: a framework for understanding processes; the use of functional descriptions; reference to ideas similar to those of morphogenesis and mediation, particularly in their application towards psychological development and epistemic issues; and detailed methods for personal development that include, but are not limited to, reflexivity, physical coordination, and emotional regulation.

To a large extent, the methodological detail presented by Ouspensky (1949) pertains to transitioning towards what Gurdjieff describes as “man number four”, which represents a person who has attained a degree of harmony and the ability to consciously coordinate their various faculties to a higher order than man numbers one, two, or three.

In the system presented by Ouspensky, Gurdjieff describes how conventional man, which he calls man numbers one, two, and three, can develop through personal efforts into higher orders of man, up to man number 7. Man numbers one, two, and three refer to a compulsion to abide consciously in, respectively, movement and the sensual, physical body; feelings; and thought. Gurdjieff's fourth man refers to a person who has undertaken protracted work to achieve a harmonious equilibrium between these three “centres of attraction” for consciousness or awareness, whereby a balance and congruence between inner and outer experience may be achieved. According to Gurdjieff, the higher orders, man numbers five, six, and seven, have available to them higher energies, which are the basis for spiritual (or mystical) experience and, indeed, the growth of a higher body that may be used to serve God (the absolute).

In this formulation, it is described how man number five represents a significant departure from the world of conventional man. These developments entail changes in man's emotional, energetic, and intellectual faculties; changes in his relations to his environment; and changes in his relationship to 'higher' spiritual agencies including that of 'God'.

To appreciate this framework of Gurdjieff's, it is necessary to take into consideration his portrayal of a spectrum of energies (or vibrations) which are not merely coexistent, in the same manner as we conceive waves in the electromagnetic spectrum to be, but that these manifest energies are continually ascending or descending within this 'spectrum' through evolution (ascending) and involution (descending, regression or unfolding). In this framework, a higher and practically invisible energy can go through a process of involution such that it may manifest among lower energies. According to Gurdjieff (and other spiritual traditions), these energetic movements are realised through a three-fold interaction. In conventional terms, these interactions of three levels of energy can be studied in terms of mediation, such as in the domain of technology. Gurdjieff's units are therefore functional. He also posits a fragmentary schema for describing a metaphysical unit of analysis of how all forms within the whole cosmos come into being and are structured and coordinated.

We should note that this framework does not refute contemporary scientific knowledge. Rather, it posits contemporary accounts as narrow and limited. This, of course, is precisely what science itself posits about its knowledge base. The contention is that Gurdjieff's framework is more objective in its detail, more objective in its scope, and more encompassing cosmologically.

Gurdjieff effectively takes all of man's actual and possible knowledge and provides one condensed (and fragmentary) exposition for its entirety.

Although this cosmological framework may seem abstruse, it represents a significant improvement upon the often asserted conviction that spiritual matters are beyond the ability of rational thought to apprehend them (Hawkins, 2006). Gurdjieff turns the tables on this matter. The limitations are no longer upon what is thinkable, but rather how much effort we personally are able to muster to apprehend both spirit and cosmos. And such an apprehension will, naturally enough, entail a rather demanding trajectory of personal development that may lead one eventually to experience realisation.

Gurdjieff's framework offers a way to conceive of the energetic processes he refers to, which may be viewed as a considerably higher order systemic abstraction of contemporary appreciations for developmental processes, dialectics, and mediation. This schema posits, then, that the processes that we may conventionally consider to be developmental in the sense of reorganisation, actually may entail an evolutionary ascent of energy.

Although this is a cosmological framework that one can appreciate hypothetically, and perhaps also relate to theoretically via dense astrophysical or mathematical models of n-dimensional time-spaces, such theoretical work is not a sufficient basis for knowledge, experience, and understanding. To transition from conjecture to knowledge and understanding of these processes it is necessary to experience these higher order energies. In Gurdjieff's schema, such experiences begin to manifest with the transition to "man number five".

One cannot fully apprehend an understanding of man number five without minimally being man number five. Amongst other things, one has to evolve one's epistemic basis for apprehension. This is not achieved merely by learning. Rather it is necessary to transform one's ways of thinking, doing, and relating. Inevitably, therefore, there is always a process of reduction or regression taking place in the communication of high order ideas, which is the underlying reason for the existence of esoteric domains. This means that one can neither apprehend nor attain to man number five (or similarly framed mystical conceptions) simply on the basis of theory. Rather it is necessary to transform oneself.

