

Time Traveling as Spiritual Practice



I heard mystic Thomas Hubl comment that spiritual practice involves the competency of movement and the competency of stillness. The competency of stillness enables us to have an enlightened relationship with our own experience, self-sense, and world. By contextualizing our

thoughts, feelings, and struggles within the realm of the formless and timeless, struggles cease, and we learn to rest, regularly, in the perfection of the unmanifest realm of pure potential. This is the realm of Being. “Before Abraham was”, says Jesus in John’s gospel, “I am”.

This post is focused on the second competency, movement. Another name for the competency of movement is the competency of becoming. Yet another name for it would be evolutionary spirituality. This competency consists of a depth dimension and a transcendent dimension. One leads us backward in time. The other moves forward into the future.

We need to learn the art of time travel.

Let’s start our time travel with us, in our condition of personhood. After 13.7 billion years, the cosmos gains the capacity to express all of the qualities associated with personhood—freedom, self-reflexive consciousness, compassion, appreciation for beauty, goodness, and truth, etc. As we travel back in history, we move from more personal to less personal to impersonal (or pre-personal)—from culture and psyche to biology to physics to the Big Bang. In the realm of the psyche, time travel involves being able to tap into the collective unconscious comprised of all forms of life,

including but not limited to the human. Dream-work is most helpful as a practice to help us to connect with the ancient archetypes formed by past cultures that live on through our dreams, and in our mythic resonances. The psychological journey may also involve traveling back into one's personal history to uncover and re-integrate failures of love and empathic attunement so that we can become more robust vessels of personhood. While these archetypes of the collective unconscious along with our developmental breaches occurred in the past, both are active in the present, affecting the quality of our lives.

Culturally we travel back from postmodern to modern to traditional (premodern) to archaic to the emergence of Homo Sapiens at which point we shift into the less personal domain of mammalian life (where empathy first makes an appearance) to birds (very early expressions of empathy) to reptiles, all the way back to the pre-personal domain of very early life (e.g. bacteria) and the domains of the biosphere and geosphere ending up at the Big Bang.



Spiritual competency in this backward movement through deep time involves, first becoming literate about the Great Story as *our* story, and second learning to honour each stage of emergence by activating the intelligences of each stage of emergence in our lives. Finally, we need to identify with this whole process. We are that creative process of development come to conscious awareness.

All of this history is con-centrated in us. We are incarnations of the process. Each of us has all these intelligences that are alive within us *here and now*: archaic, tribal, warrior, traditional, modern/rational, and postmodern,

along with the biosphere and physiosphere. Each of these intelligences is folded into us, and available to us as life conditions require their enactment. Another critical competency we need to develop is the capacity to manage the earlier, less personal and pre-personal dimensions of our being (urge for survival, status, sex, and security).



In my theology this entire evolving cosmic process is the body of Christ, and when, in the sacrament of communion, the presider utters the words, "This is my body", I am not imagining an atonement. My assumption is that the loaf of bread being broken up for us is the entire Christified-cosmos. To consume the bread is to recognize that we are constituted of, and nourished by, both physically and spiritually, the entire cosmic history.

The predominant sentiment is overwhelming gratitude and wonder that all of this history, shaped and wooed by the unifying presence of the Christ, is present in the gathered community.

Conscious Incorporation

The practice here is *conscious incorporation*. In-corporation means literally to consciously em-body the Great Story of our past with as much integrity, gratitude, and responsibility as possible. We don't engage in this competency of time travel into our past in the first place to transcend the story, but rather to inhabit it more deeply, to honour it, to know this dimension of ourselves more deeply. As Whitman wrote: "I am large. I contain multitudes." This is a practice of awe as much as anything else, to know that the whole of deep time history is showing up as us. As our depth dimension it grounds personhood in cosmic history.

