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MEMORY AND MIRROR FOR A NIGHTINGALE SINGING: 
AN INVITATION TO THINK ABOUT REPETITION, 
RITUAL, RELIGION, AND THE SOURCE

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Introduction and Exposition

Q.: What is common to a nightingale 
singing and a dog raising his hind leg? 
A.: Both are marking their territory. 

-Dog Show. Independent TV, Russia 
October 21, 1995

The epigraph of this chapter is possibly something more shocking than I originally intended. It makes one think not only about the problems of science, but also about the profession of scientists; not only about our being, in a way, professional reductionists, but also about the curious entire system of papers, journals, grants, prizes, etc. Given this monolithic framework—will we ever be able to create a science of the spiritual? It would necessitate transcending maps, territories, and our very reality, and would also require explaining how it is done (to mark one's "intellectual territory"?). Any hope? Possibly a nightingale—who seems to be still singing in my memory—suggests that the answer to this question can be close to a most improbable—YES.

We'll return to the Nightingale later; meanwhile I must train my Mind's eyes at both soft and hard ways of seeing (Leonard, 1978).

This is an invitation to ponder on repetitive activities like Magic, Ritual, and Religion that seem to be involved in creating novel timeless [or pseudo-timeless] memory files. How do sincere religious seekers and also—in a way not less sincere—magicians, alias ancient (or contemporary) Memory/Consciousness-hackers, do it? In search of God, or in search of power, one enters the enchanted territory of the timeless. Or was one really called [seduced] to enter? Any repetitive activity seems to be an entrance to nonordinary (not quite in-time) memory and consciousness. There seems to be a powerful drive to enter. The elaborating of repetitions takes in more and more personal memory stuff. The personal already carries some marks of Universal Myths—of the real timeless. So one starts upon a spiral to take one's personal life story someday "back to the timeless.” This seems to be a Natural Way of late ego development, and at the same time the Way is branching out into countless alternative ways. Rituals can involve real timeless stuff, and also—to imitate the timeless, religions provide a powerful way of totally mobilizing one's personal life story towards the timeless, although they can also provide many ways of seemingly stopping and freezing one in some form of "spiritual materialism.” (Many are called, but only few are to enter.) What is the real strategy of the timeless? Can we guess at the total design of the amalgamative dance of Prometheus [ego] and Proteus [ever-changing timeless] archetypes in us? On the imitation pathway one gets access to [some] appropriate "keys": service signals of the timeless [memory] realm. Most likely one does not need to guess at some molecular level knowledge of memory organization to do it. Eternity (the timeless) is not only in love with productions of time but is really nursing them as well. As our life-story unfolds, the personal gets
more and more blended with the transpersonal-mythological as part of a normal developmental process.

A practitioner can learn a lot about this process by just being open and attentive. Lines of teaching accumulate & transmit the knowledge (that seems to be, if not totally unrelated, then certainly at least only marginally connected to scientific concepts). Even on a not-too-esoteric level, we seem to know a bit about the ways in which some memory stuff—such as the stuff that dreams are made of—is being created as a hybrid structure between the mythological and personal. I have dreamed even on knowing about the molecular mechanism of this. According to these dreams, the timeless in the master memory engram is written down within the repetitive synchronization signals ("filled commas")—timeless indeed means repetitive—but not every repetitive action is the "real" timeless—and this timeless part of Memory is serving as a set of recognition signals for memory editing that is performed by Universal Myth engrams—inherted special memory texts that are able to grow slowly, taking in some personal memory stuff. The timeless is possibly also—together with Universal myth engrams and maybe even with high abstraction level associative memory engrams—used as a mobile seat of consciousness passing from one synchronization signal to another. Timeless consciousness is in some [molecular, limited] sense limited, being written down in repetitive elements of memory and being focused at the editing complex, and, at the same time—as something very basic in our experience of Being tells us—it is "really" not limited by time and space, but may be connected with other timeless memory carriers via a kind of novel (that possibly means: most basic & ancient) interaction between similar structures as was supposed by Sheldrake (1987)—or maybe even in a much more fundamental way. New "comments on living" can be and are added not only to Universal Myths but also to timeless memory texts. One can possibly distinguish an interplay of two editors—and two centers of consciousness—or two aspects of one editor-consciousness—in this complex (Soidla, 1993a, 1993b, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1996e, 1996f).

