

Issue No. 38 JAN - FEB 2020

NewAcropolis

Philosophy and Education for the Future

Bi-Monthly Magazine

**Generation-Z: Deltas,
Founders & Doers**

**Modernity, Post-Modernity
and Trans-Modernity**

**The Science behind the
Wholefood Plant-Based
Diet**

Woman in Myths

**PHILOSOPHY
CULTURE
SOCIETY
ESOTERICA
ART
AND MORE**





About Us

NEW ACROPOLIS is an international organization working in the fields of philosophy, culture and volunteering. Our aim is to revive philosophy as a means of renewal and transformation and to offer a holistic education that can develop both our human potential as well as the practical skills needed in order to meet the challenges of today and to create a better society for the next generation.

For further details please visit :
WWW.NEWACROPOLISUK.ORG

Editorial Team

Sabine Leitner - Director

Julian Scott - Editor

Agostino Dominici - Project
Manager and Designer

Natalia Lema - Public Relations

 **Philosophy**
Culture
Volunteering
NEW ACROPOLIS

What's Inside

EDITORIAL

04



PHILOSOPHY

Modernity,
Post-Modernity
and Trans-
Modernity

05



ESOTERICA

Esoteric Influences
in the Work of
William Blake

10



SOCIETY

Generation-Z: Deltas,
Founders & Doers

08



ART

When Does a
Renaissance Start?
The meaning of the
Annunciation

12

CULTURE

The Hidden Life of
Wolves

14



SCIENCE & NATURE

The Science behind
the Wholefood
Plant-Based Diet

16

MYTHS OF THE WORLD

Woman in Myths

18



Editorial

Shall We Talk About Collapsology?

History teaches us that civilizations rise and fall; since they are born, they will also eventually die. Some die a dramatic death; others simply fade out and become gradually replaced by others. It makes sense to study how past cultures and civilizations died and see what we can learn from it. These days, you can do a master's course in Paris on *collapsology* – or, the 'risk of collapse and adapting to it'. The thesis is that this kind of collapse could also happen to our current Western industrial societies.

According to Jared Diamond, an academic and the author of the 2005 book *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive*, we are already witnessing the conditions for collapse in a number of different countries: "Just as in the past, countries that are environmentally stressed, overpopulated, or both, become at risk of getting politically stressed, and of their governments collapsing. When people are desperate, undernourished and without hope, they blame their governments, which they see as responsible for or unable to solve their problems. They try to emigrate at any cost. They fight each other over land. They kill each other. They start civil wars. They figure that they have nothing to lose, so they become terrorists, or they support or tolerate terrorism."

If we did a health and safety risk assessment of our planet, we would flag up quite a lot of severe threats: water shortage, soil degeneration, climate change, overpopulation, pollution and toxins, inequality, fragile economies, etc. According to Diamond, they are all time bombs that have fuses of between a few years and no more than 50 years. Our present course is not sustainable and either we choose to change, or we will be forced to change. As in every health and safety check, it makes sense to list the possible threats and to prepare for them.

However, there are always those who don't want to see the writing on the wall and prefer to declare these studies as 'apocalypticism' and some sort of religious eschatology. But trying to assess the possible outcomes of our current problems and preparing for them is not

the same as promoting catastrophism. When the Soviet Union collapsed it did not mean that everyone was going to die. When the Roman Empire fell, the world continued, but not the world as the Romans knew it. The failure to perceive the problems and to anticipate future consequences has, in fact, been one of the contributing factors to the collapse of past civilizations.

One reason why problems were not perceived is, according to Diamond, "a conflict of interest between the short-term interest of the decision making elites and the long-term interest of society as a whole, especially if the elites are able to insulate themselves from the consequences of their actions." Let's say you are a wealthy landowner and you could make a fortune by logging your forests, farming your land industrially, mining the rare minerals that are under your soil despite the destruction and pollution that might cause, selling off the land to ruthless developers – would you abstain from making a lot of money for the sake of the whole and of future generations?

Well, most of those who were able to make these kinds of decisions in the past did not abstain and this is where the real crux lies: our current problems are man-made and one way or the other the result of a thinking that places the highest value on what is profitable. And if this kind of 'economic' and materialistic thinking continues to dominate our collective decisions and if we as individuals continue to succumb to instant gratification, then our industrialised civilization is going to hit the wall.

If corrupt values and a wrong kind of thinking brings down civilizations, then sound values and sound thinking will raise up new civilizations. So, yes, we do need to talk about collapsology; and in this context we need to talk about the human values and mindsets that we will need in order to overcome the challenges we are facing and to create a better way of life and offer an education that will help us to become more altruistic, more cooperative, more generous and more open to reason than to desires. The future remains open but there is no point walking towards it with our eyes shut.

Sabine Leitner

MODERNITY POST-MODERNITY TRANS-MODERNITY AND

We live in a world which has reached a high level of complexity, both in the way we think and in the way we act. The terms *modernity*, *post-modernity* and *trans-modernity* form part of the contemporary world situation in which we find ourselves. In order to gain more clarity and a better understanding of our present situation in which these three different mentalities coexist together, I will try to define some of their main characteristics.

