

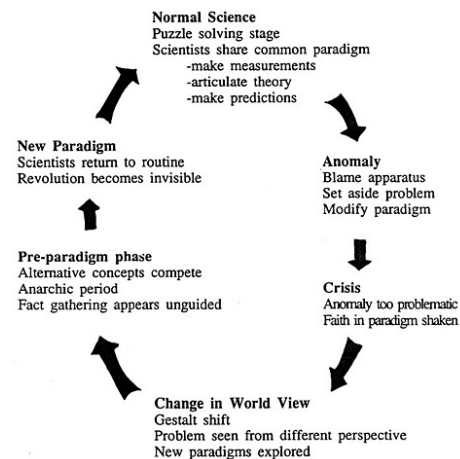
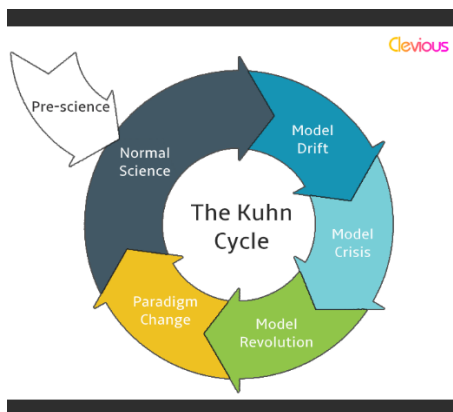


World Goodwill Seminar 2022 London

A Paradigm Shift for a New Global Culture?

Laurence Newey

In the early 1960's the term "Paradigm shift" found its way into the English language to describe "an important change that happens when the usual way of thinking about or doing something is replaced by a new and different way." The term comes from a book by the philosopher and physicist Thomas Kuhn entitled, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, which is one of the most cited academic books of all time – its influence spreading well beyond the field of science and into popular culture.



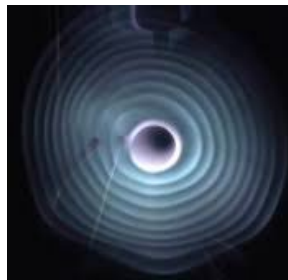
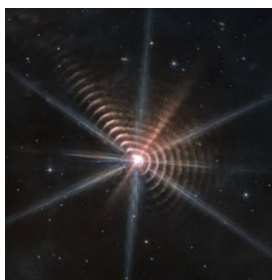
Thomas Kuhn believed that science does not evolve gradually towards truth, but is periodically forced to change in a dramatic fashion when a dominant model becomes incompatible with new phenomena. For a period the orthodox model drifts as it has to be continually adapted to accommodate new phenomena that it cannot explain. Eventually it becomes too broken to fix, and disappears in its entirety when a new paradigm that provides better explanations for the observations, takes its place.

Paradigm Shifts are important drivers in humanity's search for a new culture – and they're interesting symbols of the times we are living in; but what would help things along enormously, would be a major discovery that sets in motion a paradigm shift of equal significance to those associated with Galileo, Darwin and Einstein – one that indicates that we inhabit a living, purposeful universe in which humanity has its part to play.

It was out of Einstein's theory of General Relativity that the current model of an expanding "Big Bang" universe emerged. However, this model has been in the "drift stage" for some time now, with observations that it can't explain leading to adaptations and theoretical add-ons such as Black Holes, Dark Matter and Dark Energy. It is arguable that the model is now entering "Crisis stage" as yet more anomalies are revealed by the James Webb telescope causing ferment in the scientific community.

In a recent edition of *Scientific American*, the science writer Jonathan O'Callaghan wrote: In the weeks and months following James Webb Space Telescope's findings of surprisingly mature "early" galaxies, blindsided theorists and observers alike have been scrambling to explain them.... At stake is nothing less than our very understanding of how the orderly universe we know emerged from primordial chaos. The space telescope's early revelations could be poised to rewrite the opening chapters of cosmic history, which concern not only distant epochs and faraway galaxies but also our own existence here, in the familiar Milky Way." "You build these machines not to confirm the paradigm, but to break it," said a James Webb Telescope scientist Mark McCaughrean, a senior advisor for science and exploration at the European Space Agency. "You just don't know how it will break."

For anyone who would like to know more about the alternative Electric Universe model of cosmology, the website is www.Thunderbolts.info. Here though is an example of the type of laboratory experiment that is associated with this model and can reproduce some of the recent findings in space that the gravitational model struggles to explain.

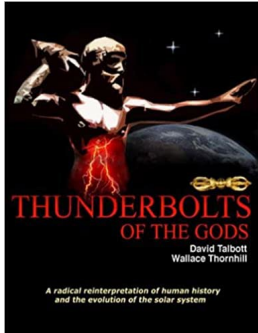


The image on the left from The James Webb Space Telescope shows mysterious concentric rings around a distant star WR 140 that astronomers are still working to explain.

Mark McCaughrean, called the structure bonkers. He said "the six-pointed blue structure could be an artifact created due to optical diffraction from the star... "But the curved but square red stuff is real, a series of shells around WR140. Actually in space. Around a star", he said. Another scientist remarked: "I think it's just nature doing something that is simple, but when we look at it from only one viewpoint it

seems impossible, at first, to understand that it is a natural phenomenon," "Why is it shaped the way it is? Why is it so regular?"

In fact, the phenomenon can be replicated in a plasma laboratory as we see on the right. When a metal anode is electrically charged in a plasma chamber, the plasma which is an electrified gas consisting of positive ions and free electrons isolates itself with thin walls of oppositely charged double layers, into concentric rings, which can be squarish or triangular like.



While there isn't time to go into more detail about this phenomenon, the electric universe paradigm is simply explained in the Thunderbolts of the Gods Official Movie and book. While standard cosmologists believe that the weakest force known to science – gravity – governs the universe, the emerging paradigm holds that a force that is trillions of times more powerful – electricity – holds this position.

