

## RETURN TO THE STARTING POSITION

### RICHARD THEODORE SERVANT

A renowned cultural historian known for his books "**The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Shaped Our Worldview**" and "**Cosmos and Psyche: Hints of a New Worldview.**"



It is impossible to speak about **Richard Tarn** in an academic, cold way. What he researched, gathered around him a circle of many young people thirsting for spirituality and was their inspiration. He should be given a separate, detailed publication. Maybe I will do that if I have time.

**Richard Tarn** is the founder of the Philosophy, Cosmology, and Consciousness Studies Program at the California Institute for Integral Studies in San Francisco, where he currently teaches. Born in 1950 in Geneva, Switzerland, to American parents, he grew up in Michigan, where he received a classical Jesuit education. In 1968, he entered Harvard, where he studied Western intellectual and cultural history and depth psychology, graduating with *AB cum laude*\* in 1972. He lived and worked at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur for ten years, in California, studied with Stanislav Grof, Joseph Campbell, Gregory Bateson, Huston Smith and James Hillman, and later served as Esalen's Director of Programs and Education. He received his doctorate from Saybrook Institute in 1976 for a dissertation on LSD psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, and spiritual transformation. 1980–  
In 1990, he wrote a famous work, "**The Passion of the Western Mind**," dedicated to the development of Western thought. history from the ancient Greeks to postmodernism, which became a bestseller and remains a widely used text in universities around the world. In 2006 he published a book "**Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View**", for which the UK Science and

medical network has awarded the Book of the Year Prize. As the International Transpersonal President of the Association, he is a member of the Board of Governors of the San Francisco **CG Jung Institute**. In addition to teaching at CIIS, he has taught frequently at **Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara** and has given numerous public lectures and seminars in the United States and abroad.

For his book "**Cosmos and Psyche: Hints of a New World View**" he praised by Joseph Campbell and Huston Smith: a book that reveals the connection between cosmic cycles and archetypal patterns of experience. Drawing on years of research and thinkers from Plato to Jung, Tarnas delved into the origins of epochal events, planetary connections such as the French Revolution, the world wars, and September 11. Whether you read it as astrology updated for the quantum age or as a modern classic on spirituality, **Cosmos & Psyche** is an essential work of development and study.

When finishing writing the aforementioned book, in the last chapter he decided to invite readers to review the "path taken" and wrote the final chapter "**Return to The initial state.**" What is the Initial State? Why is it so important?

**"But to truly appreciate this most complex epistemological insight, as well as the other great dialectical trajectories of Western intellectual and spiritual history that have developed in parallel in cosmology, psychology, religion, and being, would require a new book. I will try to summarize this by limiting myself to a brief general overview of this long historical development - something like an archetypal a meta-narrative that will touch on the views and insights outlined above."**

.....

## **RETURN TO STARTING POSITION\***

When it comes to the history of Western thought, it would be possible to do an infinite amount of research today. generalizations. But perhaps the most obvious fact is that from beginning to end, it was an exclusively male phenomenon: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Saint Paul, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Copernicus, Galileo, Bacon, Descartes, Newton, Locke, Hume, Kant, Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud... The Western intellectual tradition was created and canonized almost exclusively by men and is dominated by male views. Of course, men

The dominance of women in Western intellectual history is not explained by the fact that women are inferior to men. But can this be attributed *solely* to social inequality? I think not. I am convinced that there is something deeper, something archetypal, in this. The basic and ubiquitous male character of Western thinking character manifests itself in both men and women, cutting across all Western cultures aspects of thought that determine the most important ideas about man and the role of man

All the major languages that have been rooted in the Western tradition, starting with Greek and Latin, have tended to personify humanity with masculine words.

help: anthropos, homo, l'homme, el hombre, l'homo, der Mensch, man. As correctly reflected in what is presented in the historical narrative of this book, "man" has always and everywhere figured: "the rise of man", "the dignity of man", "the relationship of man with God", "the place of man in the cosmos", "the struggle of man with nature", "the great achievements of modern man", etc.\*.

"Man" in the Western tradition is an eternally restless male-hero, a Promethean-type rebel, constantly striving for freedom and free movement, constantly striving to separate himself both physically and metaphysically from the fundamental principle that gave birth to him and to subjugate it. Such a masculine tendency, hidden in the latent evolution of Western thought, even if it mostly remained unconscious, was nevertheless not only characteristic of this evolution, but rather was its essential component.