Be that as it may, in the realm of memory editing, almost certainly texts are editing texts and in this process the editors themselves are edited (say, by creating hybrid memory molecules). This means that some texts of Memory are able to get access to the memory editing realm to behave—to use the Biblical expression—as a kind of "yeast" that will give rise to a new Kingdom in the place of ordinary/profane memory and consciousness (and probably will captivate and transform, one by one, all the "underground" layers of the collective unconscious). One can still say that one must know the timeless very well—in a way, one must be of the Timeless realm—to do it as effectively and self-consciously as the leaders of world religions have done. Of course, to complete the task one creates a total system of new behaviors and interpretations around some original key concepts but the few key concepts must already have proven to be most effective in transforming the old timeless realm. As one can only guess why mathematics is so effective in natural sciences, so I keep wondering how special acts, like the Jesus prayer or making a cross sign, are so powerful in the mysterious realm of Eastern Orthodox christian life. On the main road to the timeless one has the mystical experience as a sign when at the right Gate and that related timeless feedback patterns are ready to take over. Only in exceptional cases have important creative new elements been effectively added on this way—to create world religions. There are certainly ready-made accesses—and traditions that have mapped them—for various left-hand (say, magical) paths. What will exact scientific knowledge of memory engram structure add to this situation one day? Historical parallels teach us that, for example, traditional, very effective selection methods were not very cardinally improved by genetics and genetic engineering. So most likely the first results of manipulating memory engrams at the molecular level will seem to be quite innocent, technically limited in possibilities, not promising any holocaust of consciousness. And still I suppose that in the longer run, the coming time of high-tech interventions to the memory-consciousness realm will most likely be a time of ultimate danger and final responsibility. You speak of some New timeless memory stuff being responsible for creating an alternative, "perpendicular" reality of the Kingdom—but maybe our basic consensus reality was also created (together with the very human species) more or less in the same way? Or maybe together with the very Big Bang? Then what we'll read in our memory engram will be just a projection, one would say—a Platonic shadow—of some Real Timeless Memory
written down at a much more fundamental level—in the very structure of the Universe. This would mean that the questions about the nature of Timeless Consciousness and “Real” Timeless Memory will never be answered merely by studying our memory engrams, and maybe our attempts will cut the very channel that could provide the answers—and that possibly supports our very existence. Or would it mean—quite contrary to the above—that deciphering the timeless parts of memory could provide some clues for understanding the most fundamental levels of the organization of reality? I don't know. I'll limit my speculations to the experiential and molecular levels that I can handle in a bit more responsible way.

—THOU, SOURCE, HELP ME NOT TO BE BLIND IN MY SEARCHES IN MEMORY! THY INVISIBLE HELP IS MY ONLY HOPE. Indeed, there is nothing so close to me, so ever present than THOU. (So great is my hope nearing the hour of Death, and so cramped still is my Mind—but in that mind, I keep finding a point of happiness, of reality. This is the point of silent conversation with THEE! Writing this paper, I keep returning to Thy presence. Help me! Help me!)

Argument and Gesture

No one understands this text.