The electric universe model reinstates the ether and promises to be that hoped for paradigm shift of equal significance to those associated with Galileo, Darwin and Einstein. It provides a firm foundation for the philosophy of a living universe in which hierarchies of divine intelligences guide the evolution of all things forwards in accordance with some supreme purpose. Furthermore, its two prominent features are "circulation and transformation" – the same characteristics of the esoteric sciences which hold that a Divine circulatory flow links every conscious existence to every other. As the divine current passes through one and all, so does the alchemical process of transmutation, transformation and eventual transfiguration, take place.

Circulation and transformation are the basic characteristics of life – the air we breathe, the water we drink, the blood that flows – all things that sustain life pursue cycles of transformation in response to the divine circulatory flow from which they have emerged. Harmony in the world can only emerge when this flow is reflected in human enterprise too: money and provisions, knowledge and information, art and culture – free circulation determines the wellbeing and steady, evolutionary transformation of 'all things.' In this scenario, consciousness is the most important factor – resonance with the flow creates upward spiralling into ever higher levels of synthesis, dissonance sends it into a downwards spiral of intensified separation and unresolved conflict.

With an electric model of the cosmos, we can imagine a more harmonious relationship between science and religion developing and new social cultures to reflect the idea of circulation and transformation. To take one example, there is an interesting concept of 'Heaven' steadily emerging in Confucianism – an ancient Chinese philosophy that has a truly religious spirit at its core. And indeed, Jan, who will be speaking shortly, may share some of her experiences of being involved in cultural exchanges between the U.S. and Vietnam. In her book she writes: "Having some knowledge of the traditions of Buddhism and Confucian culture, we attempted to translate our fast-paced individualist American style into an Asian mindset."

A leading scholar on Confucianism, Tu Weiming, lectures on the creative power of Heaven as a dynamic and transformative energy that is embodied in the human. He promotes Confucianism as a developmental process towards achieving the oneness of Heaven (or *Tian* – the cosmic source of ethical and aesthetic values.) His work is building bridges between western social theory and Christian theology, and his concept of Embodied Knowing expresses an all-embracing humanism that merges the secular and sacred. He believes that the practice of "anthropocosmic unity" can make a powerful contribution to resolving contemporary modern issues. In this context, he writes:



"We are entrusted, individually and communally, with the duty to realize through self-cultivation both our aesthetic ability to appreciate the wonderful presentation of Heaven's resourcefulness and our moral power to actively continue Heaven's great work... The ancient Chinese saying, 'Heaven engenders; human completes'... accurately represents the spirit of this 'anthropocosmic' vision... Heaven so conceived is omnipresent and omniscient, but not omnipotent. To insist on Heaven's omnipotence is to accord the cosmic process an all-embracing power of self-adjustment without any reference to the centrality of human participation. An unintended negative consequence of this is an abdication of human responsibility in the maintenance of universal order. Human beings can, through their own personal cultivation, actively take part in Heaven's creativity."

The spirit of religion (though not a specific form) surely has an important part to play in the transition to a new world civilization and global culture. It is the religious spirit that can rekindle a sense of wonder about the world around us, which has all but vanished in our global, market driven economy and the reign of smart technology. It

surely has a role to play in producing a new culture of creative flourishing which is so essential for human and social evolution. As our first speaker Jan Karlin points out – creativity is the shared background of the arts, education, innovation, and entertainment. However, a problem that has arisen in this market driven era is a declining ability to identify the quality of creative expression. This has led to a steady blending of the terms 'art' and 'entertainment', and much confusion for audiences, students, media and arts institutions alike. The problem is wittily portrayed in the title of her book, "What's Next? Creativity in the Age of Entertainment." Jan is now going to speak about this subject in the context of our seminar theme.



World Goodwill Seminar 2022 London

In Search of a New Culture: Perspectives on Human Flourishing

Jan Karlin

Thank you so much for your wonderful introduction and thank you to the Lucis Trust for your invitation to participate in the webinar today or tonight, wherever you may be. I am speaking with you from Hanoi Vietnam, my twelfth visit in the last seventeen years, including producing the largest cultural exchange in history between the USA and Vietnam, with support from the US Department of State. My husband and I are the first American artistic advisors to Vietnam. We feel fortunate to have the opportunity to assist Vietnam's cultural life, as well as engage deeply with the country we fought but now has become our other home. Our experiences throughout Vietnam and the other Asian countries in Southeast Asia, have been rich and multi-faceted. We know much about each country's cuisines, their history, their educational systems, traditional and contemporary arts, and their religious practises. In the case of getting to know the teachings of Confucius, one cannot understand him without a thorough knowledge of the many unique Asian cultures that he influenced.

Similar to learning about the teachings of Confucius, one must learn about and experience creativity. Creativity is at the root of human achievement; although most often experience it through the arts, creativity touches every area of our lives. In a 2010 survey by IBM, 1500 chief executives, from 60 countries, and 33 industries, said that creativity is the most essential skill for navigating an increasingly complex world. Even earlier, in March 2006, UNESCO brought together 1200 people in delegations from 96 countries, for the first worldwide arts education conference, with the message of encouraging creative worldwide active engagement. Our greatest innovators agree about the importance of creativity. Long ago, in a 1996 Wired interview, the late Steve Jobs explained: *Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it. They just saw something, it seemed obvious to them after a while. That's because they were able to connect experiences they've had and synthesise new things. The broader one's understanding of the human experience, the better design we will have.*

Creativity is defined as the ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules or patterns, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, originality or imagination.

Creativity is currently the buzzword in offices or on campuses, in academic courses and in arts institution boardrooms. We all know that creativity is the root of scientific studies, beautiful artworks, trips to Mars, and Hollywood blockbusters. However, the situation today is we have blurred the lines between art and entertainment, both of which rely on creativity as their inspiration. The late Dr Peter Arnott, at Tufts University, stressed in one of my classes that art makes you think, and entertainment keeps you from thinking. We need both. However today we are very confused about the difference between art and entertainment. How do we develop the discernment necessary to encourage and experience creativity and recognise what is entertainment?