When I became exposed to the unusual phenomena related to transitions towards man number five, I was in possession of fairly high order logic and rigorous appreciation for the logical relations between events, objects and their development, both in practical and theoretical contexts. What I found most shocking about the unusual events pertaining to the transition towards man number five, however, was not the dramatic fireworks of ascending subtle energies, nor the peculiar synchronicities realising communion between my inner and outer worlds, but rather the implications for how I understood the world to be. This wasn't a revelation concerning erroneous understandings, but rather the realisation of the partial truths that I had taken for a larger whole and the stunning implications for the more real complexity of the world that I now sought to grasp. This wider context also provided licence for events I would have previously consigned to categories of fantasy or the substance of fairy stories. Conversely, not long after this new world began to open up I was soon to recognise some essential truths present in many children's stories.

One of the early synchronicities for me, both leading up to and following on from my experiences of events pertaining to transitioning towards man number five, was the provision of some guidance and explanation for what I was experiencing. This happenstance included the very day and occasion in which this process dramatically began, which coincided with my first reading of the first chapter of Ouspensky's (1949) "In Search of the Miraculous." I had been putting off reading this text as, without careful study, I had considered it to probably be fanciful nonsense. On the fateful day, I had received a sufficient number of prompts to desist from procrastination. And within an hour of reading the text I had begun my initiation into a strange new world equipped with a basic manual to help me try and make sense of what was happening. I was later to learn that this kind of guidance was recognised as a particular manifestation of higher processes, that Almaas (2021) calls "diamond guidance", which can be related to Gurdjieff's higher thinking centre (Ouspensky, 1949).

Conceptually, one could conceive of this relation between a higher form of guidance and one's conventional conscious self as analogous to the relations between a young child and parent. The parent's guidance is limited to what the child can understand or apprehend and, despite the power of the adult, the child must perform its own part in order to benefit from the guidance. In Gurdjieff's terms, one is not born into, or one does not become aware of, such guidance until one transitions towards man number five.

Regardless of the means by which they have done so, it seems there has always been only a small number of people that have made the transition that I describe. This, of course, only furthers the esoteric nature of the subject. Furthermore, not only has this topic been considered esoteric, it has also been treated as secret knowledge. Hence anyone indoctrinated into such a secret knowledge might normally be bound to rules of secrecy. The experiences and understandings which I present in this text do not stem from any active participation in an esoteric school. Rather, everything that I present has been personally gleaned – collectively from experience, rumination, and careful reading. Furthermore I have neither had, nor sought, a living mentor to guide these discoveries. My entry into mysticism began fairly high up in Gurdjieff's schema and I have been too conservative and methodical in my discovery of it to trust to anything other than logic and experience.

Nevertheless, my own personal journey has followed much of what Gurdjieff reported with accuracy and agrees with the significant milestones that he identified. I therefore consider myself to be in a position where I can offer some elaboration upon Gurdjieff's accounts and perhaps also provide some encouragement to those who, intentionally or inadvertently, pursue a mystic path in this fashion. The following sections provide some clarifications and also elaborations upon key indicators of attributes and events pertaining to what Gurdjieff calls man number five.

About Gurdjieff's "Man Number Five"

In Gurdjieff's scheme, man number five represents a departure from the conventional experiences of man (i.e., man numbers one to four). Man number five pertains to the growth of the 'kesdjan body' through the use of higher energies, or substances, that have become available. Various paranormal experiences can be attributed to this process, which, as Gurdjieff says, consists

of "new emotions, new impressions hitherto entirely unknown to him, for the description of which he has neither words nor expressions" (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 195).

In conventional terms, the subtle energies can be considered as an extension to various phenomena such as: inexplicable shivers (colloquially, "a goose walked over my grave"); non-sensational tingling in the palms, soles of feet and head; and sensations of a kind of brightness and energy in the head, perhaps in conjunction with insights.

It seems that the substance of kesdjan body can be attributed to what Gurdjieff calls 'essence'. Such that, in agreement with Weor (Causal body, 2021), everyone has incarnated some fragment of this body. Yet in Gurdjieff's fourth way, it is only after great efforts that one might hope to realise the growth and completion of this body.

The kesdjan body effectively represents, or facilitates mediation with, what Gurdjieff calls "the master". It entails access to a higher form of intelligence and actualising power, that can communicate both through internal and external events. The master can know of things, and apparently arrange for things, that would appear incredible to our conventional thinking. These are circumstances which we would impute years of careful shepherding of events to, so that a particular object or event might incidentally cross our path at a certain place and at a certain time.

Once, when walking through some woods, I came upon a little shrew that, save for shivering, remained unmoving as I approached it. As I gently stroked the tiny creature's back with a little finger, I considered how I was too large for the shrew to apprehend and simultaneously considered how this encounter seemed to exemplify the master's relationship to me. Much later I sought to divine the identity of this master, which I assumed was "Atman", my "true self". The divinations were consistent and persistent: apparently this master was not "Atman" but rather "Paramatman" (essentially, God). Despite the surprise, this outcome is strangely neutralising, for there is not much one can do when faced with such bald circumstances, except be.