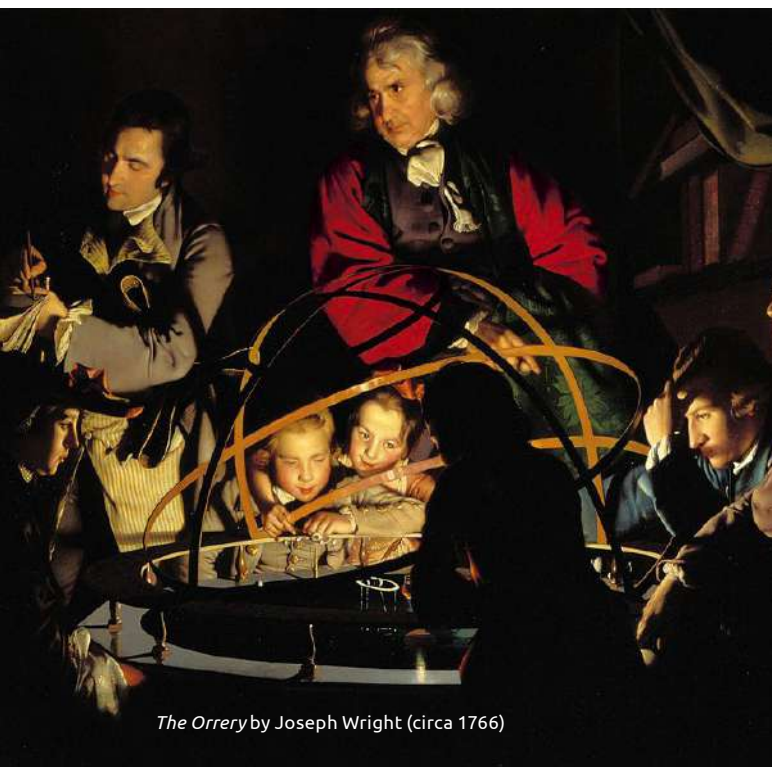
The term modernity can be applied to the philosophical, historical and sociological changes which started to take place in the Western world around the 16th century. In the cultural phenomena of the Late Renaissance and the Enlightenment we can identify the roots of the modern mentality with its emphasis on rationality, empirical science, individualism and progressivism.

Before the arrival of modernity, the dominant epistemology of the pre-modern age was that of faith in a religious dimension. In order to know any fundamental truth the human being had to rely on faith. Faith towards a God, a mystical revelation or a teaching which could be traced back to a mystical-religious scripture or experience.

With modernity we witness a radical change of perspectives. As the human being 'loses faith' in religion his emphasis shifts towards a rational and secular approach to life. The human capacity for reasoning (Descartes' remark, *I think therefore I am*) becomes the central element which can give meaning to human existence. Reason becomes the most reliable tool for discovering the truth, which is now in the hands of every individual who will have to discover it for himself. As the human rational capacity becomes foundational, by turning this 'tool' towards the discovery (and 'conquest') of the natural world we witness the birth of the 'scientific spirit' and its various disciplines (astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology etc.).

The fact that each individual has the capacity for reasoning implies that the emphasis is placed on individualism. Each individual has now been empowered to choose his own mode of action and his belief system. This situation will give rise to a whole series of political, religious and social reforms which will culminate in the birth of secularism, liberalism and capitalism.

The key word which encapsulated the modern world view was *progress*. Grounded in his absolute rational and scientific certitude, man's will and not God's will was the acknowledged source of



The Orrery by Joseph Wright (circa 1766)

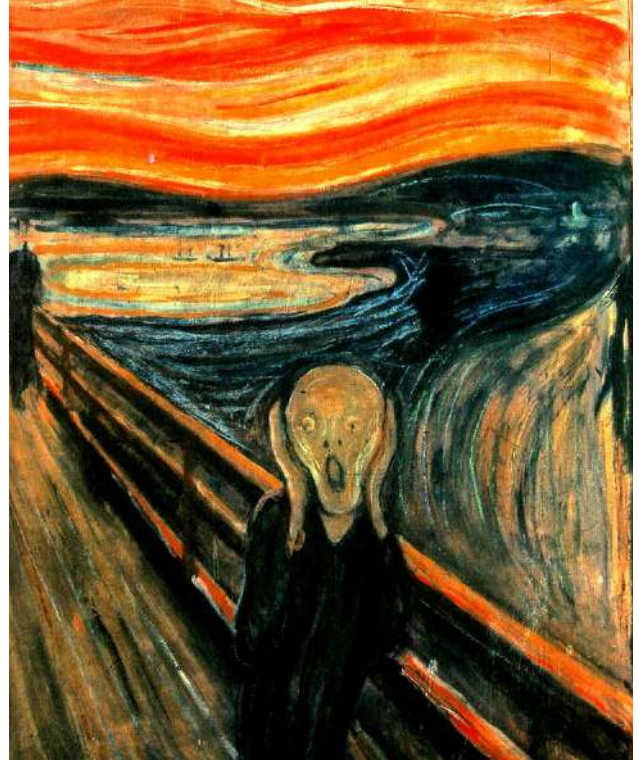
humanity's progressive march towards fulfilment. Actually what was fulfilled was the human/animal drives and desires, to such an extent that man also succeeded in transforming nature and its resources into an object to be purchased and possessed.

