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Do you think we are in a revolutionary era now? Or is it more something on the horizon?

It's with us already, but with this caveat: it is what Gramsci calls *interregnum*, this period where the ideas that buttress the old ruling elite no longer hold sway, but we haven't articulated something to take its place. Chris Hedges [HERE](#)

INTERREGNUM ¹

The human condition is fraught with difficulties. On the macrocosmic level, we have wars and genocides, & phosphorus bombs, while on the microcosmic level, verbal violence can be just as lethal. I think Krishnamurti said something to the effect, that while some of us are protesting for peace, we have very destructive and fragmented patterns in our interpersonal lives. There seems to be a lack of consciousness, that in order to heal the Big Picture, we have to heal the Little Picture first. I suppose it all boils down to power. The power of the titanic multinational corporations to get their own way, down to the control freaks who like to herd people around them into patterns suitable for their own self aggrandizement. Let He or She Cast The First Stone! None of us are without blame. But in most cases, we seem to be without shame.

Personally, for me, the only balm for this fractured situation, has been a Buddhist analysis. It has not been easy to excavate an enlightened strategy from Buddhism when one is embedded in such a great vortex of ego and self, entrenched in a system in which altruism is a dirty word. We are all, to various extents, damaged goods. In that we suffer, because the blueprint from which we operate, in an existential sense, is not a blueprint at all - it is a Map of Hell, the cartography of ongoing, self-perpetuating suffering. No Peace will be forthcoming from a rotten map!

His Holiness the Dalai Lama :

"If we want a beautiful garden, we must first have a blueprint in the imagination, a vision. Then that idea can be implemented and the external garden be materialized."
^[1]

Michel De Certeau and Catherine Porter put it this way:

"A new way of seeing is giving rise to a way of constructing. Such is the question Nicholas of Cusa poses in *Icona*: what does it mean to "see"? how can a "vision" bring a new world into being?" ^[2]

¹ Sunday, October 16, 2005.

^[1] His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *The Little book of Wisdom*, Rider, London, 1997.

^[2] Michel De Certeau and Catherine Porter, *The Gaze Nicholas of Cusa*, *Diacritics*, Vol. 17, No. 3, Autumn, 1987, pp. 2-38.

I think that placing these ideas from the Dalai Lama and Nicholas of Cusa side by side, represents a meeting of the East and the West. Everyone has heard of the Dalai Lama, but Nicholas of Cusa has been forgotten. Yet, he was one of the greatest thinkers of the Renaissance. The question is not so much “. . . how can a "vision" bring a new world into being . . .” but: how can *vision* bring a new world into being. . .” A better word would be ‘envisioning’ - closer to the Dala Lama’s idea of: “. . . a blueprint in the imagination, a vision.” Another version of this idea comes from the transmissions within European esoteric currents, and it goes like this:

“Thoughts Are Man's Most Potent Builders.” [3]

In the context of this essay, these ‘thoughts’, ‘envisionings’ and ‘blueprints’ are not on the level of a shopping list for the supermarket. They are the thought processes, through which, hopefully, we can extricate our ‘selves’, both individuals and species, from the mess of shit into which we have painted our ‘selves’.

Prof. Robert Thurman qualifies this ‘type’ of knowledge very clearly:

“If you’re a twentieth-century teacher, who can say what the twenty-first century will want? We would think somebody would have to be enlightened to be able to do that, and we don’t really have a concept of such a kind of enlightenment. But Tibetan Buddhists do. They know that enlightened knowledge does not just include knowledge of spiritual matters, but it also includes an awareness of how humanity develops and evolves.” [4]

This is a very important point. In Buddhism, I would venture to speculate, it is embodied, in an esoteric sense in the operations of Maitreya the Future Buddha . . .

“. . . enlightened knowledge does not just include knowledge of spiritual matters, but it also includes an awareness of how humanity develops and evolves.”

Do we have a vision of what we would like the future to be?

I recently had the good fortune to see a video of a lecture given by Stanislav Grof, and I was deeply impressed by the man. Grof, through his epochal book, *Realms of the Human Unconscious*, 1975, had an enormous influence on my thinking, and certainly helped to lay the tracks to the point where I am in time and space, in terms of my research. To use the words of Howard Rheingold, in his review of another Grof book: *The Adventure of Self-Discovery* “. . . Grof lays out a preliminary *cartography of consciousness* . . .” This I discovered, as my own researches advanced into the Underground Stream, of the Tarot, Alchemy, and so forth . . . eventually coalesced into a Hermetic vision behind all the various esoteric manifestations.

But it is more than a mere *cartography of consciousness* that Grof is presenting. At the moment I am reading his later work: *The Cosmic Game: Explorations of the Frontiers of Human Consciousness*: where he writes:

[3] One can overlook the sexist “Man’s” and perhaps replace it with “Humanity’s”.

