

The following is the transcript for the workshop of May 7th 2009.

Cristal Kenyon: can i check it out?

Cristal Kenyon: ty

Stim Morane: You are welcome to join us, but I probably won't be able to explain what we're doing very adequately.

Cristal Kenyon: i want to listen

Stim Morane: Yes, please do.

Cristal Kenyon: i can learn a lot that way

Stim Morane: And join in as you wish.

Cristal Kenyon: :)

Cristal Kenyon: sure

Stim Morane: Hi Scathach

Scathach Rhiadra: Hello Stim, Crystal

Cristal Kenyon: hello

Scathach Rhiadra: Hello Gen, Wester, Ara

genesis Zhangsun: Hi everyone

Wester Kiranov: hello everyone

arabella Ella: Hiya

Stim Morane: Hi gen, Wester, Arabella

genesis Zhangsun: Hi Stim

Stim Morane: Cristal, you can find transcripts of our previous chats at: <http://ways-of-knowing.wik.is/4Transcripts>

Cristal Kenyon: ok thx

Scathach Rhiadra: Hello Fefonz, Mick

Mickorod Renard: Hi everyone

Fefonz Quan: Hello All :)

arabella Ella: Hiya Mick Fefonz

Stim Morane: Hi Fefonz, Mick

Stim Morane: We'll wait another minute or two, for stragglers.

Stim Morane: While we're waiting, does anyone have any observations regarding our on-going experiments with ethical precepts?

Stim Morane: OK, well time to get started.

Stim Morane: Last time we began by reading and discussing Pila's very good and much appreciated article on our workshop wiki, at: <http://ways-of-knowing.wik.is/6Writings%2f%2fEssays/Satyagraha>

Stim Morane: Does anyone have further comments on Pila's wiki piece?

Anya Heberle: I have one

Stim Morane: Yes?

Anya Heberle: what is it about i missed the whole speech

Stim Morane: well, please feel free to read the article at your leisure.

Anya Heberle: lol ok

Stim Morane: Basically, the subject is "truth"

Anya Heberle: i just got back online after a long long time

Anya Heberle: so im just gettng back to my old self

Stim Morane: Pila was concerned about the relationship of truth to nonviolence and other things

we've been discussing here.

Anya Heberle: a bit of humour over certain situations dilutes the statiness and keeps people interested I find

Kos Hallard: Is there a relationship

Anya Heberle: dry or blatant

Kos Hallard: Gandhi was a notorious liar

Stim Morane: Kos, again, you can read the article. Perhaps you will decide there isn't one ...

Anya Heberle: Violence is a feeling of being threatened

Anya Heberle: unfortunately human kind is so diverse threatened can mean addiction lol

genesis Zhangsun: Hey Anya is this your first time?

Stim Morane: Pila mentions Gandhi's life and principles as illustrating his own main points in the wiki article, and Gandhi was himself influenced by the Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy.

Anya Heberle: for this particular meeting yes

Anya Heberle: and please i have *:-,_,.-:NOOOO!!!!*:-,_,.-:* sound and

Stim Morane: I want to look briefly at Tolstoy, just to provoke some discussion on our own emphases in this workshop.

genesis Zhangsun: then perhaps you should listen to the context first

Anya Heberle: card

Stim Morane: Later today, when you have some spare time, you might check the following short web page on Tolstoy's primary concerns and influence: http://www.bookrags.com/research/tolstoy-leo-este-0001_0004_0/

Anya Heberle: i agree totally genesis

Stim Morane: It begins by mentioning Tolstoy's strange death in 1910 at the age of 82:

Stim Morane: "He died on November 20 at a nearby railroad station, having fled in the night from an increasingly contentious marriage and a set of familial relationships that had been hardened in large part by Tolstoy's attempts to apply his radical moral beliefs to his own life."

Anya Heberle: but as a pacifist violence rarely gets any time from me

Stim Morane: This latter scene is what I wanted to examine a little further. So for our own purposes, please go now to: <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/07/24/books/more-war-than-peace.html>

Mickorod Renard: I think some people that do not have the physical ability to be violent can use lying as an offensive weapon just as well

Stim Morane: Quickly skip or skim down, then read the last three paragraphs of the article's first web page, and then go on to read the first paragraph of the article's "Next Page".