—A paradox

—Rintrah roars and shakes his fires in the burden'd air.—

Repetitions provide an element of the hypothetical text of the master memory engram that can be recognized by complementary texts-editors, and hence used for editing one's growing memory engram. Editors are composed of associative memory engrams and Universal Myth engrams that have absorbed considerable amounts of a personal life-story—so to add some comments to the timeless realm part of memory engram and at the same time to remain recognizable for the texts of the Editing complex, seems at least to not quite be a hopeless a task—but needs some practical art of Imitating the Timeless. One must also remember that some constant service signals exist in the very text of repetitions—not too clear a concept, but I have speculated about some special constant sequences that are needed for the action of the Editing complex (Soidla, 1995b, 1996f). Obviously they can be borrowed from the mythological timeless parts of the memory record that are situated within the commas (synchronization signals). This means that to write some new timeless texts in memory, one seems to be in need of imitating or contacting the real timeless. But most likely there are also available imperfect mirror reflections of the timeless in various memory molecules in the editorial complex and even “molecular fossils” possibly utilizable at the RNA or DNA level: pseudogenes for timeless editorial complex molecules that are no longer functional (whatever metaphysical significance one would ascribe to them in this case—pseudogenes just do exist in the genome)—maybe also some transpersonal—retrovirus-like inserts in timeless parts—filled commas.

Remember also that memory editing always involves creating hybrid structures between different instrumental (e.g., Universal Myth engrams) and informational (e.g., Master Memory Engram) texts of the memory record. We confront some products of this hybridization process in our dreams. Dreams and dream-related states are natural guides for creating some imitations of the timeless (of lower or higher quality—there certainly can be gradations), and/or stabilized hybrid engrams between the personal and the timeless. What is important is that most likely there is a perfectly natural developmental process guiding one towards deeper and deeper immersion into the timeless—suggesting rituals, or—more usually—ritual-related, irrational everyday activities, or synchronicities, or whatever other actions may lead to timeless-guided learning. In this way or another, hybrid memory texts uniting the personal and the timeless seem to be constantly working in us! They can lead one into different ways, from repetitions to Ritual to Religion. Imitation of the Timeless and the Sharing (Communion
of) the Timeless are two key expressions to describe two main—perhaps practically always blended—strategies behind multiple pathways towards the timeless. There seems to be a powerful drive (primal instinct) towards the timeless. This behind-the-scene drive is possibly demonstrated by the way even simple repetitions (say, in mass culture) seem to reward one with a taste of the Timeless.

—THOU, Source, help me; keep me on a (the) right way (path)! Help me to be responsible. Help me to be with THEE. I am not hoping, I am not asking for anything . . . . Help me, be with me, be me.—

Partly because the very structure of this paper imitates some hypothetical properties of the master memory engram, I cannot help thinking again and again about the possibility of metaphysical cheating if this (or some other, related) memory coding mechanism involving high abstraction level associative memory engrams will be deciphered. —Should we really be afraid? Possibly, if there will be a difference between a monad (or a wave or whirlpool of consciousness) and its body[ies], this will be most painful and will end by bringing them into accord. Of course, it opens a corridor of new high-tech magical possibilities, but possibly the implications of this hypothetical biochemical breakthrough would not be metaphysically so global. You can guess that in the long run it will even make a new—longer or shorter is another question—route of monads (the eternal nomads) back home—using the christianized metaphysical metaphor to say it. —I thank this voice in me.

How do I know who I am if I do not remember how I lived my life?

Or think of it this way. With Right Attitude, one can possibly start with any material, with any idea, maybe even with any [initial] way. Provided with Right Attitude, almost any repetitions will start the process of hybridization of one’s life-story (the process demands one’s “very blood!”) and mythological timeless material (growing more and more personality-related and holy). After some years of worship even a dog’s tooth can start emitting light, as one of the Buddhist stories tells us. What is the right attitude? Ultimate seriousness, dedication, sincerity, even healthy naiveté. Compassion, love . . . often penitence. No words are quite right, but they can hint at the right way to begin with. (This is the Gift for us!) A “Compass” in one's doings is important for right-orientation of our life events—“up” in the outer world and towards the source of I-thought (Cohen, 1974; Jaxon-Bear, 1992/1993) in the inner world [or one might possibly choose to say—towards the THOU-thought (Buber, 1958), or towards the no-thought of having no head (Harding, 1972; Wren-Lewis, 1994)]. Only one of the words about the right attitude can be the leading one with You, including words not present here (or even better, leaving all the words aside). We start as fools, thieves, rascals of the spiritual (see Dowman, 1988) to overgrow these—and other—words. With me, this is possibly just an undeserved gift—the foretaste [or better, dream-taste] of real understanding one day—already so vivid, above any uncertainty, but still [seemingly] unstable.