Conscious Transcendence

Ok, return to the present. The universe has personalized itself in, through, and as you/us. You are the personalization of the universe, here and now. The competency of movement involves time travel, not just into our deep history, but also into the future. We remember and incorporate the past, yes. But we're also called to remember and manifest the future. Here, there is conscious intent to transcend existing conditions by consciously consenting to the evolutionary impulse to manifest through us as the new future that wants to emerge. This is a movement from the personal to the transpersonal or maybe even the super-personal. This is an intensification of the qualities we now associate with personhood, but also a seeking out and/or allowing new, unimagined qualities to emerge, such as a heightened capacity to communicate non-locally and non-verbally, and the integration of what it means to be human with new technology.

The super-personal can be thought of as the christification of the human (following Teilhard de Chardin).

When, in the sacrament of communion, the presider lifts the cup and utters the words "This is my blood", again, I do not think of atonement. Rather I am imagining being lifted up by an agapic love (the unifying heart of the Christ), which is always and everywhere unifying disparate parts into creative union. I prefer real wine for the physiological effect of the wine, hinting at transcendence, this movement of the universe to transcend, yet incorporate (include). I think of the flow of divine life from the heart of the Christ, being poured out (always and everywhere), and drawing all of creation toward a consummation in Love.

The practice here is *conscious transcendence*—that is, being willing to assume conscious responsibility for the emergence of the new human that is wanting to emerge as you. *Conscious incorporation* is the foundation for this practice. If this is undertaken without a solid grounding and sense of self in the

Great Story, the indignities of the modern era can re-surface. The transhumanist movement, for example, could land us all in the Matrix without a grounding in conscious incorporation.

That is, we are tempted to engineer the future of our selves and of the Earth community with mere reason, and human cleverness, rather than tapping into the deep, 13.7 billion intelligence of Life itself. As we undertake to consciously transcend the current iteration of the human species (who can deny the need for this?), we do so with deep humility and rootedness. Our technologies can be based in what Janine Benyus calls [biomimicry](#) (consciously mimicking Earth's natural processes) and nature's principle of [waste=food](#) (William McDonough). The film, Pandora, was a first pass at trying to explore the dangers and dignities of conscious transcendence. Too often, evolutionary spirituality exclusively focuses on practices of transcendence, at the expense of incorporation.

The Christian tradition encompasses both practices of incorporation and transcendence, using the metaphor of the new creation in Christ. "In Christ, we are a new creation. The old has passed away. The new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The story of the resurrection of Jesus is the promise and the intuition of an actual rising up of the new human, capable of realizing the dream of G_d—or the Kin(g)dom of G_d to use Jesus' metaphor. This is what the hidden Heart and Mind of the cosmos is doing right now on the planet. To consciously centre oneself in this Heart is to be ignited by the fire of Love, and to give oneself unambiguously to the dream of unity, justice, peace, and loving community on Earth.



The “second coming of Christ” is not about waiting for Jesus to return, but rather the birth of the new human, individually and collectively. All of creation has been “eagerly waiting”, writes Paul, for the arrival of the children of God” (Romans 8:19). “Children of G_d” is a metaphor for full personalization and divinization. We are intended to be what our creeds have always affirmed about Jesus, fully human and fully divine. (I would add fully cosmic). Creation has been patiently waiting, actively gestating...wait for it, for us and for what is coming through us!

This doesn't diminish the rest of creation as merely instrumental, relegating it as little more than a vessel for the birth of the human. As we've seen, the spiritual competency of conscious incorporation helps us to realize that all of history from the Big Bang forward is carried forward and honoured in us as concentrated amalgams of the Great Emergence. And keep in mind, that as we practice conscious transcendence, we are all of that Big History ourselves, giving birth to what is coming as the new, super-personalized/divinized iteration of the human being. Consciously assuming this instrumental role, far from denigrating us, completes us, re-purposes us, and dignifies our lives. As a Christian, I would also add that it completes the work of the Christ, in and through our unique and varied vocations. We have much to live up to, and a glorious future to realize as we live out our vocation in Christ as time travellers.

