

Vision

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The Phenomenal Leonardo Da Vinci – An Opinion

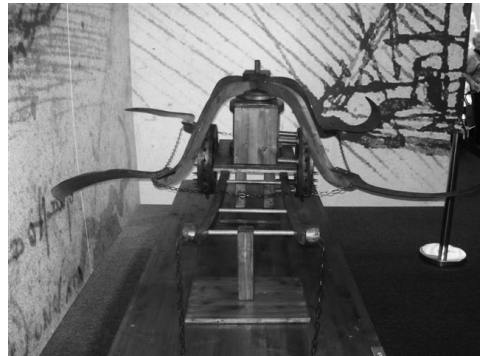
by Graham Soughtton

When you look at the life of a genius there is always a sense of amazement bordering on disbelief. In the case of Leonardo Da Vinci... WHY was it, and HOW was it that this one man living in Northern Italy in the 15th century was so universal in the application of an intelligence that seemingly knew no boundaries, no limits. The clues to understanding this are tenuous, but through study of his life and times, something of a picture is beginning to emerge. Maybe.

Firstly he had an innate gift of insatiable curiosity.

He would not, and could not, accept the orthodox, conventional explanation for why things were like they were. He had to find out for himself.

In some ways he was the Father of the



modern scientific method, which is to say he experimented diligently, and expected that any experiment could be replicated to produce similar results and so 'prove' an hypothesis.

That is to say, knowledge thus acquired must be capable of being proven and confirmed by others. This was a breakthrough in an age when ALL were expected to just accept the Church's explanation of all phenomena, spiritual, earthly and otherwise. But no one has a monopoly on knowledge or truth. This paradigm could not last, and it met its nemesis in the High Renaissance, a revolution of new thinking in which Da Vinci was a leading 'apostle'.

**"All our
knowledge has
its origins in our
perceptions."**



Secondly, and very importantly (for the time.. and perhaps this is true of other ages) Leonardo only had a very elementary level of home schooling for his ‘education’.

Luckily in Leonardo’s case there must have been a very great deal of open-mindedness and questioning of orthodoxy involved in the way his learning experience unfolded. This ‘seasoned’ his young mind with a passionate spirit of inquiry which never left him. In all his 10,000 or so notations in his copious note books the most commonly repeated phrase is “I question...”.

He applied this to himself.

Yes, he was a superbly talented artist, and while this would have been calling enough for most, Leonardo questioned even this. Art on it’s own was not what he found fulfilling. He sought a greater depth. Surely there is no

real difference between art and science, was his thinking process.

Art, in those days, being ‘representative’ must surely be underpinned by a deep understanding of the physiology, the psychology and even... the spirituality... of the object of observation. This is a great key to an understanding of Da Vinci. Without an ‘education’, which would have indoctrinated him in the ‘understanding’ of past thinkers and scholars, he had no choice but just to observe keenly, and arrive at his own conclusions. The result was a paradigm-busting torrent of new thinking on every subject he turned his acute powers of attention to.

Thirdly, (but not finally... because you can never say ‘finally’ about Da Vinci) he came to see 15th century Italy, and Europe, as part of a great wave of wonderful artists, poets, writers, philosophers, educators and benefactors (like the Medici) who collectively make up that massive counterpoint to the 1000 year domination of the Catholic Church, that we now call the Renaissance. They all fed off one another. They competed, they cross-fertilized, and they encouraged each other to ever new heights of endeavour. This was an explosion of the human imagination like nothing that had gone before. It was widespread, infectious, and unstoppable. To have been part of it would have been to ride the ultimate ‘new wave.’

Da Vinci Machines Exhibition

Location: 75 Customs Street East Auckland City
(next to the Rose & Crown)

Open Hours: 10.00am to 5.00pm
7 Days a week

Duration: October 3 – December 6.

Ticket Prices:

Adult	\$19
Concession	\$12
Junior	\$8.50
Family	\$46

Open Every Day - Including Public Holidays!

For more information please contact us: info@davincinz.com

Those wave riders were all heroes, but some were particularly determined, gifted, and single-minded in their devotion to the notion of 'why not?' thinking.

Of these Leonardo was the foremost.

But... they arise in every age, in every era and place, and how well would da Vinci have got on with our own Richard Pearce, Bert Munro, Bruce McLaren, and John Britten. They all started humbly, had insatiable curiosity, said "I question..", and in their own way took on orthodoxy, took on the world, and burst

through the conventions of their time.

Da Vinci though... is the King.

Not for nothing is he sometimes called 'The Father of the Modern Age'.

He's in a class of his own. The full reason for this is a mystery. Maybe just as well.