Marketing has been a major factor taking one away from artistic experiences that are more thoughtful, take more work by the participant, and may be challenging to understand. The public with little arts education is very confused about the difference between art and entertainment, and probably no longer cares. As we look for 21st century skills and solutions, this apathy has resulted in a declining ability to identify the quality of creative ideas that are driven by more than profit. How do we develop creativity skills? It is difficult in an environment that stresses the bottom line and graduation rates. Rarely these days does the curriculum include study of the arts or creative thinkers in science. We study the results but not the process. The result is that we have blurred the line between art and entertainment. What is the difference between watching a Hollywood blockbuster that on repeat-viewing gives us the same thrills hearing our favourite soundtrack and special effects in Star Wars, compared to an orchestral concert where contemporary work by composer Elliott Carter will inspire interpretations by many conductors and musicians, with the audience curious to hear repeat performance?

A creative thinker in any field is concerned with new ideas, not copying old ideas. However, creative people need inspiration and thorough knowledge of their field as the cornerstone of their creative process. A creative person pushes the envelope, tries new things and figures out their own personal puzzle. Picasso sketched daily to find solutions for his paintings; Beethoven explored different solutions through piano sonatas and string quartets; and Monet painted the same cathedral in Rouen numerous times, to capture every shade of light. They all needed extensive technique to build their creative skills. A shared trait of creative people is curiosity and interest in new ideas. Since Lucis Trust encourages the practise of meditation, we can draw an analogy between meditation with how one develops new skills overtime. When learning to meditate, at the beginning we are concerned with how we sit, whether our meditation has religious element, and how long we can focus. As our practise develops, it becomes easier overtime. After trying to sit for five minutes at the beginning, we suddenly are aware that 20 minutes is passed and one hour meditation is possible. As with all challenges in life practise makes better, not perfect, and we constantly strive to improve.

I am not an expert on either meditation or Confucius. After travel to Asia over the past 20 years, I do know that Asian countries should not be lumped together or

assumed to be similar in anyway. Vietnam was occupied by China for over 1000 years and later colonised by France and Japan. Scars from the American war, as it is known here, still remain. The Confucian emphasis on family and learning is deeply ingrained in its culture, but over the years developed Vietnamese characteristics expressed in its language, arts, and religions. We are fortunate to have good friends in Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand and especially Vietnam. In many discussions, our friends are proud of what they learned from Confucius. It is now expressed alongside the 21st century embrace of many religions and family dynamics that, for example, today acknowledge women in forums.

Since Confucius taught that one of the greatest joys in life was a visit from foreign friends, we have seen this demonstrated in the generosity, enthusiasm of our many friends, especially in Vietnam and Japan. We are often asked if we have experienced any animosity from the wars, and in fact we have never been subject to anything less than enthusiasm for our visits. Two thirds of the Vietnamese population is under age thirty, so the war is in the past and they have moved on as a modern society. One of my favourite stories I would like to share with you, comes from a visit we made to the home of two repatriated visual artists from Paris, to learn to make a very special lunch of Chả Cá translated as turmeric fish, which was purposely created to allow the Vietnamese an opportunity to gather to cook while planning anti-French activities during the war, since the French loved anything about this dish. Despite the French not allowing Vietnamese gatherings, this was an exception. Since the Vietnamese language is rarely spoken by foreigners due to its acknowledged difficulty, the French did not know what was being said, and overtime felt that observing the cooking of Chả Cá was a big treat.

At the end of the meal, the elderly artist has been looked at us, after consuming a lot of beer and homemade wine, and said "you know, I was a soldier in the American war". My husband and I looked at each other and whispered "here comes". The artist continued "and I am so happy to have you in our home". He proceeded to get up and serve us a five-year aged banana cognac that encouraged us to continue the afternoon together as friends. Our colleagues have taught us about Confucianism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Taoism, and other religions observed in each of the Asian countries. Forgiveness and reconciliation are central to these religions, especially with their experiences of horrific 20th century wars. We have enjoyed learning the characteristics of each country. It is a journey that is ongoing and very rich; our performances and cultural exchanges have been successful because of our efforts to get inside each culture, such as learning and performing old and new music from their old from their own cultures. We have learned many history books, poems and learned about each country's arts. The deeper one explores, the richer the experience.

Learning about the background of the culture, arts, and history of a country, deepens one's experiences. When our friends look at us and say that we knew each other in a past life, we know that the reference is a compliment to us. When learning about creativity, doing one's homework allows you to go deeper and understand

how the creative process works. I'm currently reading Walter Isaacson's biography of Leonardo DaVinci, an incredible exposition of one of humanity's most creative minds. Mr Isaacson's other biographies of Steve Jobs, Jennifer Doudna, and Albert Einstein also clearly show the process of creativity. I highly recommend all of his books. Creative thought is encouraged by ongoing exploration of oneself, as well as investigating accomplishments in all professions, as well as one's own. We cannot develop new ideas without studying and experiencing the achievements of creative people giving us a basis for new exploration and inspiration.

The word creativity comes from creator, one who creates something such as composers, playwrights scientists, inventors, visual artists, choreographers, writers, and poets. Musicians, actors and dancers, and many others are recreators, who interpret creative achievements by others. Human flourishing happens when artistic and scientific creators have freedom of expression, combined with opportunities to disseminate their accomplishments. Composers need orchestras to play their music, playwrights need actors, scientists need well equipped laboratories, and all creative people need support systems. It is a challenge today, with limited education and funding resources, to inspire creative thinking and innovation and find solutions to society's challenges today. It is complicated to find a solution as we look towards inclusiveness and addressing global problems. As my book describes examples of successful initiatives in ways to begin, it is important to take small steps that reflect one's community and interests. I do not judge whether something is art or entertainment, as this is each individual's opinion. However, I hope that better education can teach people to discern the difference between art and entertainment, to make informed choices.

