

**SOUTHERN AFRICAN BUSHMEN
AND VOEGELIN'S "NEW SCIENCE OF POLITICS"***

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Introduction

The idiosyncratic film maker Werner Herzog presents us with images from the origins of human self-consciousness in his latest documentary *The Cave of Forgotten Dreams*.¹ He takes the general public for the first time into the previously restricted cave of Chauvet-Pont D'arc in Southern France, where in 1994 spelunkers entered a vault which had been sealed by a rockfall for 20,000 years, and found some of the oldest painted images in the world. As Herzog's handheld camera tracks over the torch-lit wall, the images leap off the textured surface in three dimensions. In the Megaloceros Gallery of ancient herbivores a series of five shaggy-maned horse heads give the impression of animation. Below, sketched in sure outline, two rhinos face each other, horns locked in what must surely have been the sort of gripping encounter regularly witnessed by our hunting ancestors.

One does not have to be an anthropologist of hunting gathering societies to sense the passion and disciplined intention that went into the execution of the art. These are not the casual doodlings of a playful child. The meaning of the art and the intention of the long dead artists remains contentious in scholarly circles. But, whatever the interpretation, it is clear that something profound was stirring in human imagination many thousands of years before civilization.

Wilderness origins

Herzog's artistry, in full 3-D, no less, impels the viewer to reflect on one of the most astounding discoveries of modern science over the last four centuries: that human being emerge from an evolving universe. We now know in persuasive detail that once the earth was nothing but wilderness; everything, everywhere untouched by human hand, unseen by human eye; nothing tamed, domesticated or civilized. We know that out of an African savannah, incubated in it, nurtured by it, a primate lineage gradually evolved into hominids; and hominids slowly developed the self-reflective, creative consciousness capable of language, art, religion and politics. The very nature of our freedom and creativity emerged gradually, conditioned by the daily rhythms of sunrise and sunset, the

seasonal movements of game, and the smells and colors of fruit, flower and *veldt*. This is the irreducible paradox which constitutes the human condition. We are made by wilderness. We come from what-we-are-not.

Grasping this fact is of the utmost significance for everything we do, from our politics and economics, to our religion, our art and our play. But we have extraordinary difficulty with this. Eric Voegelin is one of the few political philosophers who recognized how a related insight stands at the center of the human search for order in history. All Voegelin's major works—his five volumes of *Order and History*, as well as his most widely read book *The New Science of Politics*—can be understood as restating, illustrating and differentiating what some scholars have called his “one big idea:” the connection between the experience of our mysterious origin and the paradoxical “in-between” nature of human consciousness.

Anyone with the patience and discipline to sustain a few moments of focused self-reflection can grasp this primary insight. We can take as our starting point for politics—the first fact of political life—that we all have some recollection of growing from ‘unconscious’ infancy into adult self-consciousness. Contained within this is a collective identity. We wake up realizing we have been born into a drama, a story, not of our making. We become conscious at particular times and places, within a particular body, shaped by family, society, culture and epoch. We find ourselves required to play a part, not knowing the beginning or ending of the drama. We know we can make mistakes, ‘spoil’ things, sometimes catastrophically, but we cannot simply abstain from the drama: “There is no blessed island to which humans can withdraw in order to recapture ourselves . . . Our role in existence must be played in uncertainty of its meaning . . . as an adventure of decision on the edge of freedom and necessity”.² This situation generates a primordial anxiety which initiates the search for meaning—how to live the best possible life.

Voegelin noted that contemporary philosophical discourse has no conventionally accepted language for this foundational insight, so he used the Greek term, *metaxy*, taken

from Plato's *Symposium*. *Metaxy* simply means 'in-between' and refers to the fact that human beings exist *in-between* that great mysterious reality which 'creates us' and the realities we create.³ This helps us understand why there can be no absolute objectivity and no certainty. We are always exploring from within a single dynamic complex. There is a blind spot at the center of our knowing. We can never step outside of our consciousness, consciously.⁴ Our problem is holding on to this experience of paradox.

