

Void, Eternity, Change

The world we see is one of constant flux. Sensations are continually arising and passing away. Thoughts come and go. Moods and feelings change like the weather. Our attention jumps restlessly hither and thither. Our bodies are subject to decay. Our possessions have to be replaced. Our collective life is changing at an accelerating pace. Life is radically different from what it was in our grandparents' youth.

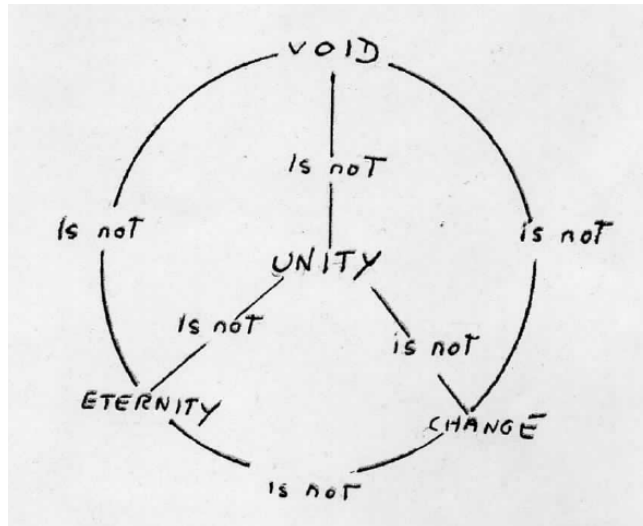
But we perceive regularities in this flux. "History repeats itself" as the saying goes. We see these regularities as evidence of eternal principles underpinning change. Nature is lawful. On a personal level no two days of our life are identical. But each day there is an eternal recurrence of the same old habits, thoughts and feelings, the same old routine. From one point of view everything changes. From another point of view nothing changes. As the French say, "Plus ca changes, plus c'est la meme chose" - the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Change and the principles inherent in it constitute existence. To put it another way, existence is manifest in eternal principles which are revealed in ever changing patterns. This is existence. There is also the absence of existence. This is void. We know music by the silence between the notes. We organize our world by the concept of empty space. The usefulness of objects depends on what is not there. A cup is useful because it has a space within it. A doorway is the absence of wall. The atoms making up our "solid" world are largely empty space. The artist paints on a blank canvas. Before the craftsman begins his labour he creates a space in which to work. Between one breath and the next there is void. Between the onset of sleep and waking there is void. Between death and birth there is void.

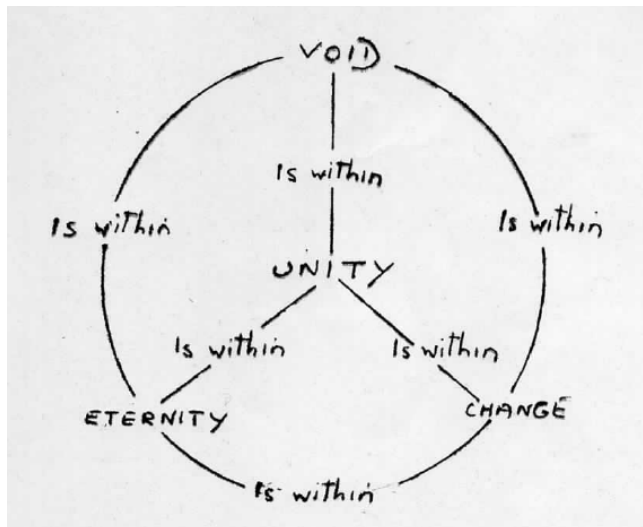
As well as being metaphysical principles for contemplation, void, eternity and change can be seen as relative ways of looking at any situation. On the timescale of our everyday lives the body of our best friend is a permanently recognizable entity. But this body is constantly changing. A large percentage of household dust is dead skin that has been shed and replaced. Your friend is a configuration of atoms which are in no way separate from billions of other interacting atoms. Your friend's individuality is from this stand-point illusory. Your friend does not really exist as a separate entity.

There is Eternity, Void and Change. As we probe reality there is a three cornered argument between these three. My friend Fred is a permanently recognisable entity. He does not exist as a separate individual. He is just part of society. Society is made by individuals. He is not a permanent individual, his body is constantly changing. All those changes maintain the constancy of his form. Despite the constant change occurring within it the body has a constant pattern of organization. But that pattern is not constant. The form of the body changes continuously from conception to death. There is a constant order in that sequence of development which is repeated from generation to generation. Your genes are perpetuated. Then our existence is illusory. Fred is just a chemical process arbitrarily distinguished from numerous other chemical processes. This argument is continued indefinitely.

There is Void, Eternity, Change. Unity is none of these.



Unity is not Eternity, is not change, is not void. But all three are within Unity and Unity is within each of them.



Look within change and you see the transformations of eternal existence or the illusory nature of existence, the voidness of all things. Within the Void there is an eternal becoming. From the standpoint of eternity all is impermanent and illusory, of no real substance. Unity is not illusory, eternal or impermanent. Neither is it the negation of that which is illusory, eternal or impermanent.

We can only teach eternity. We teach Law, eternal principle. Void cannot be taught through words, only by silence. Change can be taught by encouraging impartial observation of the flux of phenomena. You cannot teach Unity; all teaching is differentiation with Unity.

There is once a man who will have three wives. Together they have many children. All the wives are one wife and the children are noth their father and their mother. We are all wedding guests.