Stim Morane: I'll wait until you have all read these paragraphs

Stim Morane: Have you all finished reading the paragraphs I mentioned?

Pila Mulligan: yes

Cristal Kenyon: yes

Stim Morane: Obviously Tolstoy was an extremely serious and principled person, preoccupied with "ethics" according to his own understanding. Even if we studied his life and work quite closely, we would not be in a position to judge or assess him adequately. But I think these little passages still provide a useful angle for discussing our own primary concerns in the workshop.

Scathach Rhiadra: yes

Stim Morane: So, my question for you is, how does Tolstoy's orientation seem to compare with what we're emphasizing in this workshop? What differences do you notice?

Fefonz Quan: well, this mutual exposure of diaries shows what too much truth can lead to

Stim Morane: I realize we haven't presented anything about his "view" ... I'm just taking about what may be inferred from these passages about his own character and lived ethical stance

Stim Morane: Yes, I agree" Fefonz

Scathach Rhiadra: he seems a bit self-obsessed

Stim Morane: Perhaps it's an example of "too much honesty", or honesty misapplied ...

Anya Heberle: divorce or callig the police was not an option?

Stim Morane: :)

Fefonz Quan: and he doesn't sound any close to 'enlighten behavior', whatever that may be

Anya Heberle: often than not applicable rational slutions can be provided

Stim Morane: My own observation would simply be that I doubt Tolstoy's development, arising from his work with ethics, made him sufficiently sensitive in simple, direct ways, to the people immediately around him. He seems to have been more concerned with ideals and a perceived responsibility to all mankind, than to his own wife and various family members.

Fefonz Quan nods

Wester Kiranov: I recognize that

Stim Morane: I know this is all very sketchy, but the approach to using ethical precepts that I've been recommending here, is really concerned with personal maturation of a kind that is immediately responsive to other people and situations, in ways that don't rely on "ideals"

Stim Morane: I wonder if perhaps in some limited sense, Tolstoy may have been more like a certain, much criticized main character (from the noble class) in his own novel _War and Peace_, than like that character's eventual peasant mentor in the subject of natural ethics ... (in Tolstoy's story, the two characters [the noble Pierre Bezukhov and peasant Platòn Karataev] were thrown together, sharing an improbable captivity for a time during the Napoleonic invasion of Russia).

Stim Morane: Are any of you familiar with the novel?

Anya Heberle: *:-,_,.-:NOOOO!!!!*:-,_,.-:*

Stim Morane: OK

Mickorod Renard: sorry

Anya Heberle: but i understand it alotis it anything like pride and prdjudice?

genesis Zhangsun: yes

Anya Heberle: predjudice?

arabella Ella: i have read it but too long ago to recall much :)

Scathach Rhiadra: read it a long time ago:)

Stim Morane: No, it's quite different from Jane Austen

Stim Morane: :)

Stim Morane: anyway, it doesn't matter

Stim Morane: My point is simply that contemplation practice based on ethics precepts is not much like the kind of idealism that may have still figured in Tolstoy's own life

Stim Morane: We've been discussing this for a while now in this cafe series ... do any of you have comments regarding the orientation I'm emphasizing?

Stim Morane: Most recently, we've discussed features of "no violence" and "no stealing" ...

arabella Ella: why do you see it as different from Tolstoy's idealism Stim?

Stim Morane: well, what do others think?

Mickorod Renard: are you leading to looking at the wider picture Stim?

Stim Morane: One of the things I started off emphasizing in earlier meetings, and which I then realized was too difficult to follow up on at that time, was the issue of "what kind of mind are you using?"

Wester Kiranov: I missed last week, but I very much like this emphasis on everyday life you are giving now. Not lose sight of where you are because of your lofty goals.

arabella Ella: this is your statement which i am referring to Stim

arabella Ella: [14:21] Stim Morane: My point is simply that contemplation practice based on ethics precepts is not much like the kind of idealism that may have still figured in Tolstoy's own life

genesis Zhangsun: or perhaps a more specific close to home picture

Stim Morane: yes, arabella, I understand.