Voegelin's work makes clear that grasping this insight, holding it in awareness, and living according its truth, constitutes a "leap in being" and establishes the minimal conditions for order, both in the soul of the individual and the soul of society. Losing or deforming this insight catapults humanity into the destructive delusions of civilizations.

Crisis

Herzog's film ends with musings on a nearby nuclear power plant and images of a mutant, albino species of crocodile which has evolved in the plant's warm water runoff. The coda becomes obscure, but the overarching meaning is obvious. Our wilderness generated humanity is in a crisis, and it is a crisis of our own making. The same compelling science we trust to split atoms, explain our evolutionary origins and rocket men to the moon, tells us that the human presence on the planet is directly responsible for the collapse of ecosystems on every continent. Every year we cut down more of our forests, deplete more of our fisheries, expand our deserts and poison more of our air, land, food and water. The collective impact of globalizing industrial capitalism is destroying wilderness ecosystems and causing the extinction of living species at a rate unprecedented since the last great mass extinction, sixty five million years ago, when a gigantic asteroid collided with the earth.⁵ We are applying our African-incubated genius to an act of destruction equivalent to a cosmic event. In doing so we are entering the *Anthropocene*, a geological epoch determined by the impact of industrialized humanity on the earth.

At the same time we have never been more confused or more cynical about what constitutes the good and the true. Public opinion ranks politicians with drug dealers and

prostitutes, while fundamentalists control the blind passions of millions. The prevailing global paradigm of the “good life” is in terminal crisis.

In a sense, this should not be surprising. The founding expression of our ruling political worldview, Lockean Liberalism, is an achievement of revolutionary 18th century thinking, which was enormously liberating in the context of collapsing feudalism, but is now, at best, hopelessly anachronistic. John Locke and his peers took for granted the Genesis account of the creation of the earth: that the planet was young, that all the plant and animal species appeared as a result of separate acts of creation, culminating on the sixth day in the miraculous appearance of human beings. They believed the natural world existed as raw material for the central human project of productive labor, converting wilderness into wealth. In 1688 when Locke published his *Two Treatises on Government*, the iconic text of modern politics, the global human population was less than half a billion, and vast tracts of forest and prairie still covered North America. Southern Africa was an Eden filled with all species of buck and great herds of zebra, wildebeest and buffalo. To Locke and his contemporaries all of this existed for human appetite and ambition. It was simply waste until it had been transformed by human labor. Locke didn't have the slightest idea of the evolutionary continuity of species or the fact of mass extinction.

Today the metaphysical foundations of Liberalism have disintegrated, but its institutional achievements—the bureaucratic nation-state, the multinational corporation, the global market place, the mechanized factory production of cheap goods, and the ideal of the isolated, competitive, self-interested individual—all these reproduce and expand with a crazy vitality as if unhinged from our earthly reality. Their sheer overwhelming presence paralyzes political imagination, trapping us in a tyranny of ‘what exists.’ Creativity has disappeared from political philosophy. We face an extraordinary situation: at exactly that moment when our civilization is becoming global, it is disintegrating. As far as we know this has never happened before. All the fundamental questions of political philosophy need to be asked and answered afresh.

Voegelin's clarification of the "leap in being" provides a starting point for creative rethinking of political order. However his recovery and differentiation of our *metaxic* condition takes place entirely within the history of civilization. Most of his work documents the apprehension and deformation of the primary insight and abstains from reconstruction. Throughout his life he remained something of a political conservative and never developed a prescriptive notion of what a *metaxic* political order would look like. Nor did he consider how such an order would relate to the "New Science of Politics" he advocated and attempted to exemplify. He never placed the civilizational drama within the larger narrative of the evolutionary narrative. He never integrated prehistory or the political cosmology of early and contemporary hunter-gatherers. There is, however, strong indication that towards the end of his life, as the implications of his insight into the "true structure of being clarified," he became increasingly fascinated with pre-history; and that granted more years would almost certainly have extended his analysis.⁶

My purpose is to bring Voegelin's central insight what is being called "big history," the enlarged perspective of an evolving universe within which humanity gradually emerges from wilderness. When we do so we recover an earlier "leap in being," our leap into self reflective, symbolic, consciousness which might have started perhaps 200,000 years ago along the coast on the Southern tip of Africa. This leap conditioned a primal politics and a primal truth quest which sustained humanity in small self-sufficient bands of hunter-gatherers for at least nine-tenths of the time that we have been human.