To teach creativity, we must focus on realignment of the curriculum for every age group. My book *What's Next?* describes successful programmes for different age groups. Students need to study creative people and be inspired by their creativity. To develop discernment, young people should understand the difference between terms such as *clever* and *creative* through examples. Youth need to learn that self-expression through social media, such as Instagram, is not necessarily created, but most often marketing and self-promotion. Buzz words today need new definitions for words such as *creatives*, *innovation*, and *cleverness*. Imagination and inspiration leads to exploration, so it is important to study the past and develop your personal heroes for inspiration; not to imitate, but rather to study and perfect one's technique. The way forward to creativity is a path that will enrich our lives and teach us about ourselves and the world we live in.

In the process of encouraging creative education, we will learn to distinguish between art and entertainment. It is not important to attach labels to creativity, but to understand the characteristics of art that makes you think, and entertainment that keeps you from thinking. In this way we will have a chance to enhance our lives with new discoveries about ourselves and our world.

Thank you, I look forward to taking your questions and comments, and thank you again for the opportunity to address you today.



World Goodwill Seminar 2022 London

On Radical Imagination

Max Haiven

Introduction by Laurence Newey

Welcome back everybody. We are very pleased to invite Max Haiven to talk to us particularly on the role of what he terms the radical imagination. Imagination, as many of the people who tuned into this webinar will know, is the heart of our own, the western esoteric tradition. And while the imagination is acknowledged as the agent of culture and something that enriches the human psyche, it's still widely regarded as a means of escapism, a window into fantasy and make-belief. But the true function of the imagination is the opposite of this. It reveals the reality of the subjective realms through the externalisation of force. The imagination could be thought of as an image-making faculty, and as such it works with the intellect to concretise subjective energy into objective forms. As Carl Jung expressed it: *I'm indeed convinced that the creative imagination is the only primordial phenomenon accessible to us, the real ground of the psyche, the only immediate reality.* Due to the current association of the imagination with a dreamlike state, this may initially be a disturbing thought, but it's the quality and dynamism of the energy in which we choose to focus the imagination that determines our sense of reality. The higher the imagination is lifted, the more dynamic is its energy state and correspondingly, the greater the expansion of the sense of self and identity with the whole.

So, now it's over to you Max. Just a reminder to the viewers that Max Haiven is a writer and teacher and Canada research chair in radical imagination, an associate professor of English, and co-director of Lakeland University's reimagining value action lab. Thank you, Max.

On Radical Imagination

Thank you very much, it's lovely to be here with all of you and I look forward to our discussion. So, yes, I've written quite a bit over the last few years on the imagination, and from a slightly different perspective than I think many people approach the topic. I'm not particularly interested, well I shouldn't say that... as a scholar, I'm not particularly focused on the creative imagination or the psychological notions of imagination. I'm mostly interested in the imagination as a social or sociological force. In other words, I'm interested in how the imagination shapes society and conversely, how society shapes our imaginations. So, in some of my earlier work, almost a decade ago now, I worked quite closely with social movements; specifically social movements that were not particularly successful in changing the world, to try and understand how people in those movements imagined the world could be different. I really wanted to understand how it is that they developed imagination of alternative futures that they were striving to move us towards, and also how they were trying to spread those imaginative capacities to the rest of society.

I was also very interested, and I continue to be very fascinated by, the ways, in which the economic system that we live under shapes our imaginations. The economic system we live under (in brief: financialised capitalism) also depends on our imaginations. There's a temptation to think that the economy we live under mercilessly crushes the imagination under its foot. But I think, much more dangerously, the economy we live under – which of course I probably don't need to tell you is extremely exploitative and presently destroying the ecosystem we all depend on – actually *depends* on us reshaping our imaginations, reshaping how we think of ourselves and how we think of our ability to contribute to society. It does so in quite profound ways.

My interest, then, is in the idea of the imagination as this kind of social force, something deep at work not only in our own individual beings, but also deep at work in the kind of shared territories of meaning-making and sense-making in society at large.

There's a kind of feedback loop that I try and describe. On the one hand, we have an imagination of the world, an understanding of the sublime complexity that we encounter every day. We, somehow, have to create a mental picture or a series of interlocking mental pictures about what it means to be an agent, what it means to be a subject, what it means to act in a world that's beyond our comprehension. That imagination of the world leads to various forms of action that we take in everyday life, in our jobs, in our vocations; that action then contributes to the constant reshaping of society. Conversely, society then influences and reshapes our imaginations in many ways. There's this kind of feedback loop. I won't go into detail, but it works in both directions, both clockwise and counter clockwise; there's a kind of back and forth between the imagination in society and the imagination of the individual.

Here, I've been particularly interested in theories of the *radical imagination*. As I mentioned, both my sympathies and my research lean towards social movements for racial, social, economic, and ecological justice, quite unapologetically. So, on the one hand I am interested in the radical imagination of people who are radicals, who believe that we can and must transform society in a fundamental way. But I'm also interested in the radical imagination in a slightly different valence as well, in the terms provided by another inheritor of the psychoanalytic tradition along with Carl Jung who was mentioned earlier: the French-Greek theorist Cornelius Castoriadis. In the 1950s and 60s and into the 1970s he provided a very capacious theorization of the radical imagination.

For Castoriadis, the radical imagination isn't just the kind of personal imagination that makes you a social radical. Drawing on the Latin root of the word, Castoriadis means "coming from the roots." The radical imagination is a tectonic and eternal force at work, brewing not only within both every individual subject, but also at the core of society. And Castoriadis, like me (and this is why I take such inspiration from him), was curious about the relationship between the imagination of individuals and then the imaginary structures that we create to be able to live together, which is to say the social imagination, or the realm of the social imaginary. Castoriadis gave us a very beautiful metaphor, to which I often return: magma, that fascinating substance that erupts from the earth, that's halfway between solid and liquid. For Castoriadis, the radical imagination is a magma-like substance.

