

TRANSCRIPT

In Search of A New Culture: Perspectives on Human Flourishing *Talk given Oct. 29, 2022 at the World Goodwill Seminar in New York*

Christine Morgan

Hello and welcome to the final phase of the World Goodwill Seminar coming to you from New York. This phase of the Seminar builds on the two meetings broadcast from Geneva and London earlier today. We have had Geneva's presentations on "A New Culture, A New Civilisation" and another on the Light of love, approached from an African and Sufi perspective. Then from London, Jan Karlin, spoke on the challenge of true creativity and culture in an age of entertainment; and Max Haiven spoke about his work on the Radical Imagination, based on the premise that our society and therefore culture, is the product of our collective imagination, and therefore it is through the imagination that we must change it. And so we look forward now to further rich and varied presentations with guest speakers, Jude Currivan, a cosmologist, planetary healer, futurist and author, Janice Garrett, a choreographer and dance educator, and John Fullerton, who has described himself as an unconventional economist and the architect of Regenerative Economics.

So how do all these seemingly disparate fields come together under the banner of a new global culture and what do we even mean by culture? In a recent mailing we discussed how the word 'Culture' has its metaphorical roots in the plant kingdom – from the Latin cultura: the tilling of land to prepare the earth for crops, and how the ancient Roman orator, Cicero, was the first to use the term as an agricultural metaphor to describe the cultivation of the soul or "cultura animi". Cicero's works rank among the most influential in global culture – the central idea being the cultivation of a 'philosophical soul' as the highest possible ideal for human development. And this is surely the primary goal for a new culture – a shifting away from materialism towards inclusive spiritual thought and expression. This motivates all World Goodwill activities – to make steady progress towards a culture of goodwill – goodwill being a dynamic, transformative energy.

It is this energy of goodwill that promotes "human flourishing" as referred to in our seminar title. The concept of 'flourishing' is more accurately related to joy than happiness and wellbeing, for joy is a quality of the soul rather than the personality. Joy is experienced through a life of virtue and reason that allows the energy of the soul free passage through all aspects of the personality life, conveying a sense of psychological levitation – a raising upwards. It is a truly religious experience and the reason why joy and the related word, 'Rejoice,' have such strong Christian associations; in the words of St. Paul: "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice."² Joy should be the outstanding quality of the religious life but, as the initiative Theology of Joy and the Good Life observes:

"Notwithstanding the importance of joy to human well-being and the deep, ancient religious foundations for understanding and cultivating joy, the very idea of joy has all but disappeared from modern theological reflection, is all but ignored by the social sciences, and is increasingly absent from lived experience. The consequence is a 'flattening out,' a 'graying,' of human life and communities – abundance of entertainment notwithstanding – and a sharp bloom of individual and communal dysfunction."

It is heartening therefore, to see joy and flourishing emerging as features of the new and rapidly growing field of the “positive humanities” – an area of research that brings together positive psychology and the arts and humanities. Furthermore, a research project associated with UNESCO’s Futures of Education initiative has proposed that “flourishing is the central purpose of education.” Summarizing research from around the world, the recently published project report includes a section on Education and Human Flourishing.

Through all these initiatives and more, we can surely detect the dynamic beginnings of a new science of social evolution to which the Alice Bailey writings refer – one that is based on the flowering of the spirit within each individual, and which, from the esoteric perspective, is vividly portrayed in the following ancient formula:

"Out of the lotus in the head springs the flower of bliss.
Its earliest form is joy.
Out of the lotus in the heart springs the flower of love.
Its earliest indication, wisdom is.
Out of the lotus in the throat emerges the flower of living forms.
The earliest sign is understanding of the Plan." ^{DINA I}

It is difficult to think of a new culture without this reawakening of a new religious impulse, one which unites people everywhere and is open to the existence of a conscious and ordered Plan or pattern behind outer events. This is the sense that evolution is being driven forward by a majestic purpose, and that the unfolding qualities of every unit of life, no matter how small and seemingly insignificant, are needed to fulfil it. Surely one of the most pressing needs of our time is this sense of working in a purposeful universe driven by goodwill. It is characteristic of a truly religious impulse, born from a sense of wonder about the world and the nature of existence. It injects life with meaning that can revolutionize attitudes and strengthen the bridge to the subtle worlds of consciousness.