[4] Robert Thurman, Treasure Teachings, An Interview with Robert Thurman, *Parabola*, Winter 1994, pp. 7-16.

“In the last few decades, it has become increasingly clear that humanity is facing a crisis of unprecedented proportions.” p.219

“The problems that stand in the way are not of an economical or technological nature. The deepest sources of the global crisis lie inside the human personality and reflect the level of conscious evolution of our species. Because of the untamed forces in the human psyche, unimaginable resources are being wasted in the absurdity of the arms race, power struggle, and pursuit of “unlimited growth.” These elements of human nature also prevent a more appropriate distribution of wealth among individuals and nations, as well as a reorientation from purely economical and political concerns to ecological priorities that are critical for survival of life on this planet.” p.219-220

...

Stanislav Grof:

“Considering the paramount role of violence and greed in human history, the possibility of transforming modern humanity into a species of individuals capable of peaceful coexistence with their fellow men and women regardless of race, colour, and religious or political conviction, let alone with other species, certainly does not seem very plausible.”²

Humanity's world view is altering beyond our wildest imaginings. Jung externalizes an aspect of this as the Collective Mind, the Universal Storehouse of all symbols. In his LSD therapy, Dr Grof discovered individuals with intense abilities to translate their inner associations with re-incarnatory patterns to 'complex and elaborate sequences of motor activity.' These manifested in particular as mudras, spontaneously assumed asanas, dance forms from various unconnected cultures; Bushman trace dances, African tribal rituals, belly dancing, whirling dervishes, Javanese, Balinese, Indonesian, Kathakali and Manipuri dance forms, all from subjects with absolutely no cultural connections with those traditions. The 'ethnic look' of alternative culture is another example.

Frank Herbert qualifies this in '*The Children of Dune*':

"You can discover the future in the past or in your own imagination. Doing this, you win back your consciousness in your inner being. You know then that the universe is a coherent whole and you are indivisible from it."

From the holistic point of view, the Hermetic Law of Analogy, the 'As Above, So Below' we can consider the ordering of human consciousness as an essentially Hermetic operation. If human consciousness is a microcosmic paradigm of the universal mind, what evidence or experience do we have to confirm this?

Certainly, the work of C.G. Jung and the subsequent Jungian school, has achieved a great victory in introducing the term 'archetype' into scientific language. Another source of evidence for the ordering of human consciousness, is the complete research and publications of the work of Dr Stanislav Groff. In his book '*Realms of Consciousness*' his field of research is the LSD experience:

² Stanislav Grof , *The Cosmic Game: Explorations of the Frontiers of Human Consciousness*, SUNY Press, Albany, NY, 1998, p.220

"Most LSD subjects have also stated that they experience consciousness of a particular material; most frequently it was diamond, granite, gold and steel. Similar experiences can reach even the microworld and depict the dynamic structure of the atoms, the nature of the electromagnetic forces involved, the world of interatomic bonds, or the Brownian dance of the molecules.

In the light of such phenomenological realms, LSD subjects often consider the possibility that consciousness is a basic cosmic phenomena related to the organization of energy, and that it exists throughout the universe; in this context, human consciousness appears to be one of its many varieties and outgrowths."

For instance, Groff found that we contain "...animal autosymbolic transformations", "Animal identifications" and "animal phylogenetic memories."

"Somewhere in the background of our ancestral memory we have a fossilized stratum recalling that the earth put forth great and successive efforts in order to engender beings that could stand upright. The biblical serpent who appears upright is the symbolic descendent of the great saurians of early geological epochs, creatures that occupied the planet for millions of years prior to man's appearance. This serpent is, then, the symbol of the most alive creature that earth was able to produce until a certain epoch."

We must bear in mind that the descendents of the great saurians are still very much with us, in the collective form of reptiles and birds. But rather than see these creatures as external to us - we could frame the entire context of the above, in the light of Stanislav Groff's '*Realms of Consciousness*' LSD research, which indicates that we contain the saurian and reptilian, as a continuity of consciousness, within us. In other words, or in a reincarnatory Jurassic Park sense, I was a dinosaur in one, or many of my past lives. And so were we all.

Now to turn to Carlos Soares:

"Nahhash (the serpent), carrier of all the memories of time, of all forgotten wisdom, now has the mission of transmitting duration to these two new beings; ..." &c. ³

Ukraine . . . only last year there were massive public demonstrations which resulted in the government being thrown out for corruption. A year later, and with a new government, evidence indicates that the corruption levels are even worse than before.

I have a scan of about 30 pages of key passages from *Realms of the Human Unconscious*.

REVIEW OF : *The Adventure of Self-Discovery*, Stanislav Grof, SUNY, Albany NY, 1988; 321 pp.