At various moments in human society, there are eruptions that then sweep away the social institutions with which we're familiar, like a volcano erupting, and replace them. As the magma cools and solidifies or petrifies into rock, we are left with new structures. And we, as social subjects trying to contend with the incredible complexity of a social world of which we are a part, we then imagine that these solidified structures of the magma of the imagination are eternal, that they've always been this way, that they're natural, that they are necessary. But in fact, they're not. And, inevitably, there is another eruption, later on. For Castoriadis, these eruptions were, in the most dramatic forms, revolutionary changes in society, when people rise up to demand changes to the social institutions under which they live. But these eruptions could also happen in other ways. The work of particularly stirring or influential artists, for instance, could be a kind of volcanic eruption of the imagination, which fundamentally transforms the way that we understand how the world fits together, to a certain extent.

Castoriadis was also interested in a way that this also occurs within each one of us, on some level. We imagine ourselves, we imagine who we are, we imagine our capacity to act in the world in ways to which we give an archetypal or statuesque form. In the development of the ego, we come to imagine ourselves as an eternal, natural or normal manifestation; but throughout our lives – both in the natural progress of maturation and also due to events that occur—we are often met with erupted moments, where the things we took to be natural, normal, and the basis of our being are swept away by some kind of magma-like eruption. I think magma is a

very nice and useful metaphor. By social institutions, here, Castoriadis had in mind not only particular institutions like this or that museum or university or government office; he's thinking much more in the sociological sense. Marriage is an institution of society, policing is an institution of society, the university writ large is an institution of society.

Institutions are all at least in part structures of the imagination, in the sense that they are given meaning and given power in our lives through the way we invest them with our belief and with our participation and with our consent. We assume these institutions are normal and natural and eternal, but that are in fact merely, in some senses, solidification of the shared imagination. Castoriadis is a materialist theorist of the imagination, and so too am I, at least in my scholarship. I believe we need to have a materialist analysis of how the imagination works in society. I want to move away, at least my scholarship, from more romantic or metaphysical notions of the imagination, even though I acknowledge that there's a great deal of value in thinking those things through. I also acknowledge there are a great number of limits inherent to a strictly materialist perspective. But as I've already made clear, my interest is in how the imagination can change society, and can change it urgently and radically. So, for that reason, I'm less interested in the subjective side of the imagination, and less interested in the metaphysical questions of what the imagination *is* or, for instance, where consciousness and its capacity to innovate comes from.

I want to speak, in the minutes that remain, about two things I'm thinking about for a future short book on the imagination. One, I'm framing as pathologies of the imagination. The second is what I see as movements of the imagination that are disrupting, in this moment, our notions of how the world fits together in what I see as quite important ways.

I'll mention very briefly three pathologies of the imagination which I think helped illuminate the kind of theoretical framework that I'm suggesting to you today.

The first is money. Money, today, is essentially a stream of immaterial digits in databases that interlock with one another around the world. Perhaps at one point in human history money was much more closely tethered to either useful qualities (for example, salt was often used as a money), or largely useless but scarce commodities, like platinum or gold. We could argue to what extent those forms of money were also imaginary. But certainly today's forms of money are increasingly imaginary and I think, beyond that, we live in a world that has been largely subordinated to money. We have been told that the means of each person's individual survival, and the means to the competitiveness of the nations to which we might be forced to belong, and the greatest good that can be achieved, is the acquisition and accumulation of money. This is a terrible pathology of the imagination, and we are dealing with its consequences right now, as we are watching with increasing horror, as the needs of transnational corporations to make a great deal of money is trumping any meaningful action on the calamitous effects

of anthropogenic climate change. We have here a crisis of the imagination of epic and world-historical proportions. We've essentially determined and imagined, collectively, that money is more valuable than ecosystems.

A second pathology of the imagination is racism. Now, briefly, racism is not simply a manifestation of the eternal human tendency towards xenophobia. When we speak of racism in a critical valence and draw from experts on the history of racism, it is a very particular form of social hierarchy that we inherit from the ages of colonialism and imperialism, when essentially western European elites licenced themselves to go around the world and steal everyone else's resources and labour, for their own benefit. These elites essentially invented and broadcast a set of imaginary hierarchies between human beings that then justified the theft. We are, unfortunately, still in the hangover of those moments, partly because many of the structures of imperialism and colonialism continue to be with us to this day. We need only look at the flows of wealth from the global south to the global north to recognise that we are not in the post-imperial, post-colonial and post-racial moments for which we had perhaps hoped.

Racism is, in one sense, a pathology of the imagination that we continue to endure and that is so harmful to so many. I speak about it as a pathology of the imagination because it fundamentally infects our understanding of the world, and our understanding of ourselves, and our understanding of one another, based on a completely fabricated hierarchy of human beings. And what I think is really important and telling about the history of racism is that the original justifications and the original narratives for racism, which were developed in the ages of empire and colonialism, may no longer still be with us. And yet, racism, as an imaginative structure, renovates and reinvents itself with a new language and new set of justifications. So, for example, today it is no longer customary for people to speak in terms of biological racism, the idea that some groups of people are genetically inferior to others. Rather, it's more than common to hear on the nightly news, on read in newspapers, that certain groups of people have a cultural deficiency: for example, a culture of poverty, a culture of dependency, a culture of terrorism. This is one new form that the imagination of racism takes in our moment, that draws on those long legacies that gave rise to it and that renovated for new moments to enable new forms of power.

The third pathology of the imagination I want to sort of mention is conspiracy theories and conspiracism. I am just now drawing to a close, after several years, a very interesting project on why it is that conspiracism is so popular in this moment. There are a lot of reasons. But I think that, by approaching conspiracy theories and conspiracism as structures of the imagination, we can learn about it from a space of compassion and thoughtfulness, rather than judgement and othering. We are, each of us, as I've already suggested, struggling throughout our entire lives to make sense of incredible complexity that we find ourselves amidst, a complexity that in many ways exceeds our cognitive ability. The society we live in is made-up of innumerable moving parts, with complex interrelations at the economic, sociological, political,

and cultural level. It's not surprising, then, that we all turn our imaginations towards trying to come up with narratives that would explain not only the situation that we find ourselves in, but why, for the vast majority of us, the world constantly gets worse. Most people anticipate that, in their lifetime, the world is going to get more chaotic, more harsh, more competitive, more alienating.