The process of writing my previous paper (Soidla, 1996d) showed me in a practical way that one can be with Truth only when one tries no more to understand, or—more generally—to think, when one’s mind is stilled. It can sound trivial, or even silly in an ordinary state of mind; but it is so. For me, there cannot be anything more important—or even practical—than this very basic fact!

A theotoxin addict searching for where to attach a label of ultimate truth, a conditioned endorphins-producer—this is an alternative description of my state. But the experience is too real, “more real than reality,” and the ordinary reality that is the place for all the reductionistic answers is shrinking to some distant and insignificant corner.

It is not the world of Thy too-powerful mirroring and generative answers (answers to the unspoken questions of our days; answers that are possibly stylistically so well imitated in Zen koans) that I am able to love. I have passed a dark and stormy period—some more possibly await me—a period of pondering about Your—if not awful then certainly awe-related—koan-answers filling my life, and even learned to smile & accept smaller waves—seemingly of the same storm-source—but just because of this
experience I certainly feel no right to comment about the so fierce—but to other [state of] eyes curiously so obviously absent—communication from Thee at a more global level of human history. No explanations for this great picture, no need to explain. Only Thy silence, Thy silent presence.

—Source, here I am, Thy dog, Thy fool. Help me to keep this feeling . . . I almost lost it . . . When I’ll need to continue the paper—help me!—My previous paper (Soidla, 1996d) and—some parts of this one—were composed by releasing a spectrum of inner voices while keeping re-turning to[wards] the Source. After writing the “real-time text” parts down, many sentences were inserted—not only later but also during the usual intervals of “near-ordinary Consciousness” that most likely were still not identical with my “baseline,” “everyday,” critical Mind exercised when doing science. For some additional “de-esoterization,” short comments were later inserted between some “voice shifts” to reveal the growth patterns of the text. In much the same way, the current insert was written down within the “timeless” [meditation] part of the argumentation. But here the insertion is mostly intended to demonstrate a possible way of breaking the habit of linear reading—[Source, help me to heal this break], help me to pass beyond the mistakes of my limited vision. I’ll keep asking. I am not asking for anything. Help me.—

Nightingale’s questions: Does music lead to the timeless?—Yes, yes!—And Silence?—Oh, yes!—But tell me, are the birds at the window of perception waiting for sequencing the memory engram molecules?—

—Rintrah roars . . . —

Dreaming and Listening

Dear friend & brother Lotus Slug,
this is a friendly Namaste to our questions—daydreaming karmic seeds & knots.

—Anonymous

Where is the place of “demonic” dreams and experiences along one’s way to the timeless? They seem not to be human, and also not directly related to the direction of the Source. (I printed “to the D” and felt that it was a revealing mistake—but revealing What?) Xenophobia someplace? A resonance with nonhuman mind, indeed, to oscillate between negative and positive “cosmic” states? I must say that these experiences indeed often seem (according to inner search) to belong to the world without contact with the Source. (A great many other seemingly not so negative things almost disappear—or should I say—just no longer feel important when being with the Source. A question of metaphysical pecking order? Certainly demonic experiences—even though directly convertible to ecstatic states (Soidla, 1995a, 1995b)—seem to be a long way behind Your Mental horizon when You dive into the silent source behind Your thoughts. And still . . . ) Where do these kinds of experience dwell in our timeless memory compartment—or just behind the limits of the timeless, indeed in the outer, rejected (as a retrovirus remnant in a genome is physically present, functionally rejected, but this way or another possibly used by evolution), cosmic, but not really timeless [maybe spaceless?] realm—something related to planetary moons and still in a way so familiar? [I grew too emotional, but I can keep looking and looking at recent photos of them.] Or is it the world of Hekata [and once more I understand the wish to hide one’s face to this shoulder] by W. Blake? Possibly an aspect of spiritual vanity & materialism—if not of this world then of some other, possibly a realm one must not pay too much attention to, but still a realm that, in traveling upon one’s spiritual path is almost certainly to pass in one way or another. Will You remember it with benign a smile?
—Help me, Source. I need more power, to be with THEE for a while. Help me!—My Jonathan Livingston SeaGullible reader and friend, what are we doing here? Silence, my friend!—Silence! Silence of Silence. Thank THEE.—

