

Notes from the Underground Resistance

The future of the world will be a network. Not a pyramid. Not a pyramid turned upside down. The revolution of which I am speaking is a non-violent revolution and it's so revolutionary that it even revolutionizes the very concept of a revolution. The normal revolution is one where the pyramid is turned upside down and those who were on the bottom are now on the top, and they are doing exactly the same thing the ones did before. What we need is a networking of smaller groups, smaller and smaller groups who know one another, who interact with one another - and that is a grateful world! -David Steindl-Rast, TED Global, 2013.

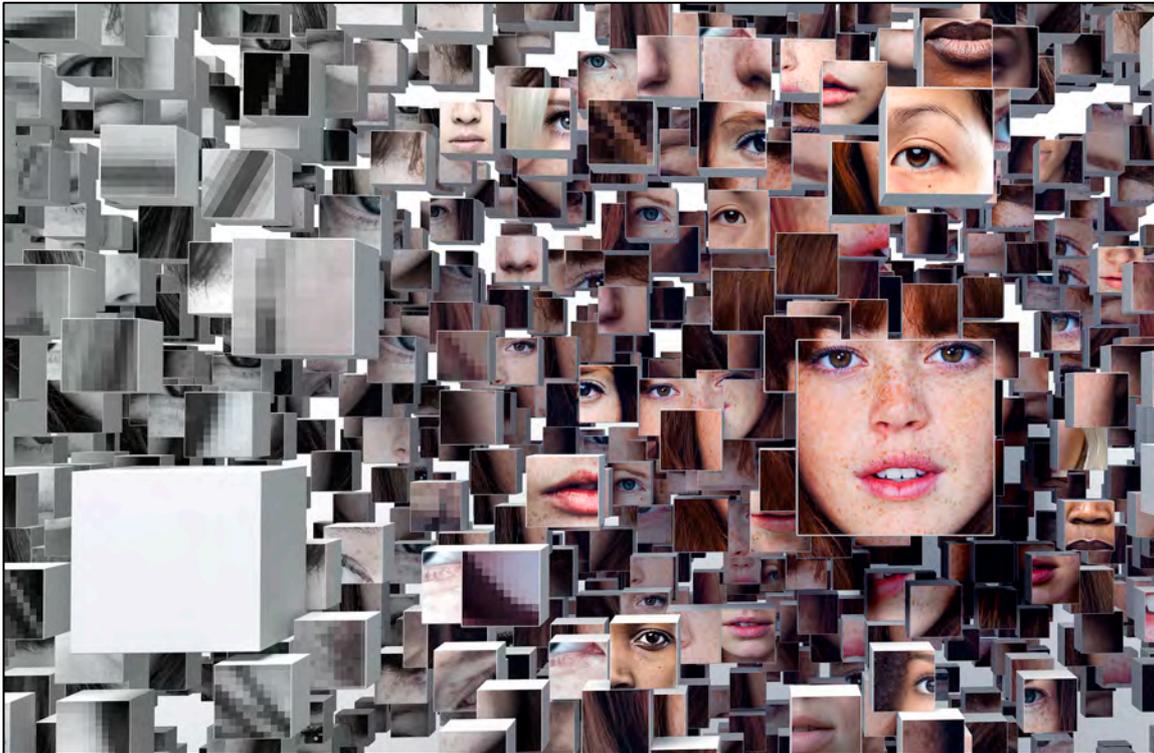


I have been pondering these words from David Steindl-Rast for a few months now, especially the surprising, high voltage coupling of the words 'network' with 'revolution'. Not quite the words I had been expecting to hear at the end of a talk on gratitude from this gentle, softly spoken man. And I have found myself asking: "What is a network?" and "What difference does it make that we in CEN identify as a network?"

I have discovered there is an interdisciplinary science of networks and that a hermeneutic of networking is an established scholarly field.¹ Researchers tell us networks are not systems or fixed entities, nor are they self-referential. Rather, networks operate under conditions of unbounded connectivity, flow, participation, transparency and authenticity. As networks operate ecologically, they offer the ideal conditions for enabling and cultivating unity and difference. More an activity than an entity, networks consist of actors who, like fractals, are themselves networks. The network is the actor and the actor is the network.

¹ See Kreiger, David & Belliger, Andrea. *Interpreting Networks* (Leck: transcript, 2014) for the information in this paragraph.

While there is much to consider here, these descriptions of a network are not unlike what Beatrice Bruteau writes of in *The Grand Option* about feminine consciousness, particularly its method.² Feminine consciousness, Beatrice says, is an orientation of consciousness towards the whole. It works not by excluding but by incorporating, taking up and appreciating the specialness of each particular individual comprising the whole. It is wholeness that arises *from within* the individual, each one retaining their uniqueness, each one participating in the consciousness of the Living One from which flows intimacy with and towards the other:



*[The] feminine consciousness has two aspects, both of which must be stressed and kept in balance: a fundamental and ultimate sense of the unity of the entire human race – even of all nature – and at the same time an attentive and appreciative sense of the specialness, the unique preciousness, of each particular individual comprising the whole. It is precisely this synthesis of individuals, each retaining its respective value that constitutes wholeness. The component individuals are themselves concrete wholes. Therefore the wholeness of the higher-level synthesis arises not from an externally imposed pattern of uniformity but from an immanent principle, working from within the constituent individuals themselves. The new wholeness is thus an achieved unity, not a given unity, and it is essential to it that it be freely achieved.*³

For Teilhard, this wholeness that is feminine consciousness bears the name, Omega.⁴ Last month, Kerrie invited us into Omega's summoning, gathering, embracing, and awakening in us a new sense of wisdom-knowing from the heart of Christ Omega.

