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GRT Golden Research Thoughts

STEPHEN.L.TALBOTT'S REPRESENTATION OF "DREAM" AND "WAKEFULNESS" IN AWAKENING FROM THE P RIMORDIAL DREAM

Akash Deep

"...O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live:
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth -
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!..."
-Coleridge

ABSTRACT

Human beings have not yet realized the full terror and responsibility of existence. It is through our minds alone that the human being passes like that swaying furious rider on the hayrick, farther and more desperately into the night. He is galloping across the storm-filled heath of time, from the dark world of the natural toward some dawn he seeks beyond the horizon. Across that midnight landscape he rides with his toppling burden of despair and hope, bearing with him the beast's face and the dream, but unable to cast off either or to believe in either.

KEYWORDS:*changeling , physical world , human mind .*

INTRODUCTION:

For he is the man, the changeling, in whom neither the sense of goodness has perished, nor an eye for some supernatural guidepost in the night. We are changelings, somehow substituted in the womb of time and nature and endowed with strange, unaccountable ideals and yearnings. But his marvelous picture fits perfectly with the idea that further back in the world's history we came out of the spirit, lost our way in the physical world of nature and are desperately trying to find a path that will lead us home again. Something in the world had awaited the birth of his awareness and when it finally came "it was not only he who had come to himself but the world had come to itself through him."

Now that we have "come to ourselves" we can resist further contraction of our wakefulness to a nullity and avoid another hiroshima and nagasaki. Hiroshima and nagasaki was the result of humankind fiddling within itself and a loss of our awarenessof the life within things.

This awakening of the human mind from its archaic state however has not occurred overnight. The evolution of consciousness of the human species is replicated in the

development of the consciousness of the human mind. Human consciousness from the archaic uroboric stage had embarked on an epic journey to reach the rational mental consciousness of today.

In the essay Talbott meditates on the entire spectrum of consciousness from the primeval to modern wakefulness.It isa unique meditation. He takes to computing the computeritself. Talbott views the computer as an empty abstraction. A product of the modern mind, the computer is at the farthest from participation and is the opposite of dream and therefore does not know the meaning and has no awareness of the content:

"How does it transcend meaning and arrive at reason? Can a computer become truly aware of anything?"

Talbott also comes down heavily on the technological contraptions that have driven us to the edges of abstraction. Talbott calls the computer a form of "pure wakefulness without content" and decries our fascination with computers. Computers, according to him have severely "contracted" our consciousness to a nullity. Human consciousness is far more complex than anything any of us has ever created. And yet everything, including our ability to think, feel and act, now seems to depend on computers. The system breaks down and our whole being is affected. Computers have severely crippled human consciousness. Human consciousness now has been sucked into a vortex of unconsciousness due to which we have moved away from "the powers enlivening the world" or "nature's living powers."

Today's human beings function as detached, separate and isolated forms of consciousness engaging with everything across a distance because they are bombarded with cascade of technologies like computers. Distance is a crippling epidemic which needs to be eradicated.

Distance breeds objectivity. A compulsion to see and know everything rules the consciousness. Also the denial of interiority in our consciousness promotes reductionism, a methodology of our consciousness to see things as only "surfaces" in existence in the world and not a subject for understanding. We have woken up to a sunrise where we detach ourselves and reduce the world to a dead, inert collection of "things" with which we feel no inner connection. This reducing of our consciousness has blacked-out our wakefulness and meaning. It has, on the contrary, spawned wide materialist epistemologies, thus robbing us of our inner life and converging our consciousness upon empty abstractions of a machine called computer.

Human consciousness has awakened in degrees. And our arousal continues. And so has our detachment from the world around us. Ancient man, while dreaming, was dreaming of the powers of the forces of nature in existence. He therefore knew of them, however dimly. We on the other hand have traded our wakefulness and awareness of life within things around us for acute materially effective consciousness centered in "distance". This distancing paints a human jungle in which we trample on our competitors in pursuit of power, position, wealth or even mere survival.

The human consciousness' withdrawal from the refreshing powers of nature is now viewed as a state of being fully awake. And yet we seek refuge in the memories of our shadowy dreams still echoing from the childhood of the human race. We have turned a blind eye to our evolutionary past. We have started to "reinterpret the consciousness of our ancestors upon the analogy of the computer."

The entire spectrum of human consciousness from the primeval dream to modern wakefulness can still be found within the individual man. Sadly though, the dreaming has sunken further into the unconsciousness and our narrowed our outlook. We have started to wake up to a world of complete darkness. The advent of computers has made the world a global village. The internet is conquering time and space with "infinity" in the palm of the hand. However we do not display the fellow feeling that is normally expected of a rational human being. The computer is a radical invention. It is not an object hat can bypass the state of "subjectivity." Universal solidarity demands feat of fellow feeling of highest degree. The computer though has succeeded in bridging the divide of time and space and bringing people closer, yet paradoxically this century in the most violent century mankind has ever woken up to. This is due to the fact that human consciousness needs a more superior form of consciousness and not the contraptions of communications technology that is now in most cases are run by computers. The consciousness that the computers are ushering is entirely a different form of consciousness and it can never glue a society together.

Now that we have come to this wakefulness that computers are nullifying our wakefulness we should

seek to deepen it. We should strive to revive to restore what has previously fallen from awareness not by sinking ourselves back in the maelstrom of primeval dream but by capitalizing on our state of complete wakefulness and wisdom that had in its palms the dreaming childhood of the human race.

We must realize the fact that computers will not endow us with its kinship in the long run. It will only alienate us further from the surrounding world and plug all our escape routes back to that real world. We will forever be trapped in a matrix of chips and logic circuits devoid of our own thinking. We must be weary of the fact that if computers gain an upper hand we might "in the end, wake up to nothing at all."

Robert Frost's lines from his poem *"The Road Not Taken"* is most pertinent in this context.

"...I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference"

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