The first symptoms of *post-modernism* were brought about by the advent of two world wars. The key notes of this new phase have been skepticism and relativism. As scientific assumptions started to be challenged, technology was taking over and de-humanising man, while traditional values and structures were crumbling. Modern man was now forced to question his old belief that the world was ordered and accessible to the human intelligence. Even the belief in human progress started to be questioned as man could no longer be relied upon as an accurate judge of reality.

In essence, in the postmodern understanding, interpretation is everything; reality only comes into being through our interpretations of what the world means to us individually. *Postmodernism* relies on concrete experience over abstract principles, knowing always that the outcome of one's own experience will necessarily be fallible and relative, rather than certain and universal.

This approach has left the modern mind free of 'absolutes', but also disconcertingly free of any solid ground. *Postmodernism* has left us without foundations for determining absolute truths about how we should think and live wisely on Earth. We can imagine pretty much anything as being true. Unfortunately this freedom to imagine anything as 'relative truth' is also the reason why *postmodernism* has gained such a universal success.

For humanity the most frightening outcome of this situation is the fact that we have renounced the ability to be and to know our true selves. Postmodern humanity is so "post-", that we are even the posterity of ourselves. Getting rid of the last link in the chain, one's own identity, could be the final, self-defeating gesture. Loss of self-identity also means loss of cultural and social identity and so we witness an aimless wandering of the masses around the planet. As we lose touch with who we really are, what



The Scream by Edvard Munch

surrounds us (i.e. the natural world) also becomes devoid of meaning, consciousness, sacredness.

So, what to do next? How can we go about re-enchanting the world around us and regaining our human identity? How can we fight fundamentalism, climate change, over-consumerism, the increasing gaps between the rich and poor, social alienation etc., if we lack certitude in universal and spiritual values?

A movement towards *trans-modernity* could be the first step to answering these questions. This emerging mentality, which is gradually gaining ground, seeks to reconnect with nature and the planet Earth. Humans are beginning to realise that we are all (including plants and animals) connected into one system, which makes us all interdependent.

While *modernity* has given science a divine status; *trans-modernity* wants it to be responsible. Science and technology, as with all human actions, have to be reoriented towards a desire for a sustainable world.

While *post-modernity* has alienated us all from our souls, our intuitions, our feelings and our creativity, *trans-modernity* is seeking to rediscover our deeper identity and to reintegrate the dimension of the sacred into our lives; so that we can make life enchanted again, dream better dreams and envision a brighter future.

Agostino Dominici

Generation-Z:

Deltas, Founders & Doers

Generation Z is the most widely known term used to distinguish the post-millennial generation born after 1995. However, this classification is not necessarily the most illuminating or the one chosen by the generation themselves.

A New York Times article (Jan 2018) discusses several options ranging from the abject '*the last generation*', '*the final generation*' and '*doomed*' all the way to the article's conclusion and the author's favourite 'Delta Generation' or 'Deltas'. Quoting directly from one respondent Kelsy Hillesheim, 22, "Delta is used to denote change and uncertainty in mathematics and the sciences, and my generation was shaped by change and uncertainty," [...] "We are not passive products of circumstance, but active members of society with agency to affect the course of history, and will to build each other up to make things better" [...]

"We know all too well that adults aren't doing so today."

From a recent Time Magazine article we also have 'the Founders' which MTV has unveiled as the name they are going to use to describe their emerging audience. MTV President Sean Atkins says the name (the Founders) acknowledges that while millennials have disrupted society, it's this new generation's job to rebuild it. "They have this self-awareness that systems have been broken," [...] "MTV says its research shows that younger teens today see a world drastically disrupted. Facebook and Google have upended the news business. YouTube has disrupted television. Airbnb and Uber have unsettled long-established industries like hotels and taxis."

This generation are the first 'digital natives': they know of nothing else and technology is an



extension of their physical realities. They are also natives of terrorism, in the sense that many will have been born after 9/11 and very few if any will be able to recall life before 'the war on terror'. They are also natives of economic uncertainty, growing up during a global financial crisis and living with austerity politics and recession. "They've grown up without a safety net," says Jane Gould, MTV senior vice president of consumer insights and research (Time Magazine).

Perhaps the exposure to violence and economic uncertainty experienced with the open-hearted clarity and innocence of childhood has significantly influenced this generation. Much of the research into this group cites a key trait they share, which is their concern for others, for the greater good, the environment and 'altruism'. In her summary of the key attributes 'Generation Z Goes to College', Meghan Grace says: "They are motivated by making a difference for others and not so much by public recognition." [...] "They are social-change minded and would rather engage in community work that addresses the underlying cause of an issue than engage in short term service to address the symptoms."

We can learn that from a philosophical point of view this generation have already had exposure to some of the ups and downs of life, but they are not jaded or disheartened and are not overly-attached to the forms and nostalgia of easier times. They have seen something of impermanence and intrinsically seem to value the health and happiness of 'the whole'.