This sense of wonder as expressed by the very young, is also a vital ingredient in education and it should extend into their formative years as well as in teenage life, driving minds and imaginations on a lifelong quest for meaning. In contrast to the tendency to overemphasize intellectuality, a recent initiative entitled – The Wonderful Education project – highlighted the importance of fostering the intimate connection between wonder, education and various aspects of human flourishing, proposing that “Wonder-full education...could promote human flourishing in three main ways: by stimulating learning, morality, and spirituality.”

Anders Schinkel, in a paper entitled Wonder, Mystery and Meaning, notes that inquisitive wonder is an active, searching attitude, a wondering *about* something that is resolved when the answer is found. Deep, contemplative, or existential wonder is not merely passive. He says, “The experience of wonder, especially of contemplative wonder, is often one suggestive of a deeper or higher meaning; the pull one feels is that of a deeper meaning, not that of the comfort of everyday meaning. Wonder unsettles—exposes the limitations of—existing frameworks of understanding, ...we do not return to them and cling to them, but we seek to go beyond them, to more encompassing ones.”

It is this same sense of contemplative wonder that leads us to search for meaning – a progressively deeper understanding of the purpose of life, and identification with it. And as Professor Schinkel recognizes, it can be an unsettling experience as it replaces established patterns of thought in which a certain sense of security and identity has been invested. But, if we work creatively to cultivate a positive tension, we can break through the veils that enshroud the everyday world to reveal a realm of meaning. Interestingly, the word ‘wonder’ is related to the German Wunde (wundt) or wound and suggests a breach in the membrane of awareness, a sudden opening in a man’s system of established and expected meanings, a blow as if one were struck or stunned. “To be wonderstruck is to be wounded by the sword of the strange event, to be stabbed awake by the striking.” [Howard L. Parsons]

It’s probably fair to say then that the astronomical community, as well as many of the general public, have been stabbed awake by some of the beautiful and surprising images that have been recently transmitted to earth by the James Webb Space Telescope. The universe is revealing even more structure and order than was commonly thought to exist and the wonderful mystery of creation grows deeper than ever, the beautiful, jewel like galaxies hinting that there is intelligent direction behind cosmic evolution.

So now I’m looking forward to listening to our first speaker so let me hand you over to Michael to introduce Jude Currivan.

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Creativity – A Pathway to Connection and Wholeness

Talk given Oct. 29, 2022 at the World Goodwill Seminar in New York

Janice Garrett

I'm really honored to be joining all of you in this discussion centering on the search for a new culture and perspectives on human flourishing, and I'm hoping to contribute to the conversation by sharing my experience of creativity as a potent vehicle for experiencing and expressing connection and wholeness.

Informing this presentation is my understanding that as human beings, we are all creators and we each carry within us an unbounded capacity to create, to give birth to ideas and impulses that flow from our spirits through our imaginations. The life force that flows through us is by its nature, boundlessly creative and we are each given the extraordinary gift of being able to bring this creative flow into manifestation in an infinite variety of forms. And I believe that at this particular time in our evolution, we're being invited and in fact, really heartily encouraged to access our deepest reservoirs of creativity to address the existential crises of our time through the unitive consciousness that Jude has so eloquently articulated in her presentation.

What I'll be sharing with you is a combination of video excerpts and reflections on the creative path that I've traveled for the past 45 years, initially as a professional dancer and subsequently as a choreographer and dance educator.

Though I trained at university as a mathematician, in my early twenties I discovered that dancing and all of its exacting rigor and joyous ebullience enabled me to experience myself, or perhaps better said my non-self, as pure energy or consciousness. And throughout my career, it's continued to be a powerful medium that's served to connect me with that which is universal, enabling me to experience, a sense of oneness with all of life. In this way, I consider myself to be extraordinarily blessed to be engaged in both a profession and a spiritual path that continually encourages and supports this awareness.

The work that I'll be sharing with you today is work that I've done in collaboration with my creative and life partner, Charles Moulton. Together over almost two decades, we've focused on exploring and expressing through our choreography the oneness and the interconnectedness of the human family. While recognizing that this oneness of life extends beyond the bounds of human life, and in fact includes the wholeness of all of life, our work has dealt with the human side of the equation, and we've dedicated ourselves to working with the human body through the mediums of movement and dance.

In doing this, one of the primary modalities that we've worked with is a theatrical form that we've evolved, which we call a movement choir. And the movement choir is a group of dancers who, much like the traditional Greek chorus, form a unified collective body that serves to comment upon and amplify the action in the choreographic work.

It reflects a sense of shared human experience that embodies both the earthly and the ethereal, and it can convey a wide spectrum of experience ranging from a very grounded physical sense of community to representing at times the invisible forces that penetrate and move our lives.