Conspiracism emerges from this very genuine need and desire to make sense of the world. It is in some ways, as I say, a pathology of the imagination. The imagination enables people to try and make often quite bizarre or dangerous connections between the different elements of their social world. But in the absence of criticism, in the absence of rigorous investigation, in the absence of self-reflection, these imaginations of how the world works can run amok. I'm a believer that we need to encourage and cultivate those processes of the imagination that give rise to conspiracism, but we need to measure them with very close attention to facts and argument. I'm not just speaking of the rigours of intellectual study that encourage us to test falsifiable hypotheses and question our beliefs; we also need to develop a more sophisticated understanding of how power works. Because a "conspiracy theory" ultimately is a theory of power. Often, the problem with conspiracy theories and what makes them different from more useful theorisations of what's happening in our world, is that they advance from a very skewed understanding of how social power functions. We're fortunate to have a wealth of theories at our disposal that explain how social power works, and those theories contend with one another to explain the world. Conspiracy theories often emerge from a genuine but ill-informed attempt to try and understand how power works.

To close, I want to turn to what I see as three movements of the imagination that I think are especially important in our moment.

First, I want to point to the worldwide movement of solidarity with migrants. I think this is an incredibly important movement, not only because it leads people to do incredible work, like occupying aeroplanes to prevent people from being deported, or travelling out onto the high seas to rescue people who've been abandoned to drown in the Mediterranean, or defying vigilante border forces on the southern border of the United States to give water and necessities to people trying to move for economic or political reasons. I think it's also important because these movements demand that we imagine the world differently, not as a map cut up, thanks to the legacies of empire, into thousands of different jurisdictions that will compete with one another for resources until we end up in war or privation. Rather, these movements are suggesting that we need to truly imagine that every human life is fundamentally valuable, and, if we truly believe that, then we could not countenance and allow the kinds of crimes against humanity that are being perpetuated largely by wealthy countries in the Global North, in order to keep their borders "secure" from the arrival of people from the Global South, whose ancestors our countries in the Global North have robbed for generations.

Next, I want to point to a movement that is especially strong, but not exclusively practised, among young people today. It is a movement to defy and challenge our understandings of the gender binary. We have a whole generation (but also people of older generations) who are demanding and exercising the right, and, indeed in some cases the duty, to challenge our ideas of what masculinity and femininity mean, and even to challenge our fabricated idea that our world needs to be structured by the binary between the two. I'm here speaking about nonbinary people, about trans people, about queer people. I'm speaking about the ways that, in everyday life, these people are taking it upon themselves to challenge our imagination about what it means to be human, and the idea that we should divide ourselves into these gender or sex roles, which has so many catastrophic impacts on so many of us, as we mature and try and come to know ourselves.

And I briefly want to speak about the movement to abolish prisons and to abolish the police, which is gaining steam around the world as we realise that these were always false solutions to the common problems of harm in our society. First of all, police and prisons do nothing to eliminate the major sources of harm in our world: the harms of an economic system, or the harms of a political system that oppresses and exploits so many. Further, we know that police and prisons have generally failed in their efforts to prevent this thing that we know and we've come to understand as crime. Grassroots movements are developing new methods for caring for one another and bringing about justice in ways that I think are very important.

These three practises of the radical imagination stem from everyday grassroots activism. But they're not simply satisfied to challenge the powers-that-be. I think each of them essentially creates a framework that shoots beyond their particular, localised efforts, beyond the individual body, and instead challenge all of us to reimagine society. They are essentially eruptions of what I've spoken of as the radical imagination. They are fundamentally showing us that those things that we thought were eternal structures that we could do nothing about, that we had learned to imagine were natural and normal—borders, gender, law and order – are in fact neither natural, nor normal, nor necessary. The world could be otherwise. I see in them a great deal of potential, not only in their own particular fields of activity, but as challenges to the imaginary structures that are right now threatening, truly, life on earth.



World Goodwill Seminar 2022 London

Goodwill as a Creative Force

Evangelia Tsavdari

What is
creativity?

Creativity begins with an original idea.

Creativity serves a dual function:

- form building
- form dissolution

Creativity is often said to begin with an original idea, and, indeed, there is no argument on the importance of a novel idea in the creative process. To take a step further, we could say that creativity serves two very broad functions simultaneously: that of building forms and that of causing their dissolution.

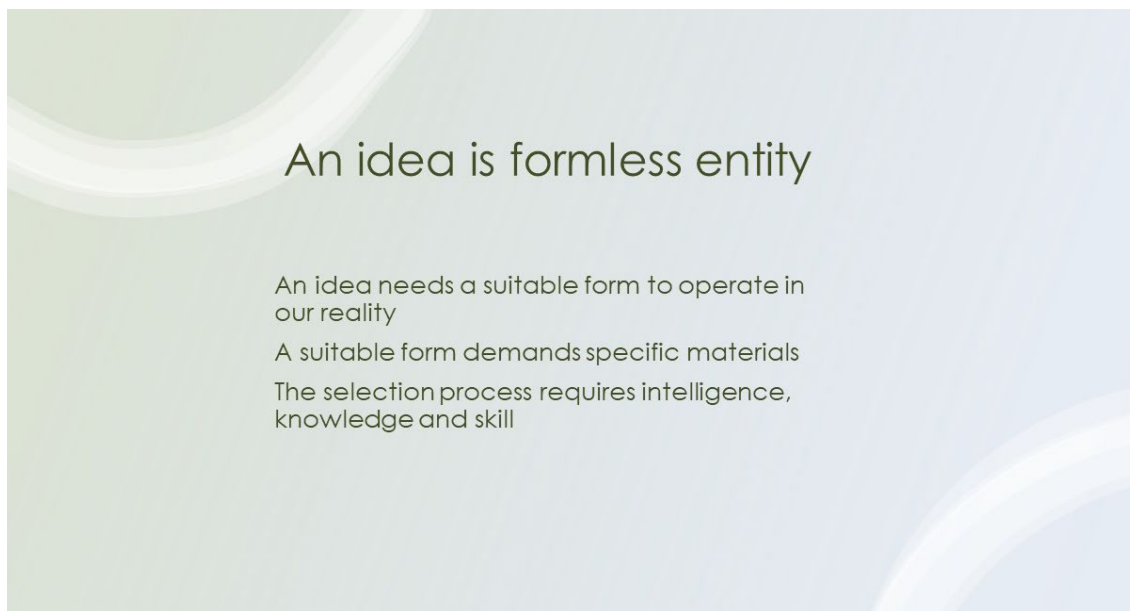
Not every
idea is a
good idea!