One of the challenges that this generation may face is that whilst being community-minded they also prefer to learn individually, their ideal learning environment being themselves armed with the internet - they can self-discover all they need to know. However, with the increase of fake sources in all areas of the media this could prove to be problematic if this generation doesn't engage in more

established sources and ultimately, from a philosophical point of view, with the perennial wisdom and unchanging laws that govern life.

There is also a tendency to reject existing structures of community work and volunteering, preferring instead their own methods and own innovation. Crucially, however, they identify themselves as 'doers' and not 'leaders'. It could be that group work which does meet their expectations could be difficult, it will be



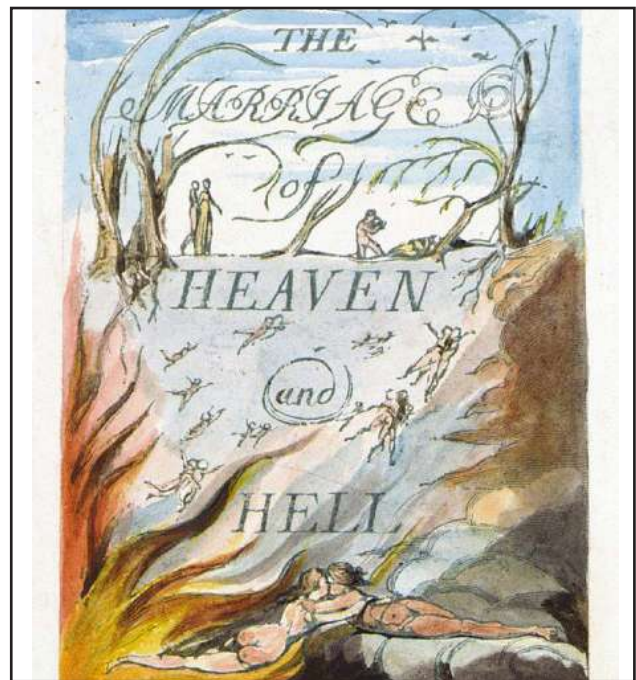
far easier for them to achieve individually than as a group. With this in mind, we can learn that a transition into leadership could be a vital key for this generation. According to a study by Bond, a group working for engagement in international development, groups wishing to work with the new generation should seek to "align altruism and self-interest - developing their leadership skills so they can become agents of change themselves."

Siobhan Farrar

Esoteric Influences in the Work of William Blake

Many of the world's great artists were inspired by the perennial, esoteric or occult philosophy and their works of art express timeless truths that continue to speak to our intuitions. The artist and poet William Blake is no exception, but it is not easy to locate him within the esoteric tradition, because he was subject to so many different influences. Kathleen Raine, author of *William Blake* (published by Thames & Hudson 1970), says that 'Blake was widely read... in the writings of Plato and Plotinus, Berkeley and the Hermetica, Paracelsus and Fludd, and the mystical theology of Boehme and Swedenborg.' Elsewhere she writes: '*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* [one of Blake's works] is the fruit of his profound studies of the mystical theology of Boehme, the alchemical writings of Paracelsus, Fludd and Agrippa and his knowledge of the Western Esoteric tradition.' Blake referred to these and other thinkers as his 'spiritual friends' who 'dined with him' on 'the bread of sweet thought and the wine of delight.'

In his writings and paintings we can find a number of esoteric themes, which I have listed below in no particular order.



- Eternal Motion, or the One-Life in all things.

This is a universal teaching of esoteric philosophy: that Life, or Consciousness, never ceases, neither with death, nor even with the cyclic destruction of the material universe. For Blake this Life, which can be seen in the smallest and humblest of things, such as the worm and the little winged fly, is in its essence joyful. 'Everything that lives is holy', he

wrote. According to Raine, this is the reason for the apparent weightlessness of Blake's figures – they are expressions of the unimpeded spirit of Life, which is in perpetual motion. According to G.P. Lomazzo, a Renaissance author of a treatise on painting, 'the greatest grace and life that a painting can have is that it expresses Motion: which the Painters call the Spirite of a picture.'

- Our perception of the world is limited by the constraints of our senses and our mind.

In this regard, Blake once wrote these now famous words: "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, Infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern." The cavern in this case is the body and the narrow chinks are man's limited senses. But it is not the senses in themselves that are limited, but rather their restriction to the strictly material perceptions. We can also develop our 'subtle senses', which would enable us to perceive Life itself, infinitely manifesting in all things. There is a fascinating picture (see below) of 'Aged Ignorance' clipping the wings of an angel with a pair of scissors. By this Blake was attacking the mechanistic and rationalistic world view prevailing in the 18th century, where reason and mechanistic science,



divorced from the spirit of Life, were cutting the human being off from the source of his being, which for Blake was the Imagination.

- The Body and the World are a Cave and a Grave.

