

RETURN TO THE STARTING POSITION

RICHARD THEODORE SERVANT

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



About **Richard the Servant** It is impossible to speak only academically, coldly. What he studied gathered around him a circle of many young people thirsting for spirituality and was their inspiration. He should be devoted to a separate, detailed publication. Maybe I will do that if I have time.

Richard Tarnis 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, from which he graduated *AB cum laude*. In 1972, he lived and worked at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, for ten years, studying 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. In the 1980s and 1990s, he wrote a well-known work "**The Passion of the Western Mind**" devoted to the history of Western thought 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 the book "**Cosmos and Psyche: Intimations of a New World View**", for which the UK Science and

medical network awarded the Book of the Year Award. As president of the International Transpersonal Association, he is the San Francisco **On the Board of Governors of the CG Jung Institute** In addition to teaching at CIIS, he frequently lectured **Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara**, gives numerous public lectures and seminars in the United States and abroad.

For the book "**Space and the psyche: hints of a new worldview**" was praised by Joseph Campbell and Huston Smith: it is 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, Tarn delved into the planetary connections of epochal events such as the French Revolution, the world wars, and 9/11. Whether you read it as astrology updated for the quantum age or as a modern classic of spirituality, "**Cosmos & Psyche** is an important 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 last chapter "**Return to the starting position**. What is the Initial State? Why is it so important?

"But to truly appreciate this most complex epistemological insight, yes as well as other great dialectical trajectories of Western intellectual and spiritual history, which developed in parallel in cosmology, psychology, religion and in 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."

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RETURN TO STARTING POSITION*

When it comes to the history of Western thought, it would be possible to make countless generalizations today. But perhaps the most obvious fact is that from the very beginning to the end, it has been 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, the dominance of men in the intellectual history of the West is not explained by the fact that women's minds are inferior to men's. But can this be attributed to *only* social inequality? I think not. I am convinced: there is something deeper in it - something archetypal. The basic and ubiquitous masculine Western mindset manifests itself in both men and women, dissecting all aspects of Western thought, determining the most important ideas about man and the role of man

in the world. All the major languages that lie in the soil of the Western tradition, starting with Greek and Latin, have tended to personify humanity with the help of masculine words: anthropos, homo, l'homme, el hombre, l'homo, der Mensch, man. As is rightly 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 the eternally restless male hero, the Promethean 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 to himself. This masculine tendency, hidden in the latent evolution of Western thought, even if it remained mostly 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 "I", torn from the primordial unity of the elements with nature. This dominant masculinity influenced all the main religious, scientific and philosophical views in Western culture - its victorious march began about four millennia ago, with the conquests of patriarchal nomads of the oldest matriarchal tribal cultures of Greece and the Levant* - and later manifested itself with force 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 in all its uniqueness, isolation and freedom. But such masculine thinking required the exclusion and suppression of woman. We observe this in ancient Greek thought, which completely subjugated pre-Greek matriarchal mythologies, in the Judeo-Christian denial of the Great Mother Goddess and the cold-blooded exaltation of the rational "ego" completely isolated from external reality, and we can argue that the evolution of Western thought was based on the suppression of the feminine principle - the suppression of undifferentiated unified consciousness, the mysticism (*mystical participation*) separation from nature. It was a consistent denial of the Anima Mundi, that is, the Soul of the World, the unity of being, a certain mystery and ambiguity, imagination, emotion, intuition, bodily instincts,

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

However, such separation inevitably encourages the desire to unite with what is lost. - especially after the heroic quests of men have led modern thinking to a hopeless impasse, where, feeling utterly alone, he (the beginning of no race) - *my note*) has assigned to himself the exclusive rights to any conscious decision, the only one 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 unknown Universe. He is beset by both psychological and biological crises: he lives in a world whose form exactly corresponds to his worldview, that is, in a "man-made" environment, gradually turning into more and more mechanistic, insensitive and self-destructive. *The crisis of modern man* - **this there is actually a crisis of men, and I am convinced that she is already rising in the great wave of the feminine principle that has shaken our culture.** This is evident not only in 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 in the rapid growth of women's education and the emergence of a growing sensitivity to the "ancestral spirit" perspective in almost all intellectual disciplines, but also in the growing sense of unity with the planet and all its natural forms, in the growing awareness of the ecological threat and the intensifying reaction against the political and corporate strategy aimed at the ruthless exploitation of the environment, in the increasing involvement of human communities, in the rapid dismantling of long-standing political and ideological barriers separating the peoples of the world, in the ever-deepening understanding of what mutual assistance and cooperation should be, and in the many different perspectives. This wave is also felt in general through 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 immanence in thought, with 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 focus on the feminine divine principle, in archaeology - the discovery of the Great Goddess tradition and the revival of the modern spirituality of this Goddess, with the rise of the Judeo-Christian Sophia tradition and the papal *Assumption of Mary** in exaltation, 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 great 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 merging of opposites... alienated loneliness will remain for some time, and the feminine principle, which was oppressed and enslaved, has now begun 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 the latent goal of the intellectual and spiritual evolution of the West. Because *The invisible passion that lurked in Western thinking was the desire to reconnect with the origins of one's being.* The driving force of Western male consciousness was its dialectical quest for self-realization and independence, and finally the restoration of the lost connection with the whole - so that, having separated from the feminine principle, it would regain it and re-establish a connection with the very mystery of life, nature and soul. So that this union would now take place on a new level, different from that on which it existed in the original state of consciousness, because the long evolution of human consciousness had succeeded in preparing it for the voluntary and conscious acceptance of its foundation and essence. The inner orientation and goal (telos) of Western thought was to restore its connection with the cosmos through the action of mature mysticism, by voluntarily and consciously surrendering to the great embrace of omnipotence, in which human independence is preserved and at the same time human alienation is overcome.

However, in order for the oppressed femininity to finally awaken, the masculine principle must offer itself as a sacrifice, overcoming a peculiar *ego death*. Western thought must open itself to a reality whose nature can shake its most deeply held beliefs about itself and the world to their very foundations. Herein 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 some greater and more complex reality. Ultimately, such a step requires unconditional self-denial. Herein lies the great task that has arisen for our age: the masculine principle will have to part with its hubris* and with the still unacknowledged part of its consciousness and voluntarily embark on 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, he 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 reconciliation with the lost feminine unity, to a deep and multi-level marriage of men and women, 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 into the history of mankind: 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, I reaffirm the vital ideals proclaimed by representatives of feminists of ecological, archaic and other countercultural and multicultural directions. So I would like to

to affirm the importance of the line that has sustained and nourished the main Western trajectory, because I am convinced that this tradition, which includes everything from the Greek epic poets and the ancient Hebrew prophets, through the entire intellectual and spiritual path from Socrates and Plato, from Paul and Augustine, from Galileo and Descartes, Kant and Freud, this astonishing 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 great Dialectic. This tradition has not only achieved the essential differentiation and autonomy of the individual, which alone could make possible a large-scale synthesis: it has also opened the way to its own self-determination. Moreover, this tradition contains resources that have remained unheeded by its own Promethean attention, which we are only now beginning to grasp, and which, not surprisingly, have made us aware of the openness to the feminine principle. Here, every perspective is both confirmed and overcome, both male and female, who are part of a single whole: after all, every 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 cannot 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 generations of people completely overlooked it? I think this is 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 a goal. Man is something that must be overcome and his union with the feminine must be completed.

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* **hubris**-unholy insolence. Ancient Greek.

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



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

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* The original English uses the word "man" everywhere, which has two meanings: **"man" and "man"**.

* Translated from Russian. abridged: psylib.org.ua