Distinctions Pertaining to Man Number Five

In Ouspensky's account, Gurdjieff identifies several key indicators for the transition to man number five. I identify seven of these and offer some elaboration on each. In addition to these seven factors, other phenomena may be related to this transition. I have written about some of these in a short paper comparing cognitive development to yogic practice (Lloyd, 2021).

A Second Volitional Shock

Gurdjieff indicates that a second volitional shock should be worked upon following mastery of the first: "Right development on the fourth way must begin with the first volitional 'shock' and then pass on to the second 'shock' at mi 12" (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 193). Gurdjieff indicates that the nature of the second conscious shock is one of emotional transformation:

The effort which creates this [second] 'shock' must consist in work on the emotions, in the transformation and transmutation of the emotions. This transmutation of the emotions will then help the transmutation of si 12 in the human organism. No serious growth, that is, no

growth of higher bodies within the organism, is possible without this transmutation. (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 192)

This second conscious shock is the basis for developments that Gurdjieff attributes to man number five:

The third stage in the work of the human organism begins when man creates in himself a conscious second volitional 'shock' at the point mi 12, when the transformation or transmutation of these 'hydrogens' into higher 'hydrogens' begins in him. The second stage and the beginning of the third stage refer to the life and functions of man number four. A fairly considerable period of transmutation and crystallization is needed for the transition of man number four to the level of man number five. (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 193)

In my personal case, I attribute the second volitional shock to a period immediately preceding an episode of dramatic internal energetic experiences that was the culmination of many years of work. This episode lasted for perhaps a month. It entailed regular transmutation of energy (emotional anxiety) into creative insightful energy directed by a will committed to undertaking an established project. Each morning for a period of about a month I would awake in a state of heightened anxiety with respect to social obligations. Instead of attending to these, however, I would devote myself to the project I had committed myself to. Each morning, after settling down to this work, I would subsequently discover joyful energies of insight into this work.

This transition, like many other personal transitions, such as conceptual reorganisation, is achieved through conscious work. It is somewhat like the effort one may need to make to engage with a new activity, except on a far greater scale. The friction lies between what one may know is the correct route, or path of truth, and that of the route that is socially expected. The social expectancy is internalised. The conflict is a contest to determine which agency will direct one's life – one's socialised training (conventionally referred to as one's superego) or one's dedication to higher ideals. To win this battle it seems that one must be willing to sacrifice one's own interests. It is a battle about what one is living for – to be forever at the whim of society and one's ego² and never actually accomplish anything of any true significance, or to make one's stand and endeavour to try to improve the situation by adhering to some high ideal regardless of personal consequence.

A Transformation in Managing Emotion

It may be noted that in addition to the exercise of will, effort, and sacrifice, this process also entails further work upon harmonisation that was initiated in transitions towards man number four. This is a harmonisation of one's intentionality (or will) and one's superego, which becomes more consciously available with the transition to man number four. Following this transformation to man number four, there is a greater internal alignment, enabling more energies to be mobilised according to one's efforts. In addition to the energies made available to man number four that were otherwise manifest as friction, a rubicon is passed with respect to one's responsibilities for man

² Language works against us when referring to the ego, for in reality the ego is a multitude; it is a menagerie of desires, wants, fears, and compulsions all dedicated to diverting consciousness away from itself, from becoming self-conscious. The ego is a multitude masquerading as an individual.

number five. By transitioning beyond the custodial agency of the superego (Almaas, 2012), one is becoming a true adult and energies otherwise completely inaccessible begin to emerge.

In addition to the transmutation of emotional energies described above, I found I had additional resources for managing emotional energies. The first of these was an internal sensory experience of energies that provided additional warnings about the appropriate use of the energies. In approaching emotional states, energies could be felt to 'fizz', which I took to mean that these energies could be consumed in emotional expression. Subsequently, I discovered that in addition to the familiar methods of maintaining emotionally quiescent states, I also had a means of directing energies within the body for maintaining certain dispositions. This manifestation was similar to the sensory experience one has through touch except it could be attributed internally. Experientially, the energetic awareness overlays the sensory awareness and discernment may be required to discriminate between them.