Stim Morane: OK, my answer is that I'm concerned with contemplation, maturation of the mind and human sensibilities

arabella Ella nods

Stim Morane: in the past, I said: In such an approach, a person would start by understanding a given precept like "no lying" in one way, and then considering it more and more deeply, looking into its implications in much more subtle spheres. The same applies to "no stealing", or "no violence". But in doing this, one of the main realizations that's available is that a certain sort of mind is being used at the outset, then gradually replaced with something else... possibly something more direct and insightful and respectful and inclusive of others, etc.

genesis Zhangsun: so you are concerned about Tolstoy's treatment of his wife :)

Stim Morane: This process of refinement enables people to find a very different way of perceiving and enacting ethics than that figuring in "idealism"

arabella Ella: thanks for the clarification Stim makes sense to me :)

Stim Morane: Yes, gen, it looks like Tolstoy was still "an idealist"

Stim Morane: which is to say, caught by the limits of a mind lacking in contemplative refinement

Stim Morane: it's ironic because the "peasant mentor" character in his novel expresses many wonderful things in line with the simpler, more natural mind that I'm saying is important.

Stim Morane: anyway, idealisms necessarily involve the use of a mind that is not awake to what is immediately present, responsive and humane

Stim Morane: it is possible to be "ethical" without having any "ideals" re ethics.

genesis Zhangsun: maybe the peasant mentor was an expression of Tolstoy's more natural mind

Stim Morane: yes, probably, gen

Stim Morane: Tolstoy definitely understood some important things

genesis Zhangsun: but funny how we can compartmentalize even our best selves in limited characters

Stim Morane: Yes, exactly, gen

genesis Zhangsun: so what allows for that compartmentalizing?

arabella Ella: what i find more strange Stim is that understanding ... as in Tolstoy's case ... does not always allow for action due to other variables over which he may not have had control

Anya Heberle: the best solution to any such situation is to not indignantly proclaim yourself over any other

Stim Morane: yes, arabella

Anya Heberle: yet the maintain yur own gravity

Stim Morane: You may be right, Anya.

Anya Heberle: yes this is hard to do under irrational pressure

Anya Heberle: which often leads to these kinds of cases

Stim Morane: But it's also helpful to realize we can learn, mature, open up over time, with some sincere effort.

Stim Morane: This is the subject of contemplative practice

arabella Ella nods

Stim Morane: this doesn't make us better than others, but rather more deferential to others.

Anya Heberle: when rewards for irrational behavior cease to be there ceases to be irrational behaviour

Stim Morane: if we do not feel natural deference, but only idealisms, then I think there's a danger

Eliza Madrigal: Without that level of idealism, he might not have written as he did.

genesis Zhangsun: in a way like the process you just described Stim

genesis Zhangsun: about one type of mind starting the project

Stim Morane: Yes, probably, Eliza. And that's interesting, Anya.

genesis Zhangsun: and another type that emerges

genesis Zhangsun: (referring to Eliza's comment)

Eliza Madrigal: Even with all that is known, many things are unknown. We have a responsibility to those we make commitments to, and yet also (it seems in Tolstoy's case) that there is a responsibility to 'quest'.

Eliza Madrigal: :)

Stim Morane: Anyway, I don't want to beat up on one of the world's greatest novelists.

Anya Heberle: yes the bible in particular teaches us not to judge as sometime confusion is a driving factor in irrational too

Stim Morane: I was just using some anecdotes from his life and work to illustrate something we've been discussing.

Eliza Madrigal: And I don't want to idealize him :)

Stim Morane: Yes, I understand, Eliza.

Anya Heberle: bi polar is a disorder that can often separate two adults completely its like someone in the north pole shouting to someone in the south pole saying your upside down

Stim Morane: So this brings us back to ourselves ... how are we doing with our own practice?

Anya Heberle: lol

Anya Heberle: i need to fix my sound card

Anya Heberle: hopefully i may return to a later meeting

Anya Heberle: thank you for your time

Stim Morane: OK, Anya.

Anya Heberle: and good consort

Stim Morane: Thanks for joining us.

Anya Heberle: godbless

Anya Heberle: *:-,_,-:NOOOO!!!!*:-,_,-:* problem at all

Stim Morane: If there are no comments re your work with the first set of precepts we've discussed, I'll move on ...

Mickorod Renard: that ,staying integrated within our normal surroundings when we may have changed ourselves mindfully,,is a problem

Stim Morane: Could you say more, Mick?