When the *Da Vinci Machines Exhibition* came to *Auckland Museum* from Florence four years ago it was the first venue in the world to showcase 'The Machines' outside Italy. Aucklanders flocked to the museum, making the exhibition the most successful in its history.

And now the exhibition, featuring large models of some of the most important designs and inventions of Leonardo Da Vinci, artistically created using traditional materials, has returned to Auckland and is showing at a down town venue from October to December. Although, there is every chance that it will run until late January 2010.

The creator of '*The Machines*' is a Florentine called Gabrielle Nicolai. The Nicolai's are an old family of artisans from Florence, and Gabrielle runs a private museum dedicated to Leonardo Da Vinci. He also knows a lot about Marsilio Ficino. On his visit here four years ago Gabrielle was astonished to find a school in Auckland named after one of his Renaissance heroes, and he was profoundly

moved to visit the school.

Since then '*The Machines*' has toured museums and other venues across Australasia, and both Gabrielle and his partner Luigi Rizzo have been keen to look for an opportunity to help the Ficino School in some tangible way.

This opportunity came a few weeks ago...

The final venue for the Australasian tour was the *Waikato Museum*. It closed there in August and was scheduled to be sent on a tour of South East Asia. Unexpectedly, the first venue was cancelled, so *The Da Vinci Machines Exhibition* was offered to Ficino School to run in Auckland again as a fund-raising event.

This extremely generous support for Ficino School delivers us a unique and beautiful exhibition to re-present to Auckland and to raise funds, but it's also a very useful opportunity to expose Ficino School, and the School of Philosophy to the wider public.

New Sanskrit Class for 2010

Anyone interested in starting a Sanskrit class in February 2010 please contact E. Kearney 535 9096 or email elainek@orcon.co.nz

An opportunity to: open up your horizons, increase your vocabulary, brighten up the mind, and walk with the great Masters through Sanskrit!

Deep and Meaningful Thoughts...

by Mathew Roscoe

Thought for the Day has sent nearly 2200 email messages to over 5000 people over the past 9 years, some 1600 of whom are currently active and this equates to an estimated 1,872,000 emails since September 2000, give or take a few.

It seems you can't send that many emails without getting a few responses. These fall into two camps; the intended and the (hopefully) unintended. It seems that a good many folk forward some of these emails to other people who sometimes respond by email but inadvertently hit the <Reply All> button thus ensuring that I receive a copy as well. At least I think that's what is happening. Over the years, I have received over 600 of these messages which have included some very romantic proposals of marriage (sorry boys, I'm taken...), even more romantic proposals of a rather less enduring nature and a few brickbats and bouquets as well.

Easily the hardest to handle are the requests for clarification that seem to assume that I am in some way qualified to explain anything. Overall, it is interesting to see how people react. So without further ado and confining the selection to those people I have never met (as far as I know) and changing the names to protect the innocent and not-so-innocent; here is a selection of the responses received.

- Mmm... either this is very profound... or he forgot half way through what the point was... intriguing.
- Dear SOP, NZ.
Every day I enjoy your messages. Some days I am totally inspired by the 'thought'. Just in case you ever think you do all this work only to cast it into a void, this day I thought I would say thank you.
- I really like and appreciate most of the quotes you send out but this guy should stick to math!
- I so needed that today.... "do not fear the conflict...."
- Polygon is what Monty Python call a dead parrot.
- What about this typo. "Rabbit Shneur" instead of Rabbi. [The good 'Rabbit Shneur' was one of my more embarrassing typos and probably the most diligently noted]
- Surely Shneur Saloman was a hare?
- Wouldn't worry about it much, there is a bit of rabbit in all of us.
- Krishnamurti's got it going on...
- "The LOVE I LOVE u with is this LOVE!!!!" (sic)
- Let freedom ring brother!! We are the islands in the stream. Kenny and Dolly and Bee Gees are sooo right! Sleep the long sleep ????????? ????-?!! :)
- Look, you guys are fantastic, but WHAT THE HELL DOES THAT MEAN?

Contributions

from

Ficino School

The Fountain

by Jaynesh Patel (aged 12)

The sun shines upon the fountain.
The colours of the fountain like a sunset
shows where the beauty lies.
The rush of the water brings peace.
The circle around the fountain surrounds the
beauty and holds it.
The pattern represents the creation of beauty.
The water is joy, and the hedge is mother
nature.

Spring Flowers

by Madeline Fenn (aged 12)

Emerald green leaves reach
For the warmth of the gentle sunlight.
Violet petals grow out of the stems,
Beholding the beauty of spring.
Tiny droplets of dew rest on the delicate
petals
Like tiny glistening diamonds,
Sparkling in the morning sun.
A fuzzy bee perches on the petals
Gathering fluffy yellow pollen,
Then flies off humming to himself.