² Feminine consciousness being understood by Beatrice Bruteau as one of two complementary structures of consciousness existing in every man and woman, with the biological form of male and female a symbol of how we choose to orient our way of being.

³ Bruteau, Beatrice, *The Grand Option: Personal Transformation and a New Creation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2001), 23.

⁴ Bruteau, *The Grand Option*, 85.

Encouraged by her invitation, I have been imagining the “wholes within wholes within wholes”⁵. In these prayers, I have felt taken into the lungs of evolution, into the holy breathing of our network where the quiet and courageous decision to choose wholeness is being made daily by each one of us, in our own unique and precious way. In these moments, it seems our CEN network is evolution’s way of generating the very wholeness that evolution is unfolding. And here in this small community of intimacy, I touch evolution’s tender and urgent invitations to live and to freely choose wholeness to the full.

Choosing wholeness and so choosing to participate in this evolutionary moment is, of course, far easier said than done as Beatrice captures so well:

We reflexive consciousnesses know a little about freedom and about creation. We know that creation means standing on the boundary between being and nonbeing and stepping into the abyss of nothingness. We know that freedom means taking responsibility for the kind of world that forms under our feet as we take that decisive step. But who can bear to make the great decisions? To face the terrifying glory of creative freedom? ⁶

Recently on a silent retreat, I found myself faced with the challenge that choosing wholeness can sometimes involve. I had become agitated about the exclusion of women from the Church because, in my mind at least, we lack a living, unitive vision. I went to sleep unsettled, still choosing to approach the issue out of the very duality and separation that was irritating me. Later that night, in a dream I heard the words: “in the underground resistance, there is no resistance”.

Aware of Beatrice’s wise counsel that resistance calls for revolution not rebellion, I realise the dream was helping me to choose the wholeness I long for by inciting a revolution of ‘no resistance’. For me, this is a revolution birthed in Silence, taking place in deep stillness and intimate darkness, arising in moments of ‘no-resistance’ to the approaches of God. Thomas Merton’s personal encounter with feminine wholeness rising within him from the depths of the Divine is a beautiful evocation of this revolutionary space:

There is in all visible things an invisible fecundity, a dimmed light, a meek namelessness, a hidden wholeness. This mysterious Unity and Integrity is Wisdom, the Mother of all, Natura naturans. There is in all things an inexhaustible sweetness and purity, a silence that is a fount of action and joy. It rises up in wordless gentleness and flows out to me from the unseen roots of all created being, welcoming me tenderly, saluting me with indescribable humility. This is at once my own being, my own nature, and the Gift of my Creator’s Thought and Art within me, speaking as Hagia Sophia, speaking as my sister, Wisdom. I am awakened, I am born again at the voice of this my sister, sent to me from the depths of divine fecundity.⁷



⁵ Delio, Ilia., *The Unbearable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution and the Power of Love* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1970), 178.

⁶ Bruteau, *The Grand Option*, 84.

⁷ Merton, Thomas., *Hagia Sophia* (Lexington, KY: Samperia del Santuccio, 1962) 61.

With these words resounding in my heart, I understand how Br David can say that this is a revolution that will revolutionise even the way we understand revolution. For this is a revolution that covers the world in beauty, in awe, in hidden wholeness, and in love. A revolution birthed from within itself, its heart opening in an outpouring of love out into the world, seeking to change the violent and hurting situations in our world. A revolution with no war as this consciousness of wholeness incorporates all that separates into her inexhaustible sweetness.



Our non-resistance is not only revolutionary in terms of the future. It is productive in terms of the past, helping to dismantle what Beverly Lanzetta describes as “the great lie about ⁸the feminine”, a lie she says requires much sensitivity and wisdom about women’s’ spiritual oppression and wounding, and their great need for healing.⁹

And Beatrice reminds us that this consciousness of the future was announced some time ago by “a unique revolutionary figure of the ancient world”, but His announcement is yet to be fully recognised.¹⁰

I sense my dream is aware of the quiet, hidden action of wholeness unfolding daily in our participation in CEN, and that being a part of it is a little like being part of an underground resistance movement, choosing to sink deeper and deeper into the ground and wholeness of our being. Teilhard, who insists God makes us make ourselves¹¹, encourages us to be courageous and true:

It is essential to see – to see things as they are and to see them really and intensely. We live at the centre of the network of cosmic influences as we live at the heart of the human crowd or

⁹ King, Ursula., ‘Searching a Feminine Mystical Way for the Twenty-First Century’ in xxx29

¹⁰ Bruteau, *The Grand Option*, 26.

¹¹ id, 84.

*among the myriad of stars, without, alas being aware of their immensity. If we wish to live our humanity and our Christianity to the full, we must overcome that insensitivity which tends to conceal things from us in proportion as they are too close to us or too vast.....we shall be astonished at the extent and the intimacy of our relationship with the universe.*¹²



May this little word 'network' encourage us to see 'really and intensely' the unbounded connectivity, flow, participation, transparency and authenticity of CEN is consciousness itself arising from within the beauty, specialness and wholeness of each one of us freely and daily choosing creative freedom with great love from the centre of our hearts. And may we be astonished that our participation in this 'underground movement' is so creatively evolving the world through Love.

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¹² Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Mileau* (Harper: London, 1957), 22.