Within this larger narrative the San Bushmen hunter gatherers of Southern Africa appear as the paradigmatic primal society. Their political cosmology helps differentiate from Voegelin's primary insight, a *metaxic* politics which has the truth quest at its center. Appropriately this can be represented as a *mandala*—the primal quaternary (see diagram). In my larger work I make the case that such truth quest could constitute 'the new science of politics' Voegelin proposed. At the same time the primal perspective suggests that this "new science" could constitute the core of a transformative practice for the individual and community, capable of healing the *anoia*—the sickness of the soul—precipitating our global crisis.

Eric Voegelin's "One Big Idea."

The leap in being catapults humanity into a moral order of being where good and evil become existential realities; our choices have consequences which matter greatly. We can get it wrong and pay the price. At the same time there is can be no absolute certainty. We are required by our humanity to live, and act and choose with an awareness of the profound mystery of existence.

The crucial point for politics is that grasping the *metaxic* situation, embracing the mystery of human mortality and fallibility, in and of itself helps condition our choices. Voegelin emphasizes a primal anxiety, but the in-between situation also confronts us with what the Jewish Kabbalist and mystic, Joshua Heschel, called 'radical amazement'—wonder in the face of the exquisite miracle of conscious existence. Throughout the history of religion and mysticism we find records of how the experience of ecstasy gives the individual a zest for life, the courage to stay open and humble as we explore our condition in the light of the ongoing quest. Maintaining this attitude of reverence for existence becomes one of the primary conditions for the truth quest and a truly human way of life. As Einstein recognized, "mystery is the most beautiful thing we can experience. It is the source of all art and science." It is even more important to recognize that it should be the source and touchstone for all our politics.

But the history of civilization, as Voegelin shows, is largely the history of retreat from openness to mystery back into the delusional certainties of religious and political dogma. The need for certainty is rooted in an unwillingness to sustain the tension of the quest and in submission to the temptation of *libido dominandi*—the lust for power. Ultimately we could say that this comes from an incapacity to sustain the tension of life in the metaxy, the death impulse—*thanatos*—a desire for the peace of the grave. Every time we think we have the final answer, whether it be that of mathematics, logic, religion or ideology, we reveal we have lost the primary experience; we have closed down the search and deformed our essential humanity. Disaster looms.

Looking back on the big history of our species as a whole, one can see reflective self-consciousness unfolding until there is an astounding ‘aha!’ experience—a potentially soul shaking revelation, as it looks back over its shoulder and recognizes consciousness emerging from something utterly ‘other’. Voegelin understood the Israelite monotheistic revelation as the first great *recorded* awakening to our in-between situation. It was an irruption into human consciousness of a single ineffable creative source, a ‘*leap in being*’—a radical advance in human self-awareness.⁷

The uniqueness of the event establishes a ‘before’ and ‘after’ and initiates the self-conscious emergence of human beings into the drama of history. The novelty of the appearance of written history reinforces the fact that the leap-in-being is a unique event in a larger process unfolding in time, which can only be expressed by a story. Unlike a theory, only the story can capture the dynamic of unique events unfolding over time. Only the story can express the meaning of the life of the individual, the society, the species and the universe itself. The story then becomes a fundamental category of cognition, the ever growing big picture, into which all the disciplines of knowledge and branches of human life can be integrated.

