

Creative Centrality – Desolate Poles Apart

By Alan Rayner

Divisive Thinking – Excluding the Centre Ground

Deeply embedded in modern human culture is a divisive way of thinking that disparages anything that it sees as ‘neither one nor the other’ as a form of indecisive ‘weakness’ or ‘compromise’ that ‘falls between two stools’. It is especially evident in the kind of partisan politics that has so widely been mistaken for democracy. Its psychological and philosophical sources and repercussions, however, reach far deeper, to the mistaken belief that material reality is either separate from or indistinguishable from immaterial reality.

Such ‘either/or’ thinking engenders from two to many diametrically opposed points of view that are incapable of relating to one another, and will perceive opposition in any point of view that doesn't entirely match their own, including any view that comes from a place between their own and their diametric opposite. Each view will only be capable of accepting what it perceives as in accordance with its own.

This is, of course, a recipe for conflict and fragmentation within the culture, which, in its turn produces a desire to regain strength and coherence by eliminating or overruling the opposition and thereby enforcing conformity with one view or another. In political terms, this is evident both in ‘strong’ dictatorships and in electoral systems that undemocratically empower ‘winning’ majority views to overrule ‘losing’ minority views, regardless of their truthfulness. The resulting oppression causes untold suffering, loss of creativity and, when it comes to all-out warfare, loss of life. In psychological terms it results in a profound sense of alienation, both internally between different needs within a personality for individual freedom and collective belonging, and between one individual or group and another, committed to one point of view or another. In philosophical terms it results in deeply entrenched and prejudiced patterns of thought that are unable to imagine possibilities beyond their pre-imposed limits.

Creative Balance – Including the Centre Ground

There is a way out from such impasses, but it requires a willingness to accept what divisive thought rejects – the vitality of the centre ground through which diverse perceptions of reality can come into confluence and complementarity instead of opposition. Such acceptance requires an *all-encompassing* ability to perceive all forms of natural organization both from within their centres and from all around their periphery.

This all-encompassing perception is illustrated in my painting 'Holding Openness', below, which incorporates and radiates out from the Centre not as a fixed point of administrative control, but as an *invitational* point that calls life into circulation around its self. Please notice that this understanding of centrality contrasts with the common perception of a 'centre' (as in conventional abstract geometry) as a 'fixed point' of administrative control. This is because in natural flow-geometry, centres are *intangible points of receptive space* that relocate with the movement of the bodies they are enveloped within, as with the 'centres of gravity' that relocate with the movements of a dancer. This is why I regard them quite literally as 'pivotal' points within circulating currents, as in the 'eye' of a hurricane.



The simple message here is this : 'Occlude or exclude the Centre and the Hole Pivotal Source of the organization's dynamic coherence will collapse'. And that too, is the central principle of natural inclusionality (see bibliography below), based on recognition of the receptive-responsive relationship between space and energy, love and life.

When we accept this message, we can regain the natural balance we need creatively and sensitively to navigate the troughs and peaks of life with inner calm and outer excitement, instead of getting caught in the no-man's land of crossfire between them or stranded in the depths of depression or on the peaks of anxiety.

BUT in a polarized culture, biased against centrality, that message is hard to hear without letting go of those resistive stances that place themselves in opposition to centrality instead of seeing themselves as dancers around the its inviting, gravitational influence.

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