This is another universal esoteric teaching, which is found particularly in the Orphic tradition of ancient Greece and is echoed in the writings of Plato and Plotinus. Blake was familiar with these through the translations of the 18th century Platonist Thomas Taylor, whom he knew. It does not mean that Blake despised the body or hated the world, but merely believed that the soul is more free and more truly itself when released from its 'earthly envelope', or when it can perceive Life beyond the normal restrictions of the senses: 'Man has no body distinct from his Soul; for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discerned by the five senses.' We find the same idea in the *Enneads* of Plotinus, where he speaks of the 'embodied soul', and also in the Indian doctrine of *Maya* (usually translated as 'illusion'). Physical nature is regarded as an illusory projection of the Real, which is intangible. Plato expresses the same teaching in his 'Allegory of the Cave'.

According to Kathleen Raine, Blake's *The Little Girl Lost* and *The Little Girl Found* 'are a retelling of the Greater and Lesser Mysteries of Eleusis, the descent of Kore into Hades, and the nine mystic nights of the Mother's search for her child... The poems are based on Taylor's Dissertation on the Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries. Many of Blake's themes... derive from Thomas Taylor's writings and translations.'

- Esoteric Christianity.

Blake described himself as 'a worshipper of Christ', although he never went to Church. According to Raine, he was 'Swedenborgian in religion'. 'Blake's Jesus is so essentially the one God in all, rather than the Jesus of history.' We can see this in Blake's painting of the Nativity, where, instead of the usual scene of mother and child, we see a luminous being emerging into the surrounding space from

his mother Mary. This is the divine part of every human being, who is in us but is usually suppressed by all sorts of factors, including a materialistic education. Esoteric Christianity sees the events of Christ's life from a more symbolic point of view: the crucifixion is the inner conflict between the spiritual aspirations of man and his more material desires; and the resurrection and ascension to heaven represent the resolution of this conflict by connecting with the divine part of oneself and being freed from the limitations of matter and the lower mind. All of this can be found in the 'mythology' created by Blake and expressed in his paintings and poems.



- The spirit world. As a visionary, Blake 'saw' not only the forms of his paintings and received some of his poems by 'automatic writing'; he would also often perceive subtle beings in nature, such as angels and fairies. We can thus see in Blake's work the 'three worlds' of traditional esoteric teaching: the world of archetypal forms (which he calls the world of Imagination), the world of subtle beings and the physical world itself. As Blake himself wrote: 'This world of Imagination is Infinite and Eternal, whereas the world of Generation or Vegetation is Finite and Temporal. There exist in that Eternal World the Permanent Realities of Every Thing which we see in this Vegetable Glass (mirror) of Nature.'

Blake regarded fairies as the living spirits of the vegetable world and once described to a lady a

'fairy funeral' which he witnessed one night: "I was walking alone in my garden; there was great stillness among the branches and flowers, and more than common sweetness in the air; I heard a low and pleasant sound, and I knew not whence it came. At last, I saw the broad leaf of a flower move, and underneath I saw a procession of creatures of the size and colour of green and grey grasshoppers, bearing a body laid on a rose-leaf which they buried with songs, and then disappeared. It was a fairy funeral."



Was he seeing a reality or was it a figment of his imagination? Perhaps he was seeing a reality through his imagination. After all, what is Imagination, and what is Reality? In Blake's view the two were intimately intertwined. In the poet's own words: 'To the Eyes of the Man of Imagination, Nature is Imagination itself... Imagination is Spiritual Sensation.'

Julian Scott

When Does a Renaissance Start?

The meaning of the Annunciation

History is rich with inspiring examples of the human spirit flourishing. One of the strongest among them is the Renaissance. It generated a change in the perception of the world and provided a new understanding of the human being, reviving the idea of interconnection between the Macrocosm (the Universe/divine) and the Microcosm (the human being). Still today, its philosophical ideas inspire and its art profoundly touches us with beauty and deeper meaning behind the forms.

There are many factors that contributed to such an extensive cultural change, the key among them being the rediscovery of the heritage of the ancient world. However, the Renaissance could have not happened without the rediscovery of the inner dimension of the human being, their freedom and creative power, and the spiritual roots and purpose of life. The best allegory for this rediscovery is the Annunciation as depicted by the Florentine Renaissance masters. For this brief



The Annunciation by Leonardo da Vinci

article I will refer to the Annunciation by Leonardo da Vinci.

The Annunciation is one the most frequently depicted Biblical events during the Renaissance. The angel Gabriel comes to Mary to announce the joyful and challenging news – she will bear a son of God. As described in the New Testament: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.”



The divine and human combined in Jesus Christ are represented in the Annunciation by the figures of Gabriel and Mary. The angel of Leonardo amazes us with its powerful posture containing all the strength of the divine will. The name “Gabriel” in Hebrew means “God is my strength.” Perhaps he is the representation of the spirit that awakens the soul by reminding it that it contains the potential of a new human being, which is also divine – the Son of the Highest, the Saviour and Light of the world.

Mary is framed by a portico. Her gentle posture speaks of some unease and reflection, and at the same time tells us that she is receiving the message. Perhaps she is the representation of the soul trapped in matter, awakened by the divine.

The sharp angles of the building behind Mary contrast with the vastness and softness of the space in which Gabriel moves. Behind her is a building with an open door leading to a dark room; behind him, the portico opens onto a beautiful garden, a misty sea and mountains that take us to the divine infinite.