Yes, one can return from an altered state of consciousness trip with a strange idea, or an apocalyptic prophecy [that is never to come true] with a label (see Tart, 1975) of Ultimate Truth attached to it. Is this my case when I speak about the Source? I cannot give any intellectually satisfying answer. But I am not troubled by this. I know the seductive dance of Prakriti holding one captive in an endless succession of worlds, subtly clowning she is, my dear sister, Prakriti [I stole the exquisitely right word from the Russian poet, Pasternak—“My sister, Life”]. But the Source is found in a point of silence behind thoughts and images. No questions, no doubts.

Maybe I should mention here—for readers of my other papers—that the hypothetical neuron activity registration at the RNA level can proceed “in real time” (as a parallel to creating a circulating synaptic modulation mediated memory record, or as a part of this process)—or be delayed and connected with a replay of the original neural activity [that is possibly edited by the neural circuits structure]. The replay can be more or less obvious, more or less edited at a level that I have not yet discussed in my papers. Anyway, the real process is certainly a multistep one [not just a short-term and long-term memory story], and contains many more very important feedback loops than the simplified picture here. Some more words of more general auto-comment. What I have developed in my papers is just a picture of a part of the whole process of memory recording that is entirely missing in contemporary approaches. Undoubtedly, there are important blocks missing at the interface of the mechanism postulated here and the processes studied in the mainstream approach. What is needed, strategically, is an attempt at reinstating the enormous capacities of informational macromolecules such as RNA in the multilevel process of memory coding. I suppose the macromolecular level is missing in the contemporary concept of memory coding as the result of a most unfortunate chain reaction of misunderstandings. But certainly, one must learn first if the core part of this whole new molecular block is something or just an exercise of the imagination.

The developing patterns and rhythms of memory editing/recording (maybe captured in music—When the Saints Go Marching In) can be the very key to the type patterns of human life-story according to the I Ching (that may or may not be oracularly detected in our psycho-physical reality), and possibly have been perceived by many spiritual practitioners as surprising sudden shifts of something like coincidences-flow-patterns (Soidla 1995a, 1995b).

—Help me to be with Thee. My doors to Thee are the Thou of Bifhla, the visible form of Sri Ramana Maharshi, and—Thou, whose benign presence is an end of its own but in a philosophical mood seems to mark the way towards Thee in a space without forms. In a space of Thee, Thou hast prepared the images of Thee to find one of the paths to Thee, paths that are Thou. Thank you.—

The human life-story before the end of the reproductive period is heavily conditioned by natural selection. The so-called Mature Ego is a result [of special Ego-forming forces governed by heavy pressure] of natural selection. After the end of the reproductive age, only a much weaker pressure of group selection remains. Any further “transpersonal” development of Ego is governed by the extrapolation of the inner logic (orthoevolution, nomogenesis) of the main Ego forming forces (that are now set free of the coherence that was dictated by natural selection), and by the remaining weak patterning force of group selection. When judged from the “Western creed” (Tart, 1994), Natural selection-dominated standpoint, any after-mature-Ego development is a gerontological process and maybe even a pathological one (as a kind of Cancer of Ego). But we need not adopt this point of view even remaining in the realm of XXth century science. Consciousness is the missing link, and even if considered not a primary but secondary participant of the Evolutionary game, when set free it obviously dictates its own rules. The Kingdom of Consciousness is growing in the material world (in a different “timeless” frame of reference, Consciousness seems to have always been here, playing
with its creation], partially utilized by group selection, but more and more taking it over in an Ultimate adventure of the Big Game. (One could say that Consciousness plays in the field of natural selection not by using its fighting forces and "pressures" but by slowly taking over and attaching different alternative value labels to the same events. Listen, please: An object of Natural selection marks its territory, an object of Natural selection cuts the airy way.) I am not sure it is quite true this way [the bush of the scientific worldview (Soidla, 1995c) needs to grow "a bit" more to embrace the Sun] but it sounds reasonably Not Too Wrong [or, hopefully points in a more or less right direction] and [if one likes it this way] seems not to block the [Spiritually-oriented] Inquiry.