The quality of an idea is determined

- by whether it satisfies any need or desire
- by the quality of the need or desire it satisfies
- by its timeliness.

We conceive many ideas but we neither linger on all of them, nor engage in an effort to make something of all of them. Some ideas are deemed “good” and others “bad” even *before* we decide to engage with them, even before we had felt their beneficial or harmful effects. Perhaps what distinguishes one from the other is the quality of the need or desire they satisfy, or even whether they actually satisfy any need or desire at all, be it existing or anticipated. Maybe it is their timing. We've now witnessed enough trends blowing up rapidly and then vanishing with no trace as rapidly, to know that not everything that is born, is meant to persist.

Returning however to the dual capacity of creativity to build and dissolve forms, both begin with a new idea, assumingly of the good sort and meriting additional attention. It may potentially resolve an issue, cover a need, satisfy a desire, simplify a process, clarify a theory, improve a method, uncover a previously unknown quantity or quality in the world, but any single one of those would urge further implication with that idea.

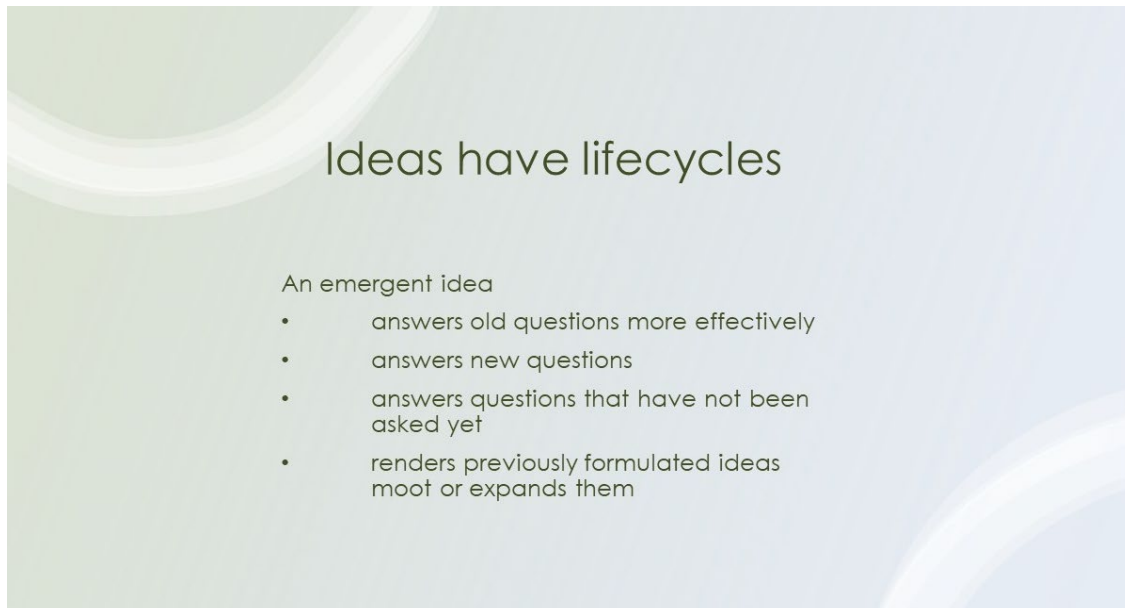


And if it is to be expressed in the world, to be shared and acknowledged, and to benefit more than its ideator, it will need a form by which to be presented, become an active part of our reality and fulfil its purpose.

The next creative stage, would be determining a form fit for the task; one which could act as an intermediary and bridge the potential of the idea and the need it answers; a form that could function as a meeting space. To accomplish this, the appropriate elements must be intelligently selected or even invented, before they are skilfully synthesized into an organized, functioning and purposeful whole. At that point, the creative process is roughly complete, and an original, formulated idea begins its career or its lifecycle in our reality.

But, a second process begins in parallel with this merry happening, and it is its direct result. It is none other than the dissolution of existing forms, rendered irrelevant by the newly arrived, formulated idea. The need or desire for older concepts and the

reliance on them starts declining, marking the beginning of their end. This is an aspect of creativity very familiar to all who attempt creation.



Ideas have lifecycles

An emergent idea

- answers old questions more effectively
- answers new questions
- answers questions that have not been asked yet
- renders previously formulated ideas moot or expands them

With every new idea born in the world, an agent of greater synthesis and an agent of conflict emerge in unison. Originality forever reaches out beyond what is already known with the hand of imagination. As it brings the new concept in, that displaces what had previously stood in the space it is seeking to integrate.

Creativity is also hardly limited to the material; it can be seen creating mental concepts or methods, the same as frequently as is seen delivering material objects. Nor is it a solitary activity. Even if an ideator seems to be accomplishing alone, they are always working in the company of all who are or have been driven by the same encompassing idea.