The Lemon Tree

by Amy Wu (aged 12)

Every branch reaching up into the heavens,
Every leaf full of life.
The branches twist and turn,
Knotting itself up.
The base of the tree is strong and everlasting.
Every design, every pattern was made by the
very hands of God.
Every lemon tree sways and dances in the
breeze.
From the trunk right up to the point of a leaf
Everything on this tree has the handprint of
the Creator.
The lemons a glorious golden colour
Filling up the air with the fresh fragrance.
Look like Christmas decorations hanging off
the tree.
Although the outside of the lemon has dents
and bruises.
The inside is perfect, faultless.
It looks like a seven pointed-star that has
dropped from the night sky.

You could almost describe this tree as the
ranks of being.
The bole represents God the Creator who has
made all this.
The trunk represents enlightened beings,
Those who are chosen by the Almighty God.
And then you have twigs, leaves and lemons
that represent human beings,
Imperfect on the outside but faultless on the
inside.

Bookshop News



The bookshop has some NEW arrivals:

- “*The Essence of Health*” and “*New Frontiers*”, both by Dr Craig Hassed.
- For help with the study of Philosophy there are a few copies of the “*Svetasvatara Upanishad*” and the “*History of Indian Philosophy*”.
- For practical application and advice try “*The Tao of Abundance*”. This will rethink our attitude and ideas about wealth.
- For those with young (and not so young) children, some of Kipling’s “*Just so Stories*” – find out how the elephant really got its long trunk and why the butterfly stomped her foot. This is still a favourite read for the first (or second) childhood.
- There have been several requests and recommendations for a book by Gilbert Mane’s “*Seven Steps to Freedom*”, so a limited number have been purchased.
- Finally there has been a restocking of Eckhart Tolle’s popular books. “*The Power of Now*,” “*Practicing the Power of Now*” and “*Stillness Speaks*”.
- We have on order “*The New Earth*” by Eckhart Tolle AND some of the POWER OF NOW CALENDARS which have been hard to obtain in the past. Also pending are the old favourites “*Good Company*” (and the new “*Good Company II*”), the “*Man Who Wanted to Meet God*” and others from the Study Society.

Please remember that it is always worth checking with companies such as Amazon for books of personal interest especially as their service is so good.

To finish with a charming and telling little piece.

A Centipede was happy quite,
Until a Toad in fun,
Said “pray which leg goes after which?”
This moved his mind to such a pitch,
He lay distracted in a ditch,
Considering how to run!

Any enquiries to Geoff Long at -
advasco@xtra.co.nz

Practical Philosophy

Courses for 2010
begin in the week
commencing Monday
1 February.

You can attend either
of the venues indicated
below.

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North Shore,
Lake House
Arts Centre**

Course fee is \$135
for nine weeks.

For further information
www.philosophy.school.nz

or call us toll free on
0800 610 539
for more details

Cultural Day

by John Ferens

Sunday August 16th was a windy and wet day, and not one to venture far outside. However, a full house of intrepid “Culture Lovers” came together to enjoy a day long programme of presentations offered by their fellow students - on subjects that they have studied and come to love.

The day was divided into four sessions, the first three of which allowed students to choose from four different lectures. The elective sessions were all excellent, so deciding which ones to go to wasn't easy...

Russell Allen
An Introduction to Economics Study. An essential for Philosophers?

Hamish Hudson
There's Something Funny about Shakespeare's Sonnets. Not "Yeah Right." - YEAH RIGHT.

David Farrelly
The Great Cathedrals. Architecture and the evolution of the human spirit.

Bruce Watson
Philosophy and Business Ethics. Humanity v The Market!

Rodger Spiller
Cash and Consciousness. So I can have BOTH?

Gordon Howard
Pacifica Azzura – A Photographic Safari set to music. Saved by a miracle.

Kyra Innes-Jones
Youth Volunteer Service in Romania and Nepal. The Gift of Service.

Graham Farrelly
Philosophy and Work. Are we working or being worked on?

Louis Boulanger
Debt and Delusion. The debate for a return to the Gold Standard.

Rosemary Innes-Jones
The Practical Use of Vedic Astronomy. (Jyotish) Time for Success?

Brian Wilson
Philosophy and the play of life. Happiness in the Drama.

Dennis Clark
The Golf You Were Born To Play. Fix the swing or fix the golfer?

The last session brought everyone together to round off the day with Bob Sutherland humorously suggesting “I think I've lost my mind. Can you help me find it?” He elaborated on the part played by our minds every day and questioned just where our minds are most of the time. The conclusion was that we really don't know where our minds are! Bob referred to Vasistha who said the mind is a “Movement in Consciousness.”