Mickorod Renard: well,,i guess if you change to following another way of life,,then you are no longer perhaps in the correct environment for ur new self

Stim Morane: you mean, you feel a little disaffected or distanced from others?

arabella Ella: when we mature or become stronger it somehow becomes more difficult for us to interact in regular ways with those who should be nearest and dearest

Stim Morane: yes, I agree.

Stim Morane: This is an absolutely standard report, more or less unavoidable.

Mickorod Renard: I find others are more attracted to me,,but I feel allienated because my outlook is not the same as their anymore

Stim Morane: Yes, I do see now.

Stim Morane: I hear this from everyone I have ever taught meditation to.

Stim Morane: The good news is that with patience, it passes.

Mickorod Renard: cool

Pila Mulligan: may I please provide some semi-related references on peace and ethics?

Pila Mulligan: I recently learned of the death (in December 2006) of Native American philosopher John Mohawk. I met him in 1978, and he was a remarkable fellow. If you have time you may enjoy some of his material linked below (an article, a video and for some more information, his obituary.) His views are harmonious in many ways with this discussion of ethics and peace.

Artcile: <http://www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=1170>

Obituary: <http://www.buffalo.edu/news/8308>)

Video: <http://fr.truveo.com/Enviro-CloseUp-.../id/3089902679> (it is a long video, but he is easy to listen to and it is informative)

Stim Morane: This happens because of what I was just calling "natural deference", and also because we feel fully a part of wherever we find ourselves.

Pila Mulligan: sorry, Stim, bad timing on my part

Stim Morane: No, thanks very much, Pila.

Stim Morane: Continuing, it is very normal to feel out-of-sync with the ordinary world once you have undergone a personal transformation, or have managed some degree of mindfulness.

Stim Morane: But as you continue, you realize that even the ordinary, rather trivial and even very selfish mind that's so prevalent in ordinary life, is still within the dimension of awakesness that you are starting to appreciate.

Stim Morane: People are part of you, and that overrides your own developments. This is natural deference.

Mickorod Renard: ok

Stim Morane: It doesn't mean you STAY in that diminished world all the time, just that you are happy to be there, when you are.

Stim Morane: Ethics without natural deference would be meaningless.

Stim Morane: By "deference" I mean, openness to others, even though they may be pursuing things you recognize as immature or even harmful.

Stim Morane: Am I being clear?

Mickorod Renard: yes

Eliza Madrigal: yes, very

Wester Kiranov: yes

arabella Ella nods

Cristal Kenyon: yes

Stim Morane: We become distanced, but in the longer run, we become more fully a part of everyone's presence.

Stim Morane: We feel their existence.

Stim Morane: This is not an "ideal".

Stim Morane: It's just how it is.

Stim Morane: Neat clock chime.

arabella Ella: :)

Stim Morane: OK, well moving on ... Last of the five traditional ethical precepts is “no intoxication”. The basic meaning on a literal level is simple: no drugs or alcohol, or at least “no immoderate use of potentially intoxicating things”.

Stim Morane: Comments? (Aside from groans or outright rebellion.)

Eliza Madrigal: :)

arabella Ella: :)

Stim Morane: I guess you can imagine that one could both broaden and deepen the interpretation of this particular precept, as I’ve tried to do here with the others.

Stim Morane: Does anyone have ideas regarding that possibility? What might it mean to extend the precept’s meaning? Examples?

Pila Mulligan: sobriety may be one of the most demanding parts of practice

Stim Morane: Yes. But in its extended sense, it needn't be "sober" in the ordinary stiffling sense.

Wester Kiranov: You could include food that is not really necessary

Stim Morane: Yes

Stim Morane: What else?

arabella Ella: balance where food is concerned ... against gluttony or chocs

Mickorod Renard: I am sure cigars must be ok

Pila Mulligan: ... sober in the sense of how easy it is to lose balance to external or internal events

Fefonz Quan: any stuff that 'plays with your consciousness' artificially, hence makes another border between us and the clear view of the world

arabella Ella: yes like mind conditioning by for eg politicians

Stim Morane: I'm sure you're right, Mick.

sophia Placebo: cigar is not ok :)

Stim Morane: Yes, Pila.

Stim Morane: Well ... I'll claim something broader:

Stim Morane: The strange fact is that EVERYTHING in life can be the occasion for a kind of intoxication, a "looking away" from your enlightened nature, which includes everyone else too.

Stim Morane: Even meditation practice can be misused this way.