The first video excerpt that I want to share with you is the opening section of a full evening-length piece set to the Italian Baroque composer Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, *Stabat Mater*. For those of you that don't know, *Stabat Mater* is the 13th century Christian hymn that depicts the sorrow and suffering of the Mother Mary in witnessing the crucifixion of Christ.

We chose to work with this piece, both because of its overwhelmingly beautiful articulation of sorrow and grief, and also the message of transformation that informs and infuses it. The music and

the choreography convey the understanding that from the depths of grief and inner darkness, there can be a resurrection of the light.

As you'll see in this video, the movement choir serves as a kind of living architecture, perhaps like a cathedral, a temple, a shrine, through which a group of five solo dancers travel and interact. And the pieces of shared journey in which the 24 performers individually and together are striving toward the light. And you'll see lots of uplifted gestures and reaching movements, all of which are appealing to the greater forces of the universe to address our yearning, to be aware of ourselves as transcendence vessels of light and of love.

Video excerpt available at:

https://www.lucitrust.org/world_goodwill/seminar/2022_seminar_details#gwsNY2022archive

The next excerpt that I want share with you is another example of a large group performance piece. This one created by my collaborative partner, Charlie Moulton, that weaves together aspects of our movement choir work with his signature ball passing piece. Ball passing is an iconic postmodern dance work in which the simple act of passing a Nerf ball becomes a model for cooperation and a metaphor for the interdependence and interconnectedness of the human family.

For both the participants and the audience. It's intended to uplift, unite, and inspire through the joy of collective endeavor. Over the years, many different versions of this piece have been created. This one, which involves 72 performers, is the largest to date and involves an intergenerational cast with ages ranging from 14 to 68 and participants from all walks of life, including students, IT professionals, firefighters, healthcare workers, teachers to name a few. Before we view this excerpt, I just want to say a few words about play. In our work, Charlie and I have discovered the importance of liberating the imagination through play, improvisation, and other spontaneous acts of delight.

In our efforts to discover and create forms that elevate, enliven, energize, and promote states of optimism, we've found that finding time to be playful is crucial and can easily go against the impulse to be productive all the time and to not ever waste time. And yet some of our favorite creations have been born of unanticipated moments of play that have led to surprising developments and unpremeditated wonderful results. And play is definitely a part of this next excerpt that you're going to see, which is from 72 person ball passing.

Video excerpt available at:

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In closing I wanted to say a couple of things and the main thing is that I really believe we're poised at a place in history in which we're being asked to direct our creative impulses toward a higher order. As transmitters of light, we have an infinite capacity to open doorways to new paradigms, and to engage in shared endeavors that embody the beauty, the complexity, the interdependence, and the interconnectedness of our existence. These can be small, delicate, daily acts of creation, a thought, a word, a gesture that we extend to ourselves and to the world that play a real role in restoring our spirits and enable us not just to survive, but to truly flourish.

Thank you all so much for letting me share this with you, and I look forward to continuing our conversation in the panel discussion later in the seminar.

TRANSCRIPT

How an Emergent Unitive Narrative Can Heal our Past and Transform our Future

Talk given Oct. 29, 2022 at the World Goodwill Seminar in New York

Dr. Jude Currivan

I'm going to be showing some of the evidence, the leading edge, scientific breakthroughs and discoveries that are really revealing what Chris was sharing with us: that unity isn't an aspiration, it is our existential reality. And of course, that's very different from what we've been told before, but it is true that this is now the case.

I'm going to share today how an emergent unitive narrative can heal our past and transform our future. We're a social species, as human beings, we've shared narratives, we've shared stories to try and understand the nature of the world and our place in it.

And to do that, we sought to embrace and reconcile both our inner and outer experiences and, as Chris said, to imbue them with meaning and purpose. Over time, our narratives have evolved as our understanding of the nature of our universe and reality and the deeper sense of that has also evolved.

And Chris referred to the gorgeous images that we're now getting from Hubble, we're now getting from the James Webb space telescopes. But even beyond those, discoveries are revealing that the appearance of our universe is not its fundamental reality. A number of scientists are coming forward to stand alongside those of us who have been saying this for some time, and the evidence is now becoming more and more compelling that this is indeed the case.

Our current narrative has been based on a secular science of solely materialistic reality and the appearance of separation. It has described a universe that's bereft of meaning and purpose, where evolution is seen to be driven by random occurrences and mutations and where immaterial mind and consciousness somehow and solely arise from material brains. And all of this now is being completely upturned.