The day was interspersed with tasty delicacies for morning and afternoon teas and a magnificent buffet lunch with a lovely selection of wines.

All that remains is to say a sincere thank you to all our presenters for their wonderful offerings and willingly imparted knowledge, and to the cooks and washer-uppers in the catering team, and all who helped to set up and pack away. Thank you all so very much for making this such a superb day.

The English Language – A Rich Inheritance

by Marilyn
Marshall

**“In human affairs the light within manifests in sound,
words and one’s use of language.”**

(Conversations 1991, Day 1)

This statement goes to the heart of why language is so important in the development of a human being’s full potential.

If we are fortunate to have the use of a language rich in vocabulary and possessing all the elements to enable a full range of expression, our chances of realising our potential and manifesting the light within are greatly enhanced.

English is such a language.

It is but one of about 5,000 languages in the world today, grouped into families numbering probably less than 20. English, the focus of this article, belongs to the Indo-European language group, which is the most widespread, being spoken by half the world’s population. Today, English is the international “lingua franca” and mother tongue of millions.

Because it is the language we use all the time, it is easy to forget just what a marvellous tool of communication it is. Instead of making full use of what it has to offer we frequently settle for a comparatively limited range of expression, the daily “comfort zone”. To borrow rather liberally from Newton’s

famous words, we play with pebbles on the seashore while the great ocean of language lies undiscovered before us.

Over a long period of time English has accumulated an impressive vocabulary through exposure to other tongues. We can draw on this word bank to convey a mundane idea or high philosophical and spiritual concepts. It gives us the tools to express subtle shades of meaning, levels of understanding, the potency of an idea for good or ill, beauty, ugliness, reason, irrationality, the highest truth, in short just about anything you can conceive.

This is why increasing rates of illiteracy and the prevailing misuse of words are of concern. Illiteracy not only creates difficulties with communication but, crucially, it results in an inability to comprehend and interpret the written and spoken word sufficiently to cope well in the world and achieve one’s full potential. Above all, it deprives one of appreciation of the beauty and heritage of our common language.

What is this heritage?

It would be useful here to briefly look at the diverse elements which have come together

to form the English language. What follows has largely been summarised from “*English, the Origins, History and Development of the Language*” by Katharine Watson (St James Publishing).

Firstly, the Celts. They arrived in Britain during the Bronze Age, prior to 500 BC. The Romans ruled Britain from AD 43 – 410, and in this period Latin and Celtic dialects co-existed.

With the Roman departure the Celts were left unprotected, and Britain was subjected to waves of invasions by the Jutes, Angles and

Saxons from regions now in the Netherlands, Northern Germany and South Denmark, driving the Celts and their language into Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany. The dialects introduced by the invading tribes became what we now call *Old English* or *Anglo-Saxon*, the roots of our language. This was a vigorous, flexible language, with much potential for poetic expression, and the formation of compounds. Unfortunately Old English is now intelligible only to those who have especially studied it.

In 597 St Augustine arrived in Britain to convert the English to Christianity, and this introduced many new ideas and words, mostly derived from Latin.

From AD 793 Viking Norsemen began to invade England sporadically, and between 1016 and 1050 England was under Danish rule. This gave rise to a degree of simplification, including removal of noun and verb endings.

The *Middle English* period began with the Norman Conquest in AD 1066. The Normans spoke French, and this was the language of the new nobility and the law courts, English being seen as rude and barbaric. Over time the

two languages as spoken by the people merged significantly, and poets such as Chaucer and others helped to popularise English writing.

With the Renaissance came a flowering of scientific investigation, discovery, education and literature, and this brought many Latin and Greek words into English. Between the 14th and 16th centuries very significant changes occurred in the pronunciation of

vowel sounds, and by the time of Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) the language had essentially transformed and stabilised into *Modern English*.

The Vision that you glorify in your mind, the Ideal that you enthrone in your heart, this you will build your life by, this you will become.

- James Allen, English author

Since the 17th century many words have been incorporated through the growth of Empire, trade, and the industrial revolution. The process of addition keeps on going as English continues to reflect the changing needs of the time.

Fine Writings

Following are some extracts from 20th century literature which help illustrate the scope of the language. The first example illuminates the faculty of reason, which is said to separate man from beast. It is taken from the late Robert Bolt’s play “A Man for all Seasons”, about the conflict between Sir Thomas More, erstwhile Chancellor of England, and King Henry VIII over Henry’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon and marriage to Anne Boleyn and his repudiation of the authority of the Pope. More has been imprisoned for refusing to swear an oath of allegiance to the Act of Succession. Here, he is visited by Secretary Cromwell, the Duke of Norfolk and Archbishop Cranmer in an attempt to get him to say why he will not take the oath.