Gabriel brings lilies, which in Christianity symbolise the purity of Mary. The 19th century occultist H.P. Blavatsky adds that lilies are the Western equivalent of the Eastern lotus and represent the Abstract and Concrete Universe. They are “the emblem of the productive powers of both spiritual and physical nature”.

One can feel the dynamics of the composition. In other paintings golden rays are shining on Mary as the Holy Spirit descends upon her. Here the power is invisible, yet it is still felt in the elegant postures and rhythm of the lines: from the centre in the vast distance to the Angel and then to the Virgin – from the infinite divine to the human. Mary accepts the glorious message, she internalises the Holy Spirit and conceives the Son. Thus begins the renewal of the world.

When next time you are contemplating the beauty of the Annunciation, may it also be a reminder about our divine nature that is waiting to be born, if we accept the challenge brought by an angel...

Nataliya Petlevych

The Hidden Life of Wolves



The image we have of the wolf today is a product of our culture and it is not entirely positive. The wolf has been demonised in the past and hated for various reasons. Medieval stories describe the wolf as a devil and the sixteenth-century tale Little Red Riding Hood showed the wolf as a devourer, while seventeenth-century tales in France described werewolves as the greatest danger coming out of the woods. The wolf is a beast, cruel and aggressive, killing livestock, innocent lambs and people.

Killing wolves was encouraged all around Europe, and in North America as well with the arrival of settlers. It was seen as a righteous

duty, a kind of justified crusade. Human beings were entitled to bring moral order and revenge, showing who is the master of nature.

Wolves in England had already become very rare by the fifteenth century, although they were still found in Yorkshire and remained present in Scotland until the seventeenth century. In most parts of Western Europe the wolf was exterminated in the nineteenth century. Today wolves are slowly coming back around Europe and their numbers are growing, but we still don't understand them very well. There are many reasons for this, the main one being that observing wolves in the wild is very difficult, as they are very intelligent and equipped with powerful senses, while in captivity wolves develop a certain degree of neurosis and their behaviour changes as a result.

But if we try, we can find plenty of research in the field and uncover the wolf's true nature. David Mech, a specialist and authority on wolves wrote: "Probably the creature's strongest personality trait is its capacity for making emotional attachments to other individuals". Their social bonding and caring behaviour are second to humans and other social primates. There are observations of an older pack member with a broken jaw who was fed by other members with regurgitated food until he was healed, and the same goes for wolves suffering from arthritis or old age. There are affectionate ties between them. They even mourn when losing a pack member, as was observed by naturalist Jamie Dutcher. He noted that the pack stopped playing for six weeks after the sudden death of one of their members, despite a significant portion of wolves' time being dedicated to play. Wolves love to play, so much so that they don't even need another wolf to play with as the natural world is a playmate. There are cases of seeing a play between wolf and raven, where they would be chasing each other without causing any harm, or sometimes even falling snowflakes can bring them delight.

Naturalist Adolf Murie studying wolves wrote about their personality: "A second characteristic of wolf personality is the animal's basic aversion

to fighting." He related it to an anecdote of a wolf being upset by two dogs fighting each other. The wolf came and started pulling the aggressor dog off the other dog by the tail. Mech is convinced after looking at records that: "no wolf, except a wolf with rabies, has been ever known to make a deliberate attack on a human being in North America".

Barry Lopez, in his book *Of Wolf and Man*, suggests that there is also a certain conversation going on between a wolf and its prey. Sometimes there is a clear moment of staring between predator and prey, which is an exchange of information. Lopez calls this the conversation of death, he sees it as a ceremonial act, an exchange of the flesh of the hunted for respect for its spirit. Therefore, there is a sacred order in it. There are many examples of a wolf killing twenty or more sheep in a very compulsive manner. It could be that this is not so much a case of irrational killing as a failure in establishing the conversation of death. The wolf has initiated a sacred rite, but the animals were not able to follow. There are some surprising similarities with the hunting process of native American Indians. There is respect, a dialogue and a recognition of a role.

Let's try to think of nature as an orchestra where every instrument plays its part. The problem when we are disconnected from nature is that we can rarely hear the symphony, but only the sounds, which when isolated can't produce the greatness of the whole. This is a world deprived of beauty which we have created for ourselves. The real beasts are not to be found out there, but rather in our immoral attitude towards animals and nature: we have projected onto the wolf the shadow of our own animal self.

Miha Kosir

The Science behind the Wholefood Plant-Based Diet

Veganism, vegetarianism and other flexible plant-based diets have become more and more advertised and promoted through the media. While Vegans have been the advocates of an animal-free diet, mostly for ethical reasons, for decades, they are now being backed up by the scientific community praising the healthy and environmental benefits of such diets.