Creativity

- Synthesis of diverse but complementary elements under an idea
- Involves sacrifice as it strips away the usefulness of existing concepts
- Facilitates the attainment of an entity's purpose

In summary, creativity is the synthesis of diverse but complementary elements under the umbrella of an idea. Creativity involves sacrifice because it strips away the usefulness and relevance of existing, less ideal forms. Creativity is purposeful because it facilitates the attainment of an entity's purpose.

Now, when thinking of elements that comprise the formulation of an idea, we should really consider groups of people too. We are subject to similar processes after all. Some human groups are even named as "bodies": look no further than e.g. the corps of police, the diplomatic corps, and many others who lack the name but not the purpose, cohesion, organisation, and ordered activity that characterise a form, a body.



Group forms

Goodwill connects individuals or subgroups in a whole to that whole's animating idea

The core idea of a whole is directly connected to its purpose

Goodwill's cohesive quality can be seen operating within any such human group, by means of the results it generates. From a couple to humanity, *human groups exist because of a central idea* which serves a purpose, and through the group, answers a need or desire. Goodwill's role is to connect the individuals or the subgroups that comprise the formulation of a grand idea, and it functions by linking each separate entity, be it a person or a team, to that essential core.

Look no further than the groups you consider yourself a part of, preferring to examine the ones that are not biological or geographical just for the sake of venturing beyond materialism but still keeping it real and relevant to our life experience. Frequently, the purpose of a group is stated in its name, and spotting its central idea is a short walk from there. Think for example, "United Nations", something like the "Red Cross" on the other hand, is more cryptic, although their agenda is so well known today that it is difficult to imagine a time when this group was only emerging as a previously unknown entity.



Goodwill

- Ability of diverse elements to comprise a group
 - by staying true to its core idea
 - by aligning with the purpose that the idea serves

So, goodwill is the ability of diverse elements to form parts of a group by staying true to its core idea and to the purpose to which it answers. It enables individual entities to partake in a synthetic process by providing that which the process requires. They may be it already or they may need to become it. There was an illustration that was circulating during the first year of the pandemic, near a time of racial unrest in the US, and it was just the phrase "Oh, the things you'll need to unlearn to become a half-decent person!". Utilizing goodwill may at times involve such an effort.



Goodwill

- by reducing conflict
- by improving understanding of complementary diversity
- by simplifying the living experience
- Facilitates group attainment and group health

Nevertheless, looking at the same point in the horizon does not require standing at the same spot with someone else. But it may urge a person or a group to sacrifice personal objectives, and mental and emotional forms such as mentalities, defence mechanisms, or habits to which they adhere, as they align with a group purpose

without coercion, and with minimal conflict, because they are seeing and recognizing an idea whose time has come. That's how goodwill operates, and in so doing it minimizes friction and the energy required for the accomplishment of group objectives and for group health. Goodwill is then creative for making harmonious syntheses possible by providing elastic cohesion.

The effects are numerous.

Perhaps it is worth citing, that reducing friction in essence means reducing conflict or its intensity. Any person can be part of a group without necessarily subscribing to its central idea. But that person cannot express goodwill because they are not looking in the same direction as their partners. Usually, such cases may thrive only temporarily for sooner or later they will be unable to follow the group rhythm; it is facilitated by goodwill, which is bound to group purpose when they are not.

As goodwill brings to the fore new groups embodying new ideas, it could generate conflict with existing groups, rather than minimize it as advertised. This is why we are talking about *world* goodwill. Because there is no cap on the size of the group that goodwill can unify, and the greater the group with whose purpose one chooses to align themselves, the lower the possibility of experiencing severe friction. Meaning, it is much harder to encounter conflict when one is bound to humanity or the planet, than when they are bound to any other, inevitably smaller, group.

This is the reason why the pursuit of a better balance within the natural environment is a favourite. It leaves no one on the planet out, no human, no animal or plant or mineral species. It is truly a grand idea and a most worthwhile objective.



It provides a single purpose for that massive group, humanity, because it dictates its function as a de facto single entity, providing maybe for the first time in recorded

history the opportunity for goodwill to operate on an interspecies level. Imagine that, and then look at humanity's internal issues and see how smaller they immediately seem. It is not an exercise in futility but an exercise in right perception of scale.

A final point on goodwill's contribution to the creative process, is that anything that occurs needs to occur somewhere, and conflict is no exception to this rule. If the space within which conflict takes place breaks down, much more than just conflict ceases. By reducing the intensity of conflict, goodwill enables the form within which it happens, to continue existing.



This is a chance for evolution through conscious choice rather than through selection by violence or might because such evolution produces only certain types, with which we are more or less familiar, and it is quite certain that we can do better. When inner conflict is offset or of relatively low intensity in a group, then this group is free to perceive new, greater horizons and acquire a new, broader purpose which it will hold and embody alongside similarly grand, similarly benign, groups.

It is a happy time to be alive on this planet now because our sight has been upgraded and we are collectively seeing farther and deeper than ever before. The first is bringing us opportunity after opportunity for collaboration across nations, across disciplines, across generations, across any type of preference or secondary characteristic, as humanity. The second is gifting us a clear and detailed view of our existing materials, ourselves. The idea of humanity is not moot but the form through which it expresses itself needs, and is in the process of, an upgrade. Improving on the existing form of an idea is yet another type of creative endeavour. It entails a more intelligent, more imaginative and more skilful approach, or in other words a deeper understanding of the existing need and a wider knowledge of the available and required resources. As we now possess these and will increasingly be aligning with our purpose as humanity, goodwill will be able to demonstrate the latter part of its

properties that we are examining today. It will be revealed as what it ultimately is, a force.

Force is “an influence that can change the motion of an object” or even a “push or pull upon an object, resulting from the object’s interaction with another object”.

Goodwill gathers toward a central, attractive idea and later toward the purpose of this idea. This attraction, when all the people in a group are gathered and facing in the same direction, alters the course of individuals from their personal or secondary objectives, or against one another, to the shared purpose.



Ultimately, this conserves energy and reduces material, emotional and mental losses.

The outcome is speed of attainment. *The law, is the Law of Group Progress.*