“Norfolk: Oh, confound all this... I’m not a scholar, as Master Cromwell never tires of pointing out, and frankly I don’t know whether the marriage

was lawful or not. But damn it, Thomas, look at those names.... You know those men! Can't you do what I did, and come with us, for fellowship?

More: And when we stand before God, and you are sent to Paradise for doing according to your conscience, and I am damned for not doing according to mine, will you come with me, for fellowship? ...For myself, I have no doubt.

Cromwell: No doubt of what?

More: No doubt of my grounds for refusing this oath. Grounds I will tell to the King alone, and which you, Mr Secretary, will not trick out of me.

Cromwell: You don't seem to appreciate the seriousness of your position.

More: I defy anyone to live in that cell for a year and not appreciate the seriousness of his position.

Cromwell: Yet the State has harsher punishments.

More: You threaten like a dockside bully.

Cromwell: How should I threaten?

More: Like a Minister of State, with justice!

Cromwell: Oh, justice is what you're threatened with.

More: Then I'm not threatened."

The above reveals as much about the stature of Robert Bolt (1924-1995) as a brilliant writer as it does about the greatness of Thomas More. Bolt was best known for his film and television screenplays to which he brought great clarity of expression.

Another who shared this quality of precision and economy of language was the late Christopher Fry (1907-2005), a fine English playwright. He was a master at conveying a powerful idea in very few words, such as in his play "The First Born" where one of the characters describes a proclamation by Pharaoh condemning Hebrew baby boys to death: "They all died of a signature" (the famous exception being Moses, who was discovered floating on the Nile in a reed basket).

Fry could also be very amusing, as in "A Phoenix Too Frequent". In this scene with its delightful play on words, the widow

Dyanamene has gone to the underground tomb of her departed husband Virilius to mourn him.

Dyanamene:

"He was the ship. He had such a deck, Doto, Such a white, scrubbed deck. Such a stern prow, Such a proud stern, so slim from port to starboard. If ever you meet a man with such fine masts Give your life to him, Doto. The figurehead Bore his own features, so serene in the brow And hung with a little seaweed. O Virilius, My husband, you have left a wake in my soul. You cut the glassy water with a diamond keel. I must cry again."

Language shapes the way we think and determines what we can think about.

**- Benjamin Lee Worf,
American Linguist**

In several best-selling books, the late Bernard Levin (1928-2004) revealed his impressive facility with the English language. In this brief extract from "To the End of the Rhine", Levin, traveller, writer and *Times* newspaper columnist, effortlessly conveys the subtlety of atmosphere –

"...And in the third, and finest, of the Reichenau Churches I had a bonus. Sitting quietly and at peace as the last of the evening sunshine filtered in, I saw the chancel door open. In came a tiny, plump nun, wholly oblivious to me, or to anything but the task before her. There was a wood carving, a simple, moving, pieta, in the nave, surrounded by pots and troughs of flowers, and the little nun had come to water them. Up and down the tubs and jardinières she went with her sprinkler watering can, keeping the flowers fresh for Christ and His Mother, while I held my breath lest she should notice me and break the spell of her rapt and loving service."

Apart from obvious stylistic differences, what is it that immediately identifies these authors, in much the same way as we can know the work of a poet or composer? It is the *inner sound* behind the words. That sound, which is in all of us, reveals itself in different ways depending on what influences we have made part of our being, “the vision we live by”, and it in turn informs our choices. Browsing in a bookshop, for example, we listen inwardly to the sound of the words on the pages – whether we realise this or not – and make our selections. Does the writing strike a responsive chord within us? If so, we will probably buy the book; if not, it goes back on the shelf.

A fine example of language striking a responsive chord is the following passage from “Wild swans” by Jung Chang, who spent her youth in Mao’s China and survived the ten year Cultural Revolution:

“With the help of dictionaries which some professors lent me, I became acquainted with Longfellow, Walt Whitman, and American history. I memorized the whole of the Declaration of Independence, and my heart swelled at the words ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal,’ and those about men’s ‘unalienable Rights,’ among them ‘Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.’ These concepts were unheard of in China, and opened up a marvellous new world for me. My notebooks, which I kept with me at all times, were full of passages like these, passionately and tearfully copied out.”

These and other writings spoke directly to the spirit within her, which could not in truth be bound, and opened her eyes to the restrictive regime under which she had lived until this point. Ultimately they led to her departure for a freer life in the west. Thus can fine words uplift and liberate.