A second important factor in managing emotions was a cognitive sense of no longer needing to harbour any residue anxiety over situations. Effectively, it seemed I had transcended the normal social bases for responding to uncertainties, and attended, rather, to a different patterning of unfolding events, which could be calmly observed. To all intents and purposes, it seemed as if a part of me that had previously been commissioned with the responsibility for raising alarms was now wholly under the jurisdiction of my intentions, such that I was no longer necessarily bothered by what might be considered social obligations that were not congruent with my intentions, and could look upon these circumstances with equanimity, whilst at the same time being curious as to awareness of new events and perspectives that presented themselves. This is not to say that I no longer experienced disruption in my activities, which was commonplace. Rather, I was less bothered by emotive issues arising from a conceptual basis.

Indeed it may be said that emotion, as it is conventionally known, plays a weaker role in my lived experience. Additionally, there are more refined experiences that sporadically substitute for emotions. At other times one may have the "tunefulness" of emotions but without carrying any noticeable chemical catalyst in the blood. This concurs with Almaas' (2012) observation that emotions are a function of the personality.

The Production of a Certain Substance that Resides in the Lower Body and Passes up to the Head

The primary reference here is to substances and energies produced by, or in conjunction with, the sexual glands, which Gurdjieff labels si 12. Note that it is not only sexual energy that may be transmuted into higher energies. However, this circumstance is quite dramatic given our conventional perspective on the role of sexual substances in the life of man.

Starting intermittently and sparingly, yet proceeding over time with more regularity, energies available in the region of the perineum or scrotum (for males) may be catalysed realising a movement of this energy up to areas of the head, sometimes referred to as the higher dantian (Chao & Yü, 1970). The presence of this energy may be sensed. Hawkins (2006) refers to this as an exquisite energy.

Needless to say, this energy is considered precious. Hence, conventional western 21st century recreational sexual habits may be considered wasteful practices for people who have reached this stage. Gurdjieff's remarks upon the question of abstinence from recreational sex for people who had not transcended to this stage were that it depends upon the makeup of the individual. Clearly, religious doctrine may be related to this circumstance.

Gurdjieff says: "'Hydrogen' si 12 is the 'hydrogen' which represents the final product of the transformation of food in the human organism. This is the matter with which sex works and which sex manufactures. It is 'seed' or 'fruit.'" (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 255)

The use of si 12 in supplying a resource for the completion of the kesdjan body can be undertaken subsequent to the second conscious shock. We again have this critical quote from Gurdjieff:

The effort which creates this 'shock' must consist in work on the emotions, in the transformation and transmutation of the emotions. This transmutation of the emotions will then help the transmutation of si 12 in the human organism. No serious growth, that is, no growth of higher bodies within the organism, is possible without this transmutation. (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 192)

This second conscious shock, which according to the enneagram also entails the transmutation of mi 12, is a major goal in the development of a human being:

[...] In reality, however, they [the alchemists] meant the transformation of coarse 'hydrogens' into finer ones in the human organism, chiefly of the transformation of mi 12. If this transformation is attained, a man can be said to have achieved what he was striving for, and it can also be said that, until this transformation is attained, all results attained by man can be lost because they are not fixed in him in any way; moreover, they are attained only in the spheres of thought and emotion. Real, objective results can be obtained only after the transformation of mi 12 has begun. (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 193)

Of all the factors listed in this section, this indicator might be considered the most fundamental or essential in relation to man number five.

The Production of this Substance such that, Over Time, its Manner of Production and Circulation Becomes Transformed

Over time this process of energetic transformation proceeds on its own. Yet, to some degree, the catalysation of this energy may be instigated intentionally.

The Possession of an Indivisible 'I' to Whom all His or Her Knowledge Belongs and a Permanent Self-awareness

I relate self-awareness to awareness of my orientation (see some of my writings on active orientation: Lloyd, 2016, 2020). This seems to be readily available to me at any juncture.

Furthermore, given my new perspectives and experiences in relation to 'the master', self-remembering is usually not far away from mental consideration.

Gurdjieff (Ouspensky, 1949) has the following to say about an indivisible 'I' in relation to man number five:

The knowledge of man number five is whole, indivisible knowledge. He has now one indivisible I and all his knowledge belongs to this I. He cannot have one I that knows something which another I does not know. What he knows, the whole of him knows. His knowledge is nearer to objective knowledge than the knowledge of man number four. (p. 73)

The implication of this indicator is that I do not have parts that have their own unauthorised autonomy.

The Possibility of Being a True Christian

I have not dwelled upon what it means to be a 'true Christian'. A perspective that I commonly take is that individuals are only readily responsive to events that are proximate to their own development or are typically limited in their readiness to appreciate wider contexts of meaning that extend beyond their personal values. I take the reference to the possibility of being a true Christian to mean that man number five is not prone to double standards; that he is sufficiently integrated such that he can live up to what a true Christian is supposed to be.