While the written stories of scholars, scribes, rabbis and priests preserve the founding experience, and record its unfolding, they also tend to freeze the teachings. Institutionalized religion crystallizes around blind obedience to the literal word of the Holy Scriptures—the Torah, The Gospels and the Koran. Bureaucratically enforced rituals, rules and regulations create stable communities but also distance the followers from the primary mystical experience of the in-between. As C.G. Jung noted, religion then becomes a defense against authentic religious experience. The quest shuts down and we fall for the deluded certainties of ideology and theology with all their murderous consequences. Convinced it understands the written word of God, humanity acts diabolically. The upsurge of fundamentalism in our age, whether that of the free market and scientific materialism, or Islam, Christianity and Judaism, reveals how far we are from the awareness of the in-between, and helps explain the impending catastrophe of our own civilization.

The re-creation of a *metaxic* politics requires a new Genesis, a new narrative of our Southern African Eden and our Bushman Adam and Eve.

Our African Eden

The last great leap into what archeologists call “fully modern human behavior,” might well have taken place on the bush-fringed beaches of Southern Africa.⁸ The overwhelming consensus of the scientific community is that early pre-human hominids, the first humans and then modern *Homo sapiens* all emerged in Southern Africa, south and east of the Great Rift Valley. This feature appeared about seven million years ago, when climatic and tectonic shifts, part of the earth’s slow evolution, pushed up a series of mountains, cutting deep gorges, lakes and rivers that run all the way from Ethiopia down the East coast of Africa, curving into the tip of South Africa. A dramatic escarpment was created separating the lush canopy rain forests to the West from a totally novel environment to the East—the drier, more open game filled plains of the savannah—the *bushveld*—the “real Africa” of popular imagination. This was the habitat that incubated the first ground living simians, and then over millions of years, modern humanity.⁹

New evidence suggests the last leap into modern human consciousness occurred on the coastal terrace of the southern tip of Africa. Few places in the world are more evocative of an African Eden, or stand in sharper contrast to the eroded badlands of Ethiopia where most of the earlier hominids bones were found. Despite a significant urban population, and despite being the holiday playground of the country, pieces of this southernmost tip of Africa are still relatively pristine. In places the bush is still populated by buck, baboon and, in nearby mountains, leopard. The ocean still supports one of the richest fisheries in the world—from a variety of shellfish to a full range of megafauna: whales, seals, porpoises, and great white sharks. The coastal terrace gets rain throughout the year and is covered with flowering bush – the tough, aromatic, small leafed Cape ‘*fynbos*’ or ‘delicate bush’—one of the botanical wonders of the world, constituting an entire floral kingdom with many more species than its nearest rival, the Amazon basin. The air is filled with the spicy scent of bush and ocean spray. A forest covered mountain range

follows much of the Southern coastline providing an epic backdrop to enormous curving bays of surf pounded white sand beach. The *Khoisan* name for one of the mountain ranges “*Outeniqua*” means, enticingly, “man laden with honey”. Clear rivers and streams, stained deep amber by vegetation run through valleys and rocky gorges emptying into the bays and beaches. When Europeans first arrived, the area was filled with the charismatic big game of Africa—elephant, rhinoceros, lion, leopard, buffalo and a great variety of buck. Hippopotami waded out of river mouths into the ocean surf to greet the startled Dutch sailors, who named the creatures *Zeekoe*, ‘sea cows’. The natural bounty of a region filled with flowers and birds is reflected in the *Khoisan* name for one of the mountain ranges, *Outeniqua*, meaning ‘man laden with honey’. The coast is also dotted with middens of stone ages remains and gaping rock shelters which on excavation have revealed some of the richest evidence for that last leap into modern human consciousness.

Most of the early archaeological work on the emergence of modern human behavior was oconducted by European scholars on *Cro Magnon* humans, named after the site of the first finds of *Homo sapiens*. The radical discontinuity between Neanderthal and *Cro Magnon* sites, and the absence of comparable evidence for modern behavior outside of Europe suggested a “creative explosion,” indigenous to Europe, both flattering to Europeans, and convenient for their archaeologists. This long reigning theory is now being replaced by a wealth of new evidence uncovered in the rock shelters and middens[†] along the South African coast over the last few decades. It now seems likely that there was a much earlier, more gradual emergence of fully modern humans, *Homo sapiens sapiens*, which could have started along the Southern African coastline around 200,000 years ago.