Words are often used to draw a “mental picture” so that the reader or listener can “see” what is being described, as shown in the following two extracts –

“The mountains grew more astonishing; waves, tents, pyramids, teeth, castles, cows’ teeth, they changed colour and shape as the shadows of clouds moved across them. Olive green, iron grey, orange red. Against semi-circles of staggering peaks a little square box stood by the road, “Café restaurant Le Gorge”, out in the open without a soul in sight. Pinnacles wild with stratification rise up and curl back on themselves like breakers about to descend and the skyline becomes the edge of a pie-crust table.”

“Morocco is a Lion” –
Nancy Whelan (1913-2008)

Here is a description of very early morning -

“A heavy dew had fallen. The grass was blue. Big drops hung on the bushes and just did not fall; the silvery, fluffy toi-toi was limp on its long stalks, and all the marigolds and the pinks in the bungalow gardens were bowed to the earth with wetness. Drenched were the cold fuchsias, round pearls of dew lay on the flat nasturtium leaves. It looked as though the sea had beaten up softly in the darkness, as though one immense wave had come rippling, rippling - how far? Perhaps if you had waked up in the middle of the night you might have seen a big fish flicking in at the window and gone again... Ah-Aah! sounded the sleepy sea. And from the bush there came the sound of little streams flowing, quickly, lightly, slipping between the smooth stones, gushing into ferny basins and out again; and there was the splashing of big drops on large leaves, and something else - what was it? - a faint stirring and shaking, the snapping of a twig and then such silence that it seemed someone was listening.”

“At the Bay” –
Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923)

The clarity of the above descriptions makes it easy to appreciate what the authors saw and felt.

And then there are the great poets who have contributed to the sum of the language and enriched our lives. How often do scraps of poetry learned long ago float into the mind? These can range from the most sublime

of Shakespeare's Sonnets to "Macavity the Mystery Cat", depending on the mood! Poetry is a powerful medium of expression. Much poetry finds its way into the language, becoming a part of common speech, for example, "*Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage*" (Richard Lovelace, "To Althea").

Where to from here?

English has certainly travelled a long way from its Anglo-Saxon roots. No doubt it will, like

other living languages, keep on changing and evolving. The question is – in which direction? Will it gradually sink under the weight of misapprehension and misuse, slang, facile catch-phrases, acronyms and euphemistic jargon, or continue to expand and be enriched by positive influences?

We need to take care of this beautiful language to keep it alive and full of meaning. As Samuel Johnson observed in "Boswell's Life" (776), "*languages are the pedigrees of nations.*"

Where is Mrs Brown?

// ... but where is Mrs Brown now?" the little girl asked her father after he had told her Mrs. Brown had died.

"Well...", began her father thinking about his catholic upbringing, "she's in heaven"...

"... but where is she?" the child persisted.

'Well darling... you know... in heaven there are angels and...'

'But where is she...?'

The family lived in central Queensland, dry and isolated. They lived beside a creek. 'Old Man Creek...' they'd affectionately called it. The children slept in a caravan and the adults under the stars with a mosquito net and smouldering cow dung to keep the mozzies away.

Mum and the kids would collect dry dung from around about during the day, stepping through tall sharp spinifex grass, bringing it back to camp for the evenings.

After a big rain, Old Man Creek would fill up and the family would swim in it. But when it didn't rain for a long time, the creek would

dry up and they would walk along and explore its dry bed. They made a face out of reflector lights which were pushed into the banks just above high water level so as not to wash away.

Old Man Creek was home because their father was a surveyor. He used to go out into the middle of nowhere in his shorts and boots, hat but no shirt to survey and record the surrounding landscape.

There were no doctors and the nearest town was a day away, so any emergency and the flying doctor service had to come. The family would go into town when they needed supplies and the children would watch other children playing... too shy to join in.

Life was simple and isolated where they were and when the little girl asked that question one evening her father, perplexed at not knowing how to answer what she was really asking, began a life long quest for truth...

An immigrant after the 1956 revolution in Hungary. He and his Australian wife, members of the School of Philosophy in Sydney for many years, began a new branch of the School in Budapest, six years ago!

by Nicolette Farrelly

Sufi Mystic & Poet –

Hazrat Inayat Khan

by Cathy Dean

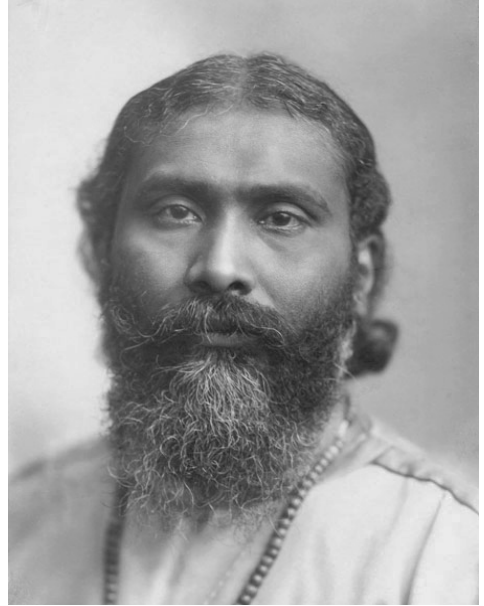
**“When the soul is
attuned to God every action
becomes music”**