Systematic clinical research in the use of psychedelic drugs was a major casualty of the cultural revolution triggered by LSD. Stanislav Grof, virtually the sole survivor of the

³ Carlo Soares, *Esha-Hheva-Eve- Woman*, *Maitreya* magazine.

original psychedelic researchers, began his research in Prague and moved it to the United States in 1968. Among the tens of thousands of psychedelic trips he investigated, as participant as well as observer, were thousands of legal LSD sessions with dying patients. His findings in that field – evidence of painkilling as well as spiritually uplifting potential of guided trips by terminal patients – remain as a challenge to those who must deal with the dying.

In this book, Grof lays out a preliminary cartography of consciousness. One of the theoretical lenses Grof uses to focus on the common elements of psychedelic experience is his idea of "Condensed Experience (COEX)" structures which emerge during different stages of psychedelic trips, near-death experiences, and other unusual states.

Many hundreds of times, Grof observed how various stages of what appeared to be the process of experiencing birth surfaced in these states. He also observed a range of religious, mythological, and paranormal phenomena, all of which he attempts to map in this book. Hindu gods, Nordic mythology, extraterrestrial guardians, archetypal entities abound in the psychedelic sessions Grof describes, and he provides a taxonomy linking mythological, religious, and deep psychological imagery with the cartography of the psychedelic journey. Of particular interest is the emergence of a new category of experience Grof has noted in recent years: the strong, often life-changing experience of knowing that the Earth is a living organism, and is wounded, and crying out to be healed.

– Howard Rheingold

TOTALATARIANISM

they are not artists themselves, and they feed off the carrion of the creative process of others. They are actually bottom-feeders, like the river turtles that feed off the bums of hippos.

INTERREGNUM ⁴

"The late 20th century has shown (is showing) signs of a new cultural barbarism and an increasingly uncultured consumerism."

Now, 20 years later, at the first decade of the 21st century, I think these words have even more significance. The late Soviet film director Andrei Tarkovsky said:

"We've reached a time when we must declare open warfare on mediocrity, greyness and a lack of expressiveness, and make creative enquiry a rule . . ."

Sadly enough, the very opposite has become the norm: the *Dumbing Down – Domination of Lowest Common denominator* . . . Tarkovsky would turn in his grave if he could see the vulgarity of Reality TV. Though materialism is triumphant, the truth of the matter, is that we have entered the phase of The Living Dead. Homo Economicus is not the culmination of human evolution, but its ossification. Or so we are made to believe. Global Empires have come and gone, and this cyclic vision of history is shared by Eastern philosophies, and the great English historian, Sir Arnold Toynbee, who sums up the situation thus:

⁴ This was the title of: *A Workshop on Creative Struggle against Cultural Hegemony from a Hermetic Perspective*; which I gave at Hiroshima Mon Amour, a cultural club in Turin, Italy, about 20 years ago.

“Even during the painful process of disintegration, the spirit of creativity — or the ability to respond to challenges — is not utterly overwhelmed: but in order to carry forward the work of creation in a disintegrating society, some alternative channel must be found.”

And Antonio Gramsci writes:

“The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this *interregnum* a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.”

It is evidentially certain, that these *morbid symptoms* have appeared with greater frequency since Gramsci wrote those words.

“This short workshop will look at the struggle for creativity, using paradigms gathered from the Tarot, symbolic and visual material in Hermetic & alchemical systems, as well as depth psychology, information theory, semiotics, & mythology in general. The workshop is specifically aimed at people working in visual creative fields, artists, theatre, dance, film and so on. Illustrations will be shown.”

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C. G. Jung:

“No thinking person will wish to claim that the present state of affairs represents a durable end-state. On the contrary, everyone is convinced that the tempo of change and transition has speeded up immeasurably. Everything has become fragmented and dissolved, and it is impossible to see how a “higher” synthesis could take place in any of the spiritual organizations that still survive without their having to be modified to an almost intolerable degree. One of the greatest obstacles to such a synthesis is sectarianism, which is always right and displays no tolerance, picking and fomenting quarrels for the holiest of reasons in order to set itself up in the place of religion and brand anyone who thinks differently as a lost sheep, if nothing worse. But have any human beings the right to totalitarian claims? This claim, certainly, is so morally dangerous that we would do better to leave its fulfilment to Almighty God rather than presume to be little gods ourselves at the expense of our fellow-men.”⁵

Frances A. Yates

“The profound dissatisfaction with the world of today which is felt by so many people has its roots in a distrust of science, in the impression that man's increased knowledge of nature and his ability to use that knowledge as power, has not led him in the right directions. He has become imprisoned in technologies, reduced in status as a human being, enslaved by the unforeseen results of applied science. This dissatisfaction has given rise to a widespread search for religious values, an interest in the hidden or the 'esoteric' in the hope that this may lead back to a lost sense of purpose or meaning in the world.