The Possession of More Objective Knowledge than that of Man Number Four

For some time, Gurdjieff's objective knowledge and objective reasoning seemed somewhat puzzling. Yet it can be seen to be fairly obvious that the imputed increased objectivity of Gurdjieff's standpoint, relative to conventional science, entails the recognition of both the evolution and involution of energies within our greater cosmos and all that this implies holistically. The implication is that, relative to his perspective, science at that time of writing was both skewed (with a myopic focus upon empirical methods) and limited in fidelity or scope of conception. Although there has been some shift in scientific paradigms that now include, for example, the role of the observer in procuring results, there still remains a gulf between the cosmology of Gurdjieff's account and the relatively narrow spectrum of phenomena deemed to be an acceptable target for study by rigorous means.

The facets of skew and fidelity can be ascribed to what Gurdjieff respectively calls objective reasoning and objective knowledge. It seems that when Gurdjieff is referring to objective reasoning, or simply objectivity, he is typically referring to the relative degrees of bias or skew in personal perspectives. For Gurdjieff, man numbers 1 to 3 find it very difficult to extract themselves from their personal perspectives which are skewed to serve their psychological interests or needs. See, for instance Almaas (2002) and Rohr & Ebert (2001) for elaborations upon personality constraints with respect to spiritual development.

The fidelity or scope of the objectivity (objective knowledge) is contingent upon the manner of mental organisation, which itself is a distillation of conscious experience and will (or

intentionality). Gurdjieff's portrayal of knowledge expressed in terms of the law of three and law of seven represent one end of a spectrum of knowledge structures that begins with the pseudo-concepts acquired in early childhood (see Lloyd, 2020, for an elaboration of the development of this organic structure). Interestingly there are parallel conceptions in both regular psychological accounts and esoteric literature that pertain to the self-same transformations in man. For instance, discounting the references to higher bodies, de Boer's (2014) esoteric description of the development of self-awareness and understanding aligns well with my study of cognitive reorganisation (Lloyd, 2020).

For Gurdjieff, objective knowledge means that there may be apprehended seed conditions at a causal level that genetically precede anything experienced as manifest phenomena. Experientially, I can relate to this circumstance in terms of experience of synchronicities, cognitive appreciations, and relations of energetic experiences that allow for agreement with Daoist ideas related to wu wei – a term standing for "doing without doing" that has several interpretations.

I do not relate objective knowledge directly, as some do, to cosmic consciousness. For me, knowledge and reasoning entail a mediated process that is distinct from the immediacy that is portrayed in such accounts. Objectivity entails not only seeing things as they are, but also implicates a structure that delineates what is seen as objectifiable. This is the metaphysical structure that Gurdjieff relays in his cosmology, a structure of relations that permeate all things.

On this matter, of Gurdjieff's metaphysics, I have reviewed and considered quite broadly literature pertaining to Gurdjieff's enneagram, and can relate much of this to my appreciation for systems and psychology more generally. The enneagram expresses a way of knowing and relating to the world that can be considered as an end point of a long trajectory of cognitive reorganisation, each stage of which may entail personal revolutions and crises. The knowledge structures of the enneagram are not something that can simply be appended to the results of conventional educational achievements. It is for this reason that much of the literature pertaining to Gurdjieff's enneagram seems, to me, to originate from conceptions that are several logical levels below that of the epistemology that achieves a crowing formulation depicted in the enneagram. These accounts are therefore limited in their application.

Objective knowledge and reasoning plays a role in mediating communication between Gurdjieff's steward and master. The intelligence of what Gurdjieff calls the steward and the master can be productively thought of as being nested in relation to each other. It is only when the steward has developed competencies – having been saturated in practical, holistic and complex activities – that relations can start to be established with the background activity of the nascent higher intelligence of the master. Without the rigour and relative objectivity of man number four, clear distinctions could not be made between fantasy and genuine observations of the activity of higher centres.

Clarifications with Respect to the Transition to Man Number Five

This section focuses upon key aspects of Gurdjieff's account of principles pertaining to the development towards man number five, these include: the indirect path; differences between paths;

important substances in Gurdjieff's account; the significance of the 'pill'; the problem of realising 'gold'; the reference to kundabuffer; and references to si 12.

In Ouspensky's "In Search of the Miraculous" (1949), Gurdjieff describes a certain linear progression in the potential development of man's being. The development may start from a condition of either man numbers one, two, or three and proceed to a culturally skilled man number four, in which all three aspects of man numbers one, two, and three can play a conscious and more harmonious role. From man number four a rare, yet possible, progression may be made to man numbers five, then six, and finally conceivably reaching man number seven.