So writes the sufi mystic and musician Hazrat Inayat Khan in the only book he actually wrote himself, called “The Dance of the Soul”. All other books are compilations of lectures that he gave around the world. The book is divided into three parts: Gayan, Vadan and Nirtan.

Gayan (singing), suggests the celestial voices, the “unstruck music” from which all music comes. He speaks of manifestation as being the music of the Creator; that the universe is made out of music and that every heart is attracted to that music. The whole of nature tells of that music and when the heart is open and the soul is awakened, this music can be heard.

Vadan can be considered as the “divine symphony”. Every soul takes part in it, and its performance is the purpose of creation.

Nirtan means the dance of the soul. The idea is that the expression of the beauty within a person is a mystical dance which every human being performs. The light of Truth can be heard as the whisper of the Beloved, and when a person expresses this, it is called the dance of the soul. When the soul dances, every moment of life becomes a miracle.



Hazrat (an honorific title) Inayat Khan was born in Baroda, India on July 5, 1882. His early life revolved around music and he performed as well as composed, winning many awards and obtaining a professorship. He was married with children and on the website there is a heartwarming video interview with his son (born 1916) telling anecdotes of his father.

Inayat Khan met a sufi teacher Abu Hashim Medani who trained him in the way of various sufi orders. According to the son, although Hazrat Inayat often spoke at the outset about spreading the Sufi teaching, as he continued he spoke more and more of the “message”. When questioned about this he related it to “the awakening in humanity of the divinity in man” – a universal message indeed! His teacher, shortly before his death, instructed Hazrat Inayat to take the wisdom of Sufism abroad, and so on September 13, 1910 he sailed to America with his cousin and brother. In his autobiography he makes

and brother. In his autobiography he makes mention of homesickness and meeting Western opposition to Eastern teachings. Initially their public meetings were mainly performances of Indian music, and they accompanied, amongst others, the dancer Mata Hari. Hazrat Inayat also gave lectures on Sufism both in America and Europe travelling widely from 1910 – 1920 when he settled in France focusing on summer schools, classes and lectures. His message was always aimed at unity, rising above differences and bringing humanity together. It was not a new message, but an echo of the same Divine message which has always come, and will always come, to enlighten humanity.

In 1926, Hazrat Inayat, physically exhausted went home to India to rest. But even there, calls on his time were great, he caught pneumonia and after a brief illness he passed away February 5, 1927 aged 44. His burial tomb is in Delhi.

Hazrat Inayat followed the ancient Sufi practice of expressing esoteric truths in terms of sound and music. He once described this as follows: “ I have become His flute; and when He chooses, He plays His music. The people give me credit for

this music which in reality is not due to me but to the Musician who plays on His own instrument.”

In a time when we hang our trust on modern scientific thought and technology and which is now pointing to vibration and energy being the basis of the universe, it is more than a little interesting to read Hazrat Inayat’s lectures, themselves an echo of the ancient Indian Vedas, on the mysticism of music, sound and word. He wrote “the life Absolute from which has sprung all that is felt, seen and perceived, and into which all again merges in time, is a silent, motionless and eternal life which, among the Sufis, is called Zat. Every motion that springs forth from this Silent Life is a vibration....”

Hazrat Inayat Khan speaks the message of Unity with the voice of the poet, musician and lover, and his wisdom is at once profound, ancient and ever fresh.

“Thy music causeth my soul to dance; in the murmur of the wind I hear Thy flute; the waves of the sea keep the rhythm of my dancing steps. Through he whole of nature I hear Thy music played, my Beloved; my soul while dancing speaketh of its joy in song.”

From “The Dance of the Soul”

Auckland School Cultural Groups

Come – and enrich your life!

Economics	@ 27	Sat. 7.15 – 9.45 am	Russell Allen	276 8770
Forms of Government	@ 27	Sat. 10.15 – 11.45 am	Russell Allen	276 8770
Portrait Drawing	@ 27	Sun. 7.00 – 9.00 pm	James Hanna	846 9931
Choir	@ 27	Sun. 7.00– 9.00pm	Simon Laurent	845 3156
Plato	@ 268	Wed. 9.45 – 12.00 pm	Lillian Beanland	521 5054
Portrait Drawing	@ 268	Thurs. 9.45– 2.00 pm	Paul Brickland	445 9012

New members to these groups are welcome.