Wester Kiranov: I was still trying to say that ;-)

Stim Morane: Even our lovely little meetings here in the cafe!

Stim Morane: Sorr, Wester!

Stim Morane: *sorry

Fefonz Quan: yes, more addictive than red wine, thses meetings are :)

Wester Kiranov: you said it better

Stim Morane: oh, I wasn't claiming that, Fefonz.

Stim Morane: But there is the potential lurking in everything.

Stim Morane: It's tricky because "intoxication" can be a good thing, taken as meaning complete engagement.

Fefonz Quan: i was Stim :) yet red wine is good for the heart...

Stim Morane: The problem with the more problematical kind of intoxication is that it obscures the full dimensionality of presence.

Stim Morane: It disconnects, rather than connecting ...

Stim Morane: The other four ethics precepts might be seen as leading to this one, both making its larger implications accessible and also drawing upon these implications to make advanced insights related to “no lying” etc possible too ... a form of reciprocal inspiration.

arabella Ella: scuse me RL calling ... bye all ... nite ... ty Stim

Stim Morane: Bye ara!

Mickorod Renard: bye Ara

Stim Morane: This “ethics” workshop series is drawing to a close. I’m trying to limit each series to between 6 and 8 sessions. Also, I always want to find ways to ground group discussion on personal practice and the insights that can emerge from such practice over time.

Stim Morane: Since I haven’t yet seen how we might fully manage that here, in our Café sessions, perhaps sometime we could continue this “ethics” exploration in another kind of course held elsewhere on the Kira campus. We can talk about that possibility later.

Stim Morane: Meanwhile, I’d like to ask for 3 volunteers to work with the larger implications of “no intoxication” during the next seven days, and then offer their findings next week so we can use them in our Café chat together. Volunteers?

Wester Kiranov: I think that would actually do me some good

Stim Morane: Wester, are you volunteering?

Fefonz Quan: could you please just say again what you mean by 'work with the larger implications of “no intoxication”' ?

Stim Morane: *volunt

Wester Kiranov: yes i am

Stim Morane: Fefonz, looking at ways all sorts of things in life can "intoxicate" us in a negative sense.

Stim Morane: OK, thanks, Wester.

Stim Morane: Any more volunteers?

Stim Morane: I need 2 more ...

Stim Morane: :)

Fefonz Quan: intoxicate as: obscure our sight, effect us negatively, make us more selfish etc?

Stim Morane: Yes, Fefonz, that kind of stuff.

Stim Morane: But also, other things quite beyond those.

Eliza Madrigal: If I do that, I might not be here to talk about the exploration... might not sign on SL :)

Stim Morane: :)

sophia Placebo: i want to but im not sure i can make it next week :)

Stim Morane: Well, shall we risk counting you as a volunteer, Eliza?

Fefonz Quan: Stim didn't mean not to do them, just observe Eliiza :)

Eliza Madrigal: Sure :)

Stim Morane: OK. Good.

Fefonz Quan: i cna try too

Stim Morane: Sophia, we probably shouldn't rely on you as one of the 3 then.

Fefonz Quan: can

Stim Morane: OK, thanks, fefonz. And sophia, perhaps you'll be able to join us and contribute too.

Stim Morane: So, let's see what we can do, based on the volunteers' reports!

Wester Kiranov: oh- I just realized I can't be here next week. but I can still work on the precept before.

Stim Morane: Thanks, everyone!

Stim Morane: See you again, hopefully!

Pila Mulligan: thank you Stim

Mickorod Renard: thankyou Stim

sophia Placebo: bye stim thanks

Fefonz Quan: Thank you Stim!

Cristal Kenyon: thx Stim
Adams Rubble: bye Stm. Thank you :)
Stim Morane: Well, Wester, we'll just have to make do.
genesis Zhangsun: bye Stim!
Stim Morane: Bye!
Scathach Rhiadra: bye Stim, thank you
Eliza Madrigal: Thank you Stim!
Wester Kiranov: thank you stim and all
Eliza Madrigal: Thanks for the link, Pila
Scathach Rhiadra: good night all, Namasté
sophia Placebo: bye all
Eliza Madrigal: And good that you could make it, Adams :)
Adams Rubble: night Scath
Mickorod Renard: nite scath
Adams Rubble: bye Sophia
Eliza Madrigal: Bye Everyone, thanks. Nite Scath