Good scientists have always, and will always, I hope, follow the evidence. The evidence is now leading us across numerous fields of research and at all scales of existence to essentially a 180-degree turn to that perspective of materialism and separation. Instead, it's revealing a wholeworld-view of non-locally unified reality and a conscious, evolutionary universe (essentially a living universe) that meaningfully and purposefully exists and evolves. What we're seeing is a universe that actually embodies an innate evolutionary impulse to evolve from simplicity to ever greater levels of complexity, diversity, perceptions of individuated awareness, interdependence and inter-being. And ultimately and vitally, it is a living, meaningful and purposeful universe. As my friend Ervin Laszlo said, this evidence is re-enchanting the cosmos.

And I'd love to hear what Janice has to say in terms of the arts because one of the things that I know, having written *The Cosmic Hologram* five years ago and now *The Story of Gaia*, is it's not so much facts that change people, it's emotions. And there's a wonderful quote "the role of the artist is to make the evolution irresistible." I'm inviting, welcoming all artists everywhere to really feel into the existential reality of this new wholeworld-view and, and imagine and bring forward and share the wonder, the joy and the gratitude for its new and unitive narrative.

Our universe began nearly 14 billion years ago, not in the implied chaos of a big bang. It wasn't big, it was minute. And it wasn't a bang. We now know that it was extremely fine-tuned and incredibly ordered, and the simplest it would ever be. And from that first moment, of what I call an ongoing big breath, space has expanded and time has flowed forwards. Our universe, we also are now finding to be innately informed with meaningful in-formation being its fundamental stuff, and that its appearance of energy-matter and space-time emerge from deeper non-physical realms of cosmic intelligence and causation, as a meaningfully informed, conscious and living universe. Space expands

and time flows to have, to embody, to experience, to evolve to ever greater levels of complexity and diversity. Essentially though, is to understand that as it does so it exists and evolves as a unified entity. While we have bought into a hitherto paradigm of separation, we're now able to wake up. And of course, many of our beloved brothers and sisters, and especially indigenous communities have always understood this. We are inseparable. We and our planetary home, Gaia, and our entire universe are literally inseparable.

From that first moment of beginning—and we're seeing some of these glorious early images with the James Webb telescope—there was a very purposeful shepherding of the very earliest and meaningful information expressed as energy-matter eventually into stars. And in their centers, a wondrous alchemy fueled the emergence from simplicity to complexity of all the chemical elements. And all of those elements came into being through generations of stars. I sometimes describe the very early stars as a bit like rock stars. They lived hard and they died young. But my goodness me, the legacy they gave to us was wonderful, because at the end of their lives, they exploded and all of those nutrients were joyfully spread throughout the space between them.

So this slide is a James Webb image. And you see the blue of space, but then you see this brown, amazing image of what's called an interstellar dust cloud. And in that interstellar dust cloud and ones like it, we were born. Our planetary system and many, many others were born. And these clouds, they are the planetary wombs - creches . They are the birthing places of solar systems and planetary homes. And we now know that the harbingers of biological life, all of the elements, ice, and complex pre-biotic molecules and bathed by ultraviolet light, came into being in such clouds. These were the precursors to our entire planetary home, Gaia, its wonderful diversity and ultimately ourselves.

And we are part of a wondrous trinity of Gaia, our sun Sol and our moon Luna. Gaia, is the perfect distance from our star, Sol, located in the goldilocks zone and so able to be a water planet. And our moon, Luna, is perfect size to help sustain Gaia; we're almost a binary system. She keeps us stable. She nurtured us in the very early days of our planetary home, when Sol shone significantly less brightly than now to ensure that in those conditions we didn't become a frozen planet but continue to be a water planet. The three, Sol, Luna, and Gaia, form a family within a solar family of other planetary siblings.

Gaia was the name given to the Earth goddess, as some of you I'm sure will know, by the ancient Greeks who saw her as a living being. James Lovelock, a pioneering planetary scientist, realized many decades ago that she is a completely interdependent planetary system. And although Jim would not probably have gone as far to acknowledge the innate sentience of Gaia, we're now realizing that our planetary home is a living planet, being within a living Universe. And she too has evolved over the last four and a half billion years. Again, continuing the universal emergence from simplicity to complexity, the birth of biological children, eventually to ourselves, and all of her atmosphere, her hydrosphere - her waters, her geosphere of rocks and minerals, and of course her biosphere are completely interdependent and evolving as a co-evolutionary dynamic partnership.