Although Gurdjieff does allow for circumstances of reaching higher states of being without transitioning via man number four, he seems to indicate that such transitions can be limiting:

Man number five has already been crystallized; he cannot change as man number one, two, and three change. But it must be noted that man number five can be the result of right work and he can be the result of wrong work. He can become number five from number four and he can become number five without having been number four. And in this case he cannot develop further, cannot become number six and seven. In order to become number six he must again melt his crystallized essence, must intentionally lose his being of man number five. And this can be achieved only through terrible sufferings. Fortunately these cases of wrong development occur very rarely. (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 72)

Yet when we consider Gurdjieff's remarks concerning alternative paths, it seems this restriction may be limited to that of the fourth way:

But all the ways, the way of the fakir as well as the way of the monk and the way of the yogi, have one thing in common. They all begin with the most difficult thing, with a complete change in life, with a renunciation of all worldly things. A man must give up his home, his family if he has one, renounce all the pleasures, attachments, and duties of life, and go out into the desert, or into a monastery or a yogi school. From the very first day, from the very first step on his way, he must die to the world; only thus can he hope to attain anything on one of these ways. (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 47)

Irrespective of the full veracity of this account (which could be validated by comparing it, for example, with accounts from the biographies of yogis), the implication is that aspects of man number six may be attained directly. This can be appreciated when it is recognized that "dying to the world" (*ibid.*) pertains to a key aspect of man number six, which entails the renunciation of the ego (personality). The Daoist path, for instance, may be considered a direct path to this aspect of "man number six", which does not concern itself with the disciplines and competencies of man number four, or possibly neither the emotional and energetic breakthroughs of man number five. There remains, therefore, an implication that paths that circumvent the early work, of synthesizing the bodies and of achieving emotional transformations, may lack resources or transformations achieved by those who have undertaken such work.

Although mystical paths, such as Daoist approaches, seem to dispense with concerns for cultural competence and a disciplined effort at psychological synthesis which can be attributed to man number four, I shall not comment upon these alternative outcomes further. The path I have

traversed has significant alignment with Gurdjieff's "way", and so it shall be events and transitions pertaining to this that I shall focus upon.

With respect to Gurdjieff's restriction upon who is eligible for higher forms of development, my experience seems to contradict a stipulation of Gurdjieff's that the fourth way cannot be followed independently:

As a matter of fact, if we take all the people who are neither fakirs, monks, nor yogis, and of whom we may say with confidence that they never will be either fakirs, monks, or yogis, then we may say with undoubted certainty that their possibilities cannot be developed and will not be developed. This must be clearly understood in order to grasp all that follows. (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 48)

And, "It must be understood that both in the inner and in the external life of a man there may be conditions which create insuperable barriers to the fourth way" (ibid).

And, "first of all, it [the fourth way] has to be found" (ibid).

Gurdjieff therefore seems to make the argument that without overt assistance, progress with the kinds of development that he is concerned with cannot be made.

On the face of it, my own experience of attaining certain transformations without overt guidance, and without membership with a Gurdjieffian group, contradicts this statement. Yet it may be, however, that the alignment between my unwitting path and that of Gurdjieff's adds general support to this principle. That is, that I had found the "fourth way" through my own discoveries.

On this matter, Ouspensky (1957) refers to an alternative, slow, and perhaps rarely followed path that he calls "the objective way":

These four ways are called subjective ways. These ways are supposed to produce certain effects. But some people, maybe very few, may develop to a certain extent even without school-work. This is called the objective way; but it is a slow way. Subjective ways are short-cuts, they are for people impatient of ordinary slow work, even if there is a certain progress. So theoretically you can get possibilities of development living quite an ordinary life, without C influence, using only the material provided by B influences: religion, philosophy, art, science? On the whole, if people can absorb enough of this material, it should be sufficient for development, but even at best it is slow and uncertain development. All schools, all ways are for impatient people; that is why they are called subjective ways. So the answer to this question is both yes and no; some people can develop without schools and some cannot, because it is a question of different types of people. Besides, the objective way also needs conditions; it does not mean that all people who are not in the work can develop. In a sense the objective way is even more difficult than school-work, because there one has no possibility of verifying whether what one decides to do or not to do is right or wrong. In school one can verify; but verifying is one thing and doing is another. (p. 395)

In my case I would say that much of the esoteric experience for me has seemed like group work turned inside-out. Instead of insights and learnings being presented in one fabric, I have uncovered

and experienced them in life's process from a diverse variety of activities and sources. Indeed many insights have seemingly arisen unbeknownst to those participating in exchanges, whilst significant insights from many years past still retain a salience that found a home within a wider esoteric tapestry.