An intellectual message of this paper (or rather an invitation to conspire in thinking—to use the expression coined by Ferguson, 1980) is just that Repetitions in Habits, Rituals, Religions & Mysticism involve different amounts of inherited timeless memory core stuff (that most probably coexists with timeless junk sequences of different functional involvement—more or less the same way that retrovirus remnant sequences and other kinds of repetitive DNA persist in our genomes). “Higher” rituals can lead one to deeper and deeper cycles of creating hybrid structures between personal and mythological timeless memory core structures. This is the search for one's Ultimate Way, Life-long Pilgrimage of genuine Religious life, leading to more and more permanent contact with primary and pure timelessness, perhaps culminating in a merging of in-time and timeless editors that will be permanently held together by “spiritual” high abstraction level associative memory engrams (Soidla 1995c, 1996a, 1996e). It would be a long story to discuss the "junk" parts of timeless memory, most likely already devoid of original "mind retrovirus" or other negative qualities and acting as fierce Dharma Protectors in Buddhist thought used towards ultimately positive ends—one certainly needs a lot of knowledge to handle this kind of stuff.

—Thou, living in me, I am so noisy and have lost the feeling of Thy presence—the only [no-]thing that is valuable for me. Help me in Thy silence! Don’t leave me.—

The answer is: When I am [with] Thou, then I am right. No other thing really matters. Questions are asked only when I am not with You.

It is a painful thing to be in the world where one sees questions as questions. Messages from You—synchronicities, existential crises [that at some distance can feel just like topsy-turvy peak experiences inside-out], philosophical paradoxes—all carry ultimate seriousness, gravity, and lead towards the Grave. And . . . by an impossible way, through the eye of the needle I have to pass . . . and—with You—this can be as simple as snapping one's fingers. No change, and everything is new. What is it? Tell me.—

There is a feeling tone of wisdom that allows the unfolding of the wisdom quality of one's own self.—Can You help me to use this concept of feeling tone? O.K., one starts with right intonation and then seemingly does nothing, waits for nothing. A real black box it is. Sorry, I cannot answer You. There is a feeling tone for being a trickster, and seemingly for everything. Is there a feeling tone for Enlightenment? Yes. Possibly, yes. And it is silence. Here I must add some words on the real-life context of my concept. The first draft of the above words was more powerful, definite. I wrote it down and then, in my kitchen, I confronted something rather improbable that felt like a comment on my attempt at prophetic talk. Trying to put everything in its right place, I managed—without even directly touching it—to (accidentally) fling a large kitchen knife across the length of the kitchen and to have it disappear under the refrigerator. Physically, it was a most impressive and almost improbable constellation of coincidences: consciousness fiercely clowning and commenting at its best. Who is the one who had this experience? The one who has been visited by the Numinous but not grown to enlightenment. Yes! But this is possibly not the final answer. The one who writes my life story in Memory is the one who reads it [through me]. My life story is written and read as a part of some enormous play of consciousness, Thy lucid presence being inseparable from my mind, in some
moments I feel that I can wake up to be with Thee in the all-pervading, very center of all this play—
to be conscious, to be happy, to be. Neti [not this], neti, yes, yes!

I wanted to put forth some important questions, but I could not do it. You know these questions, about
Evil, about the dark side of God, about the tensions within the Timeless, and the ways towards their
resolution, etc.—But one cannot have both the questions and the real answers. I no longer need the
questions ... What remains is the eternal silence as a song of the Nightingale, reverberating, filling
me, leaving me, persisting . . . –

-In Thy silence . . . –

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: Thank You!

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