And the whole journey from simplicity to this complexity, has been one of collaboration on many different levels. And when those great leaps have happened, from single cell to multi cellular, to ecosystems, to human beings, to all that we have brought forward, all of which is part of the whole that has been guided meaningfully, purposefully, and in cooperative relationships.

Our human future of potential flourishing, is calling for us to now literally embody Gaia's wisdom to co-operate, to synergize, to link up and lift up, to realize that we are absolutely embedded in her web of life.

And more than human beings, we are Gaians. And if we can grow up, as Ken Wilber said, and show up and clean up – knowing that we'll talk about the healing that's needed as we awake from the illusion of separation. Because our worldview of separation in many ways have driven a world of

suffering, whereas a wholeworld-view of unified reality and its unity expressed in diversity supports a world where peace is a natural outcome rather than conflict, where justice and fairness and inclusion are natural outcomes and behaviors. And where its unitive narrative that it enables to be articulated can underpin and frame such transformational change.

So even more than star dust our history goes even further back. The hydrogen in our bodies is almost as old as the Universe, and we embody its distributed and non-local intelligence. To just summarize at this point, mind and consciousness aren't something we have, they are literally what we and the whole world are. Our Universe is a great and finite thought of an infinite and eternal cosmic mind.

I'm sharing this from a perspective of breakthroughs and evidence. This is what the evidence is showing us. This is what ancient wisdom teachings have always told us. What spiritual traditions and teachings and experiences have revealed to us. And our Universe exists to evolve. As a meaningfully in-formed and holographically manifested entity, its appearance is a projection of consciousness. Everything in existence has meaning and purpose. *We* have therefore innate meaning and purpose as it's microcosmic co-creators.

The question for us, today and ongoing is what do we choose now? This understanding, this new and unitive narrative, is also helping us and vitally because of the evidence that is being discovered, to naturalize mystical experiences, multidimensional engagement and communication, archetypal realities and communications, and coherent group consciousness. It is showing us the empowerment of coming together in love. In love. As simple as that, when we begin to think and feel and speak from this understanding of inseparability, of unity in diversity. Our group consciousness, because we are inseparable and we are vibrational beings, heightens the possibilities of what we can inspire and transform, as Gaians, to such new adventures and wonders.

In a sense, beyond conscious evolution is conscious (r)evolution and beyond the ego me-empowerment is our collective we and all empowerment. And beyond change, this offers us an opportunity for transformation. And I would suggest beyond wellbeing, this is a journey, a remembering of our whole being. And beyond unity and diversity and inclusion is our belonging. We don't need to ask permission. We belong as Gaians in a living and evolutionary universe.

So I would suggest that this can help us heal our dismembered psyche. This can help us heal our disease of separation. And there's much to do and to share, and explore and come together to allow that, to embody that. But what this also does in terms of perhaps inviting us forward, it invites us to act local. And it matters because we relate, we belong, we involve, and it really calls us into the joy and the excitement of regeneration and sustaining. It invites us to link up and lift up together.

There is the old saying, "act local, think global." Well, at wholeworld-view we've added our little nuance to this, which is "act local, feel global" because we look after what we care about, we care for what we relate to, and we and Gaia are inseparable, we are Gaians. But then we've added a third which is "think cosmic." And it matters because we are co-evolutionary partners of our entire Universe. We are its microcosmic co-creators.

So we are being invited, it seems to me, with our conscious, (r)evolutionary opportunity to step up and step into that role that the whole Universe is asking of us.

A unitive narrative is articulated to invite, to really welcome that stepping forward and linking and lifting up and to invite us into an embodied wholebeing that is founded in hearing inwardly the wisdom of our hearts. And there's one key point here about the complementarity of feminine and masculine attributes, relatedness and perspectives, to co-create the synergies within and between us. Its unity guides us into a wholeness of the inner and outer being and doing of our lives.

And I'll finish by paraphrasing Teilhard de Chardin, who was a mentor of a beloved friend of mine, Jean Houston. Teilhard said a hundred or more years ago now, "Someday we shall harness the

energies of love, and then, for the second time in the history of the world, humanity will have discovered fire.” I would suggest that someday is here and now. This is what a unitive narrative speaks to. And as we wake up to the radical reality of a unitive narrative and the wholeworld-view evidence that underpins and frames it, in turn, the unitive narrative can underpin and frame our service to conscious evolution and transformational change. I would suggest that also as a species, we might discover and, perhaps for the first time, who we really and truly are, and who we can evolve to become.