The conceptual side of this development has however required perhaps the longest path of a dogged pursuit of "B influence" material, culminating in conceptual appreciations proximate to those Gurdjieff relays concerning the enneagram. I have plans to write about this in a separate paper.

Gurdjieff (Ouspensky, 1949) completes a thread of discussion concerning the knowledge of the fourth way (or of the 'sly man') with the remark that certain substances may be ingested as a substitute for the labours of the fakir, monk, and yogi:

The 'sly man' knows the secret and with its help outstrips the fakir, the monk, and the yogi [...] he simply prepares and swallows a little pill which contains all the substances he wants and, in this way, without loss of time, he obtains the required results. (p. 50)

These ideas are corroborated by traditions of external alchemy (e.g. Waidan). I do not, however, take this remark about consuming a pill to be necessarily literal. The only special substances that Gurdjieff draws attention to for attaining crystallization of man number five are those of si 12 and of special substances within the air that one can freely breathe, provided one has the means to attract these substances. The pill, rather, seems to pertain to an analogy, of taking in a specific substance that allows the practitioner to advance more effectively than the three alternative paths presented.

We can see that, indeed, the fourth way recognises a 'substance' that enables the practitioner to advance more effectively. This substance pertains to the potential for using the experiences of everyday life, which are tailored to our specific individual needs. In other words, the fourth way practitioner has available a "bitter pill" by means of which he or she is able to effectively exercise their various faculties simultaneously:

The method of the fourth way consists in doing something in one room and simultaneously doing something corresponding to it in the two other rooms – that is to say, while working on the physical body to work simultaneously on the mind and the emotions [...] to make use of certain knowledge inaccessible to the ways of the fakir, the monk, and the yogi. This knowledge makes it possible to work in three directions simultaneously. (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 49)

It is, according to Gurdjieff, in the crucible of life experiences and difficulties that practitioners have the opportunity to coordinate the three different sides to their development which may be otherwise isolated in the ways of the fakir, monk, and yogi.

This critical factor of using the frictions of everyday life, and of considering it as a substance, is closely aligned with a conception I had discovered in my research on cognitive development, that I termed "Active Orientation" which entails a necessity for a consciously engaged disposition in encountering problems in order to yield transformations in cognition (Lloyd, 2016, 2020).

One of the life-changing revelations that stems from the realisation of the transition to man number five is the role of all of one's prior difficulties and suffering that have helped to propel one towards this outcome. This places constructive problem-solving upon an entirely different scale of significance, suggesting that much if not all of the suffering experienced in life has a conscious purpose.

Gurdjieff's remark about a pill for acquiring the necessary substances may also be extended to encompass his references to "gold." "Gold" refers to a substance that may catalyse si 12 such that si 12 is transformed to realise higher substances. Anyone who digs sufficiently into alchemical literature will soon discover that the substances of the sexual glands are deemed to be of high significance in the transformation of man. And this circumstance finds agreement in Gurdjieff's account also. I should like to say, however, that it is not necessarily only sexual energy that is of relevance. In the cosmology of Gurdjieff and, of many mystical accounts, a scale of energies may be traversed, and hence energies of different kinds and from different sources may be mixed, transmuted, and passed up as higher energies. I can corroborate this circumstance by personal experience.

Gurdjieff, however, presents yet another enigma with respect to the production of "gold". Gurdjieff stipulates that gold must be made and, yet, to make gold one must have some gold, even if it is only a small amount:

In order to extract more [i.e. climb higher in the production of energies], it is necessary to have in our organism a certain quantity of corresponding fine substances. The fine substances contained in the organism act like a magnet on the fine substances contained in the inhaled air. We come again to the old alchemical law: 'In order to make gold, it is first of all necessary to have a certain quantity of real gold. If no gold whatever is possessed, there is no means whatever of making it.' (Ouspensky, 1949, p. 189)

Here we arrive at a seemingly unresolvable contradictory position. If, as I maintain, the second part of Gurdjieff's method is concerned with the realisation of gold (i.e the transition to man number five), how is it that he claims here that gold cannot be produced without gold? There are two parts to my answer. First, the production of gold with gold principally pertains to a method that may become automated and is concerned with a periodical supply of this energy. This method cannot be executed successfully without the necessary ingredients. Secondly, a difficult and painstakingly protracted method can be pursued to realise, or possibly release, a certain amount of gold that may already be present and yet has remained inaccessible until the current occasion.