⁵ C. G. Jung, *M. C.* p.321

New approaches to the history of science have revealed that the scientific advances of the Renaissance and early modern period arose in the context of a tremendous movement of religious interest in the world of nature as a manifestation of the divine, a movement in which influences which today would be labelled 'Hermetic' or 'esoteric' played a part."

... ..

Frances A. Yates

"The word 'renaissance' means 'rebirth' and it is expressive of the way the movement was understood by the scholars and thinkers who created it. They believed themselves to be reviving, or returning to, earlier and better times, not abandoning the past for the future, but seeing the future as a child of the past." ⁶

Herman Hesse:

"They dreamed of a universal synthesis, and combining profound contemplation with keen observant faculties, the experimental with *a priori* methods, they sought to arrive at those realities which underlie phenomena, 'in more common but emblematic words', they sought for the substance which is at the base of the vulgar metals." ⁷

JEAN GEBSER OBSERVED that all transitional ages bear a dangerous, Janus-faced character. Light and darkness, violence and catharsis, crisis and opportunity all mix and intermingle. In our own era of increasing political upheaval and ecological devastation, Gebser's words are as prescient now as they were half a century ago. As our external future becomes increasingly denatured and decultured, the equilibrium we seek may lie less in material solutions, and more in the fundamental question of consciousness. When the extremes of cynicism and optimism fail us, a more discerning investigation of our Janus-faced times is called for. Critical challenges must be navigated as clandestine opportunities for the manifestation of a new consciousness. Only by engaging crisis as a creative death are we able to embrace the potential irruptions of the integral reality hidden in our fragmented world.

This conference invites its participants to examine the liminal space of "Crisis and Mutation" in order to concretize the ever-latent (yet ever-present) origin. In doing this we seek to unveil the integral presence underpinning the complex and conflicting undulations of human evolution.

Some of the questions this conference seeks to address include:

How can the symptoms of disintegration that fragment our world be understood as negative indicators of the integral (i.e. what is the solution hidden in the dissolution)?

How can tension be used to liberate ourselves from the extremes that create this very tension?

⁶ Frances A. Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, Paladin, 1975.

⁷ Herman Hesse, *The Glass Bead Game*.

What is the "alchemy" of consciousness by which we can engage and transmute deficient manifestations into integral concretions?

<http://www.gebser.org/conference>

VACLAV HAVEL

"In this world, categories like justice, honour, treason, friendship, infidelity, courage or empathy have a wholly tangible content, relating to actual persons and actual life.... The natural world, in virtue of its very being, bears within it the presupposition of the Absolute which grounds, delimits, animates and directs it, and without which it would be unthinkable. This Absolute is something which we can only quietly respect; any attempt to spurn it, master it or replace it with something else appears ... as an expression of *hybris* for which humans must pay a heavy price, as did Don Juan and Faust.

To me, personally, the smokestack soiling the heavens is not just a regrettable lapse of technology.... It is a symbol of an epoch which denies the binding importance of personal experience ... crashes through the bounds of the natural world, which it can only understand as a prison of prejudices ... an unfortunate leftover from our backward ancestors, a fantasy of their childish immaturity. With that, of course, it abolishes as mere fiction even the innermost foundation of our natural world: it kills God and takes His place on the vacant throne, so that henceforth it might be science which, as sole legitimate guardian, holds the order of being in its hand.... The fault is not one of science as such but of the arrogance of humankind in the age of science. Humans simply are not God, and playing God has cruel consequences.... We have rejected our responsibility as 'subjective illusion' and in its place installed what is now proving to be the most dangerous illusion of all: the fiction of objectivity stripped of all that is concretely human, of a rational understanding of the cosmos, and of an abstract schema of a putative 'historical necessity' ... and technologically achievable 'universal welfare,' demanding no more than experimental institutes to invent it while industrial and bureaucratic factories turn it into reality. The fact that millions of people will be sacrificed to this illusion in scientifically directed concentration camps is not something that concerns our 'modern person' unless by chance he or she lands behind barbed wire and is thrown back drastically upon his or her natural world.... The chimney 'soiling the heavens' is not just a technologically corrigible design error, or a tax paid for a better tomorrow, but a symbol of a civilization which has renounced the Absolute, which ignores the natural world and disdains its imperatives. So, too, the totalitarian systems warn of something far more serious than Western rationalism is willing to admit. They are, most of all, a convex mirror... of its own deep tendencies ... not merely dangerous neighbours, and, even less, some kind of an *avant garde* of world progress. Alas, just the opposite.... Perhaps somewhere there may be some generals who think that it would be best to dispatch such systems from the face of the earth and then all would be well. But that is no different from a plain girl trying to get rid of her plainness by smashing the mirror which reminds her of it." ⁸

⁸ Vaclav Havel, "Anti-Political Politics," in John Keane, ed., *Civil Society and the State* (London: Verso, 1988), pp. 381-398