**The evolution of Western thought was driven by the heroic desire to create an independent and rational human "self", torn from its primordial elemental unity with nature. This dominant masculinity has influenced all major religious, scientific and philosophical views in the West. Its culture, its victorious march began about four millennia ago, with the conquests of the oldest patriarchal nomads in the Mediterranean, the matriarchal Greek tribal cultures and the Levant\*, – later with force manifested itself in the patriarchal religion of the West, which grew out of Judaism, in its rationalist philosophy, which originated in Greece, and in the objectivist science that emerged in Europe in the Modern Age. All this became the reason for the development of an independent human will and intellect: a transcendent "I", an independent individual "ego", human self-determination with all its uniqueness, isolation and freedom. However, such masculine thinking required the exclusion and suppression of women. We observe this in ancient Greek thinking, which completely subjugated pre-Greek matriarchal mythologies, in the denial of the Great Mother Goddess of the Judeo-Christians and in the cold-blooded exaltation of the rational reality, and we can say that the evolution of Western thought was based on the suppression of the feminine principle - the suppression of undifferentiated unified consciousness, the separation of mysticism (*participation mystique*) from nature. It was a consistent denial of the Anima Mundi, that is, the Soul of the World, the existence and ambiguity, imagination, emotion, unity, certainly instincts, secret**

**nature, woman - in short, everything that the masculine principle considered "other", "different" in its projections.**

But such separation inevitably encourages the desire to unite with what has been lost - especially after the heroic quests of men have led modern thinking to a hopeless impasse, where, feeling completely alone, he (the beginning of no family - *my note*) attributed to himself the exclusive rights to any conscious the only solution in the Universe (man is the only conscious and rational being, the Cosmos is blind and mechanistic, God is dead). That is when man experienced an existential crisis: he is a lonely, mortal conscious "ego", thrown into an absolutely meaningless and unfamiliar Universe. He is beset by both a psychological and a biological crisis: he lives in a world whose form exactly corresponds to his worldview, that is, in a "man-made" environment, which is gradually becoming more and more mechanistic, callous and self-destructive. *The crisis of modern man* – **this is really a crisis of men, and I am convinced that it is already rising in the great wave of the feminine principle that has shaken our culture.** This is evident not only from the rise of feminism, the strengthening of the position of women and the exaltation of purely feminine values in the eyes of both women and men, and not only from the rapid growth of women's education and the emergence of a growing sensitivity to "ancestral spirits" perspectives in almost all intellectual disciplines, but also due to a growing sense of unity with the planet and all its natural forms, due to a growing awareness of ecological threats, and an intensifying reaction against political and corporate strategies aimed at ruthless exploitation of the environment, with human communities increasingly involved, due to the rapid dismantling of long-standing political and ideological barriers that separate the peoples of the world, a growing understanding of what mutual aid and cooperation should be, and many different perspectives. This wave is also felt in general by the desire to unite with the body, with emotions, with the subconscious, with imagination and intuition, with a new interest in childbirth and the dignity of the mother, with a growing recognition of the immanence in thinking, a great interest in the Gaia\* (Earth) hypothesis. It is also felt in the passionate interest in archaic cultures and modern indigenous tribes, such as ancient Europeans, American Indians, Africans, - the feminine divine principle that has become the center of attention, in archaeology - the Great Goddess in the discovery of the tradition and the revival of the modern spirituality of this Goddess, with the rise of the Judeo-Christian Sophia tradition and the papal exaltation of the *Assumptio Mariae\**, due to the almost universal spontaneous emergence of female archetypal manifestations, both in some dreams and in psychotherapy. Let us feel this impulse in the vast on the wave of interest in mythological views, esoteric teachings, Eastern mysticism, witchcraft and shamanism, archetypal and transpersonal psychology, hermeneutics and other non-objectivist epistemologies.../.../this list can be continued indefinitely. **As Jung predicted, an epochal shift is taking place in modern consciousness, a reconciliation of two hostile poles, a fusion of opposites reunion...the alienated loneliness would remain for some time, and the feminine principle, which had been oppressed and enslaved, now began to rise very rapidly.**

And such a dramatic development is not a simple reward, not a compensation for what was lost, because, I am convinced, it was a latent development of the intellectual and spiritual development of the West. the goal of evolution. Because *the invisible passion that has been hidden in Western thinking, was the desire to reconnect with the origins of one's being*. Driven by Western male consciousness The force was her dialectical aspiration for self-realization and independence, and finally the restoration of the lost connection with the whole - so that, having separated from the feminine principle, she would regain would reconnect him with the very mystery of life, nature, and the soul. That this connection would now take place on a new level, different from the one he had in his original state of consciousness, because the long evolution of human consciousness had succeeded in preparing him for the voluntary and conscious acceptance of his own foundation and essence. Western The inner orientation and purpose (telos) of thought was to restore one's connection with the cosmos through the action of mature mysticism, voluntarily and consciously surrendering to the great the embrace of omnipotence, in which human independence is preserved and at the same time human alienation is overcome.