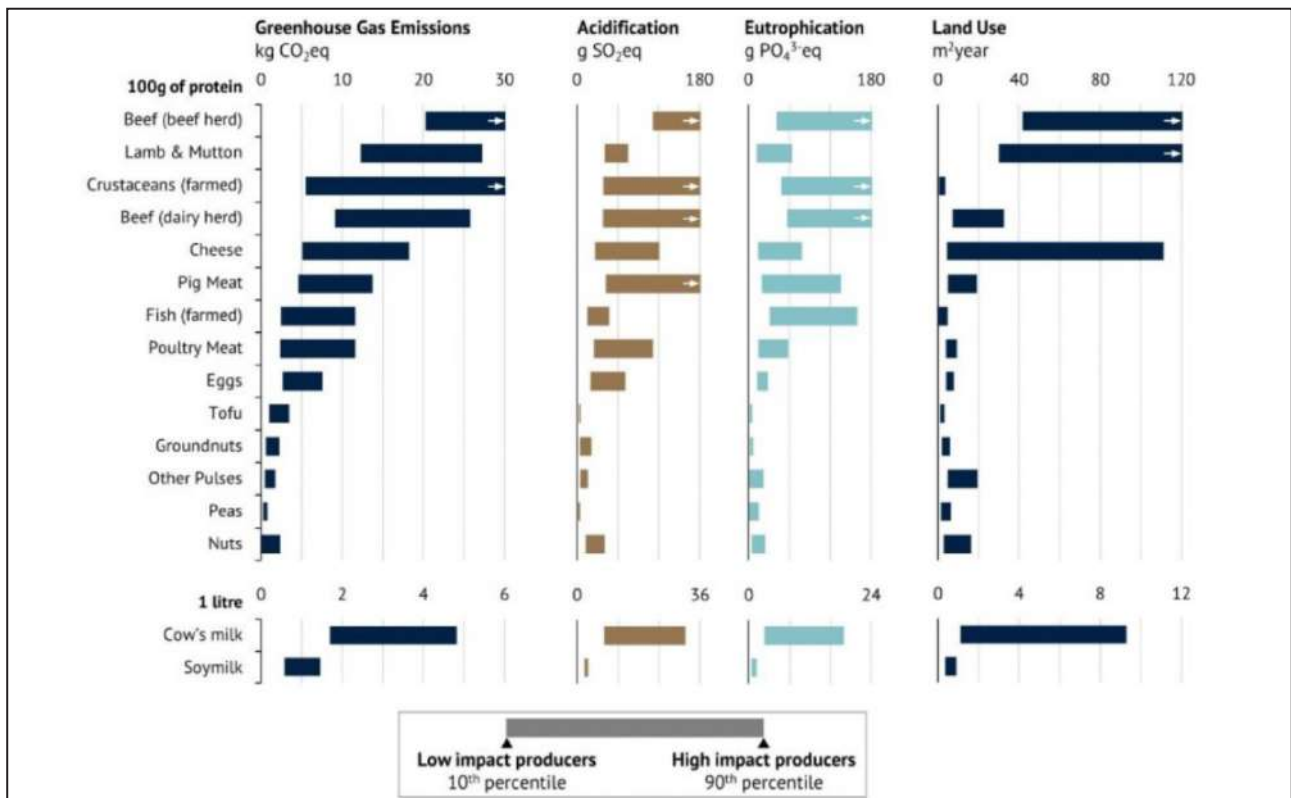
The Health benefits:

First and foremost a balanced and well-planned vegetarian or vegan diet has been recognised by many health and dietary organisations to be healthy and appropriate for individuals during all stages of the life cycle¹. But it is not just appropriate, it has significant health benefits when it comes to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease to patients who have already experienced strokes or heart-attacks².

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19562864>

2. The China Study by Dr T. Collin Campbell and Dr Thomas M. Campbell





Animal farming on an industrial scale has increased the use of antibiotics to help prevent infections and diseases in the battery farmed chickens, pigs and cattle. To that end between 40% and 70% of the antibiotics produced are given to livestock, depending on the country's own regulation. This has had the inconvenient side-effect of making bacteria more antibiotic resistant but also it makes our "waste water" more difficult to clean and the "solid waste" almost impossible to reuse for agricultural purposes.

For everything meat-base products bring to your plates, plants can do it at a lesser cost for your purse but most especially for the planet³.

3. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/04/30/dining/climate-change-food-eating-habits>.

To save the environment:

Decreasing meat consumption and processed food by switching to a wholefood plant-based diet is probably the most effective way an individual has to decrease his or her carbon footprint, but also to decrease water consumption and water pollution.

The forests and jungles burning have been seen on the news many times over this year. This is due to climate change and more extreme weather patterns but also because of a global agriculture pushing towards animal grazing and animal feed production.

The ethical conundrum:

One does not have to be a vegan at heart to feel compassionate towards the mistreatment of our animal food stock. By just seeing them as produce we

fail as human beings to see the bigger picture: Nature cannot be seen and treated as a factory. It is time to come back to a more sustainable and respectful approach to agriculture.

The depletion of our seas, the burning of the forests, and the destruction of natural wildlife habitats in general is accelerating a mass extinction on a global scale. It is therefore important to know what we put on our plates and the consequences behind it.

As philosophers, responsible human beings, we must look to behave ethically and compassionately. With the new year coming, maybe the best resolution you can make, for yourself and the planet is to eat more of your vegetables and beans and less meat and fish.