This initial 'gold' may be attributed to various factors: to the protracted efforts in forming and using a permanent centre of gravity (Ouspensky, 1949); to the transcendence of emotional energies whilst committing oneself to a highly valued project; to the blessings of spiritual beings; to the energy lying dormant in the lower chakra and released by the internal process called kundalini, or the entering of the holy ghost (Prem & Ashish, 1969); to the fragment of the kesdjan body one possesses; and to the grace of Paramatman or God (Saraswati & Roles, 2000, p. 604).

Practically speaking, from a Gurdjieffian perspective, these criteria amount to the same thing: grace will only be received and the effects of kundabuffer will only be transcended when unrelenting efforts yield a transformation in the energetic system of the practitioner; when waves

of powerful emotional energy are transcended in the commitment to a project that the subject (or 'devotee') considers of paramount significance, greater than himself and his ego-based desires; when the subject has realised the functional ability to hold on to and contain higher energies; when the 'master' speaks to the subject through both internal and synchronously external means; when orgasmic energies known as kundalini, or divine energy (Almaas, 2021), are released within the subject in a deep meditative state in which the breath seems to come to a standstill; when the subject has transcended social expectations and the dictates of the superego; and when the production of 'gold' has been initiated through the transmutation of sexual (and other) energies to supply the higher dantian with a higher energy substance. All these closely related events correspond to what Gurdjieff aligns with "man number five".

Of these various events perhaps the most incongruous sounding will be the reference to kundalini energy, which Gurdjieff explicitly attributes to the misadventures of fantasy. One answer I can offer in response to this is, firstly, the correspondence of kundalini with kundabuffer, i.e. an obstruction (whether organic or a crystallization resulting from its effects) and, secondly, with the dangers of an all-out pursuit of such energy for which Gopi Krishna (1970) gives ample warning. Gurdjieff would not be the first mystic to throw people off the scent from a path deemed excessively dangerous, and to direct attention instead to tractable goals for which one must manifest one's resources, and work upon one's own clay.

A second, more considered, answer entails a re-construal of the yogic reference to kundalini in terms of Gurdjieff's metaphysical conceptions. For in a Gurdjieffian cosmology any boundary, including the boundary that kundalini transcends or dissolves, has a two-fold significance. Up to a point the boundary repels forces approaching it, but if a force has sufficient power to carry it beyond this boundary it may receive further impetus from the boundary. This two-fold perspective provides a different defining delineation for the process called kundalini in which both suppressing and transcending forces can be at play in a more balanced and systemic appreciation. Sri Krishna Prem offers the following apposite remarks concerning the twofold significance of snake symbology:

The symbol of the serpent has always had a twofold significance. On the one hand it is the symbol of wisdom and of the Seers who possess it. It was the Nagos or wise Serpents who, according to tradition, taught the secret Pana Paramita Sutras to Nagarjuna, and also gave him some magical 'clay' for the building of sanctuaries. On the other hand, equally well known is its use as a symbol of desire and evil... (Sri Krishna Prem & Sri Madhava Ashish, 1969, pp. 88-89).

Nevertheless, if my experiences generalise, then it seems that kundalini energy is a component of this transformation. Its manifestation may, it seems, be brought about in a more benign manner when it is realised indirectly, through a project that one can meet with under less hazardous and potentially crippling conditions than those that Krishna (1970) both suffered and described.

This is not to state, however, that Gurdjieff's path is free from hazard. Far from it. One can readily find in Gurdjieffian literature references to the hazards of pursuing such transformations. It was reportedly for the reason of avoiding these hazards that Ouspensky sought to discover, and subsequently commission his students to find, the source that would complete the fragmentary knowledge espoused by Gurdjieff. For Ouspensky's Study Society (The Study Society, 2021) this safe method turned out principally to be meditation. However, whether the results obtained from

the meditative route are equivalent is not easily determined. What can be said is that for many who enter into a practice of meditation, it is often recreational and may lack the kind of discipline demanded by Gurdjieff's methods. For this reason it should be clear that Gurdjieff's methods are certainly not for everyone. Most likely they will be most appealing for those who like to push themselves, for whom the notion of personal transformation is an idea that they live by, and yet, for these reasons they may find it more palatable to learn to ameliorate, control and master an ego rather than simply surrender it.

Final Comments

The above descriptions may help to distill and clarify Gurdjieff's elaborations concerning the development of man number five, and assist practitioners in their own work. In my view, Gurdjieff's system of mystical development has much in common with western psychological conceptions, particularly with respect to the harmonisation of his faculties and the valuation of intelligence over an immediate surrendering of the ego. The emphasis upon self-awareness, activity, and working in the world, has an appeal for pro-active people who are less inclined to channel all of their efforts into meditative practices. Gurdjieff's system therefore has much to offer students of psychology and the higher reaches of man's development, conceptually bridging conventional psychological accounts with those of mysticism.

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