But in order for the oppressed feminine to finally awaken, the masculine principle must offer itself as a sacrifice, overcoming a kind of *ego death*. Western thought must open itself to a reality whose nature can shake to the very foundations its most deeply held beliefs about itself and the world. In this lies its true act of heroism. The time has come to cross the threshold - and this action requires extraordinary courage,

faith, imagination, and the conviction that there is something greater and more complex reality. Finally, such a step requires unconditional self-denial. Therein lies the great task that has arisen for our age: the masculine principle will have to part with its hubris\* and with the still unperceived part of its consciousness and voluntarily journey into a completely new relationship based on mutual understanding and equality with all forms of the feminine principle. Thus, the feminine principle no longer needs to be subordinated, denied and enslaved: it must be fully recognized, respected and valued as an equal. From now on, it must be recognized not as an objectified "other", but as a source, a goal and an immanent presence.

This is indeed a grandiose task, but I am convinced that it is precisely for this that Western thought has been preparing, step by step, throughout its entire existence. I am convinced that the tireless inner thought of the West and the development of its masculine principle, in an incredibly long dialectical process, have led precisely to the reconciliation of the lost feminine unity, to the deep and multi-level marriage of men and women, to a victorious and healing union. I also believe that most of the conflicts and disasters of our era reflect the fact that the drama of evolution is now approaching its conclusion and clarity.

After all, our era is trying with all its might to bring something fundamentally new to the history of humanity. new: it seems that we are witnesses and participants in the "birth pangs" of some new reality, a new form of human existence - that "child" who will be the fruit of this great archetypal marriage, carrying within itself the entire past. Therefore, once again I endorse the vital ideals proclaimed by feminists of ecological, archaic, and other countercultural and multicultural orientations. So I would like to

to confirm the importance of the line that supported and nourished the main Western trajectory, because I am convinced that that tradition, which encompasses everything from the Greek epic poets and ancient the Hebrew prophets, throughout the entire intellectual and spiritual path from Socrates and Plato, from Paul and Augustine, from Galileo and Descartes, Kant and Freud, - this astonishing The path taken by the West should in no way be dismissed as some imperialist-chauvinist conspiracy: it should be considered a necessary and noble part of the greater Dialectic. This tradition not only achieved the essential differentiation and autonomy of the individual, which alone could make possible a large-scale synthesis: it also opened up the path to self-determination. Moreover, in this tradition lie resources that remained without the attention of its own Prometheus, which we are only now beginning to understand and which, strangely enough, have made us realize the openness to the feminine principle. Here, every perspective is confirmed and overcome - both male and female, who are part of one whole: after all, each pole needs an opposite. And their synthesis leads to completely new horizons: beyond which a reality that has not yet been experienced opens up unexpectedly, which is not given to be seen until it itself appears, or becomes a new act of creation.

**And yet, why has the masculine character of the Western intellectual and spiritual tradition become so obvious to us only today, when all previous human generations have completely missed this?** I think it's only happening now because, as Hegel observed, a civilization is unable to understand itself and its meaning until it reaches such a stage of maturity, until its hour of death approaches.

**Today we are experiencing what is very similar to the death of modern, that is, Western man. It is possible that the end of "man" is near. But man is not goal. Man is something that must be overcome and his union with the femininity.**

.....

\* **hubris** - unholy arrogance. Ancient Greek.

\* **Levant** – a historical geographical name common in Western languages for a region located in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. **Look at the map** - you can see the following countries: Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Jordan. The ancient Greeks and Romans used the word Syria to refer to this region. The Arabic language uses the name al-Shams, which forms one of the three parts of the Mashreq.



\***Gaia** (γῆ) in Greek mythology is the personification of the Earth (Mother Earth). The first temple of Gaia was built at Delphi.

\***Academia cum laude** is a unique system of individual studies that allows motivated undergraduate students to go beyond the boundaries of their main studies, delve deeper into a personal study topic, and work with world-renowned university professors - top-level scientists, researchers, or recognized artists, respected authorities in their field.

\* In the original English language, the word "man" is used everywhere, having two meanings: **"human" and "man"**.

\* Translated from Russian. abridged: [psylib.org.ua](http://psylib.org.ua)