Florimond Krins

WOMAN IN MYTHS



Aphrodite of the Syracuse type. Parian marble,
Roman copy of the 2nd century CE

In myths we can find the archetypes that can guide our life and help us discover our soul. In the case of goddesses, these can reveal to women the primordial forces of the spiritual world and help us to understand the inner being that characterizes our female complexity.

Jorge Angel Livraga, founder of New Acropolis, once wrote: “myths have the property of awakening certain aspects within man that are beyond his strictly rational capacity. Myths can reach parts where reason cannot go; myths are closer to intuition than to reason. Myths speak about a truth by using a symbolical language, and that language offers remarkable advantages; it is rich, wide and adaptable enough to enable each individual to perceive what they can assimilate. No one remains untouched by a myth, whereas a rational explanation may leave them unmoved.” Myths are like a door that connects our mind, and our emotions with the spiritual world.

The great psychologist Carl Jung regarded myths as great tools for understanding the way our psyche works. They are part of the collective heritage of humanity, and through the collective unconscious they speak to the deepest part of our being. “A myth is like a dream we are able to remember”, and to explain it allows us to know ourselves better. In the unconscious of all men and women there are seeds that contain a model of the form of the spiritual world, and the strength of that seed makes each person want to replicate it as a way of life. Those primordial forces or archetypes from the spiritual world would be the gods and goddesses that myths refer to. Here we will be referring to the goddesses of ancient Greece, due to the fact that they are most widely known.

Goddesses represent a certain type of woman and a shadow aspect; it is a shadow within us because the light of spirit is missing, the light that is needed in order to become aware of this weakness in order to overcome it and become better, more confident and happier.

Aphrodite

Woman: sees herself as a princess, and loves to seduce and to shine. Embodies the joy of living and associates love with sensuality. Always seeks beauty and harmony in her surroundings.

Shadow: emotional immaturity; by remaining stuck in sensuality and in the desire to catch what is beautiful, she can fall into narcissism and infidelity.

Athena

Woman: is totally in control of her emotions, and will rarely allow herself to be driven by them. Stimulated by difficulties, she excels in teaching, artistic creativity or research. She has a great practical sense and gives priority to being successful professionally. She is faithful to her chosen partner and expects the same from him.

Shadow: when she feels attacked, she turns cold, relentlessly critical, aggressive and authoritarian. If she is not channeling the energy properly, she can fall into depression.

Demeter

Woman: the role of the mother continues to be one of the most sacred archetypes for the human being. As a mother, she discovers the protective instinct, and rediscovers inexhaustible springs of attentiveness, patience and tenderness. She is warm, affectionate, and her attentiveness towards 'others' gives her a sort of sixth sense that makes her very intuitive. There is another side to this archetype, which is the spiritual mother, the one who loves all human beings, such as Mother Theresa.

Shadow: the devouring mother. She doesn't know how to say no. She doesn't know how to express her anger or explain her feelings clearly, and that causes her to feel a victim of existence. When she projects all her energy onto her child, she becomes possessive and infantilizes him. Her need to give life, to do everything and control everything turns her into an oppressive mother.

Hera

Woman: the real feminine power is usually manifested in a subtle way. Hera is, on the one hand, the humble one, the one who guards the fire of home, and on the other hand, the proud queen. She seeks authenticity and her joy of living is profound. She is attentive and receptive towards others. For her, human relationships are more important than seeking independence. She also needs the prestige, respect and honour that marriage brings. Her happiness depends on how much love and respect her husband gives her.

Shadow: jealousy and wounded pride. Jealousy is born from an unhealthy need to possess the other, a sort of illusory power that creates more fears, bitterness and sufferings than joy. When her soul falls into this fearsome trap, she no longer distinguishes the true from the false.

Unfortunately, in our civilization there is little room for the spiritual because the keys of the symbols contained in myths have been lost, and as a result we only see in them promiscuity, revenge and jealousy... But all philosophies speak about a very important aspect of our psyche, the soul, that voice, that

feeling we notice sometimes when admiring a beautiful landscape, or a harmonious piece of music, that which we cannot explain but transports us upwards, towards what is eternal and makes us feel part of Nature; for a moment, a special warmth visits our hearts and we stop being ourselves in order to become one with what is around us. In those moments we are in touch with our deepest ideals and dreams about goodness, beauty and justice.

The real achievement of the human being is to discover his inner being, his soul, that energy that can be supported by matter, but has at the same time the ability to elevate itself towards the great ideals and dreams. To do this, women need to accept themselves as they are and not lose their multiple identity. We are not only mothers or wives, we are also lovers, heroines, educators, doctors, housewives, artists...

We need to begin by developing an altruistic morality that gives without expecting anything in return. We need to accept that we are all different, and consequently we perceive things in different ways. To learn to listen, to show real interest in others, looking for what brings us closer rather than what separates us: this is what will help us make progress in the art of communication.

According to the mythologist Joseph Campbell, what is essential is that women give birth to something, whether it be a body, a soul, a society or a civilization; and if woman is not given the opportunity to give life, she will lose the reason for her existence.

Written by Margarita Dominguez

Translated and adapted by Natalia Lema