For enquiries, please phone the group tutors listed.

At 27 Esplanade Rd, Mt Eden & 268 West Tamaki Road, West Tamaki.

...the incredible marvel of being a human being

by Nicolette Farrelly

In considering what to write about the recent residential week held in July and the wonderful talk given by Craig Hassed on Mindfulness and Well being and extending this to the goodness which comes out of group nights and taking groups, this is what came to mind...

We are most content when we are ourselves. We love more fully, laugh more heartily, forgive more readily and accept without comment. There is a fascination and energy in knowing that we in any given moment can be our natural selves without any of the limits that often change how we see a situation.

There is no end to the refinement of our natures or the discovery of our true selves. The message is always the same. With effort and recourse to stillness, comes mindfulness and in mindfulness we are our natural selves full of humanity, dignity and goodness.

The residential week in July conducted by Mr Donald Lambie, accompanied by Mrs. Lambie was potent in its simplicity and instructive in its call for each individual to take responsibility for their own spiritual progress. There were the usual meditation and study sessions where we looked at the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, but there was also a silent contemplation session in which students were given the simple instruction to observe what happened with a conscious and sustained effort to connect with the Self over a three hour silent period. This could be done by reading and reflecting on a piece

of scripture, meditating or walking while concentrating on the sense of touch, sight and hearing one at a time for equal lengths of time.

Using any and all of these exercises, in extended silence, allowing the inner vision to be sharpened and refined was so instructive and useful. The practical appreciation being that at any time we can connect. Our narrower worlds can drop away so that with care and dignity we can deal with any situation from goodness.

In a similar vein Dr. Craig Hassed, gave a three hour lecture at our venue in West Tamaki in August. He outlined his "ESSENCE" programme which is being taught as part of the curriculum at Monash University in Melbourne, where he lectures. He is a long time member of the School of Philosophy and medical practitioner, who over the past twenty years has studied and written about an approach to medicine which requires the mindful involvement of the patient in the process of recovery. That is, treating the whole body and not just finding a cure for a symptom, through practising his "ESSENCE" programme – Education, Stress Management, Spirituality, Exercise, Nutrition, Connectedness, Environment.

He looks at the body, mind and spirit as the whole human make-up and has based his practises on addressing all these aspects.



Body needs good food and exercise, mind requires stillness and spirit can be experienced in stillness, meditation and other self-awareness exercises. The good news is that all these are free and common sense! We are best equipped to treat ourselves, but cannot do it blindly. To outline Dr. Hassed's main points:

Education – If we educate ourselves about our health, causes of illness and reasons for treatment and prognosis we're more likely to take preventative steps and help ourselves. We need to have an awareness of the psychological barriers which impede our progress. Without which we can't change our patterns of behaviour to improve our well-being.

Stress management - covers mental health and the mind- body link; emotional state. Level of happiness, anxiety, depression and our general relationship with the world.

Spirituality – the basic human need to search for meaning however that may present itself.

Exercise – is key to enhancing physical and mental health. Dr. Hassed mentioned that if exercise and its benefits could be put into a pill it would be a multi-million dollar earner for pharmaceutical companies!

Nutrition – conflicting views make it hard to know what is right for us and how to introduce good nutrition into our lives, but is worth looking into.

Connectedness – human beings by nature are social, but to what degree do we feel connected to our families and lives in general?

Environment – this looks at our surrounding physical environment and the social, emotional and intellectual environments we create for ourselves.

The talk was full of good humour, and delivered with a freedom which comes from personal knowledge, belief and practice.

Dr. Hassed has written three books to date – 'New Frontiers of Medicine: the Body as the Shadow of the Soul (Vol. 1 & 2)', 'Know Thyself', and his most recent book which was the basis of his talk in Auckland in August; 'The Essence of Health. The Seven Pillars of Well Being'.

Lastly I mentioned the goodness which comes from group nights and taking a group. With this constant contact and ongoing practice we are reminded of the goodness and dignity within us and are provided with the opportunity to experience this over the course of a group session and to take that reinvigorated memory away; to marvel at the blessing of being a human being.

"For the past eighty years I have started each day in the same manner. It is not a mechanical routine but something essential to my daily life. I go to the piano and play one or two preludes and fugues by Bach. I cannot think of doing otherwise. It is a sort of benediction on the house. But that is not its only meaning for me. It is a rediscovery of the world of which I have the joy of being a part. It fills me with a feeling of the incredible marvel of being a human being."

(The famous Spanish cellist
Pablo Casals, 1876-1973)

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