Literally thousands of Paleolithic shell middens dot the beaches of this coastline. 3,500 have been documented between high water mark and 5km inland, and this is estimated to be about 10% of the total. In other words there are perhaps 30,000 middle and late stone-age middens along this coast, and this figure doesn’t include those covered as ocean

[†] These middens are layered pilesx of discarded shells and bones, with occasional human-crafted tools and other remains, marking the site of countless generations of Paleolithic meals.

levels rose to their present state about 12,000 ago.¹⁰ In addition to the middens the rocky coastline is full of the widely gaping rock shelters with remains going back to the middle Paleolithic, some thirty of which have been extensively excavated.

One of the directors of this new research, Curtis Marean, points out that between 195,000 and 125,000 years ago the world was in a glacial ice age, with much of the African continent dry and desertified. His analysis of paleoenvironmental data of ocean currents, weather patterns and geological formation indicated there were few sites in sub-Saharan Africa which could have supported a human population. One was at Pinnacle Point near the town of Mossel Bay on the South African coast. When he led an international team of archaeologists to excavate the site, they discovered the oldest evidence of a human seafood diet, together with small stone blades, finely worked points, and most importantly, traces of worked ochre going back some 160,000 years.¹¹ Ochre is generally used among hunter-gatherers and indigenous societies for symbolic purposes as adornment and in paint pigment. Further east along the same coastline, at Blombos Cave, Chris Henshilwood found a piece of carved ochre 77,000 years old and a piece of engraved bone 70,000 years old.¹² All of this strongly suggests symbolically mediated human behavior 40,000 years prior to the Chauvet cave paintings of Europe.

Henshilwood and Marean have marshaled this new evidence to reveal a circularity and Eurocentric bias in the older theory of the European creative explosion. This earlier theory defined “behavioral modernity” as behavior marked by a loose cluster of archeological finds—tool complexity, trade items, sophistication of hunting strategies as well as the more fundamental use of symbols in mediating behavior. Henshilwood and Marean offer a more inclusive, more theoretically robust argument based on causal mechanisms derived from behavioral ecological theory and well known patterns of behavior of contemporary hunter gatherers in changing climates. They point out, for example, tools and food storage technology increases in complexity as people move from tropical to arctic environments and is not a necessary indicator of an increase in “behavioral modernity”¹³ They emphasize that it is not simply the *capacity* for symbolic behavior but evidence for the *use* of symbolism to organize human behavior that defines

‘behavioral modernity.’ Symbols allow us to store information outside of the brain, deepening and complexifying our relation to the past and the future. Symbols sharpen the poles of our in-between situation distinguishing human beings as “created” and “creators,” marking the beginning of the quest in story-telling, politics, religion and ethics. Symbol usage also greatly enhances communication and the sharing of ideas.

This more sophisticated theory, in addition to the wealth of new evidence, supports the recently proposed Southern Dispersal theory of human migration out of Africa. This argues that the remnant coastal population thrived on the wealth of seafood, and then around 50,000 years started walking up the eastern coastline out of Southern Africa into Arabia, Southeast Asia and then eventually New Guinea and Australia.

It now seems that some of their descendents never left their African Eden, and continued to live as nomadic hunter-gatherer into modern times, protected by the harshness of the Kalahari Desert. We know them as the San Bushmen. Today their descendents survive, forced off their ancestral hunting grounds, often living in squalor, at the mercy of government agencies. Recent genetic and linguistic mapping studies now supports what long seemed clear to many who grew up in Bushman country: they are the closest living relatives to our shared ‘African Adam and Eve’.¹⁴ Their traditional cosmology is the oldest on earth, receding in almost unbroken lineage to the Paleolithic origins of human consciousness. They provide us with a living, evolving model of politics close to the conditions in which the original leap in being led to human flourishing.

The “Creative Explosion”

The most dramatic hard evidence for the first appearance of human symbolic activity—the original leap in being—is the exquisite cave paintings found in underground caverns in southwestern Europe. The European paintings have received a disproportionate amount of scholarly attentions for three obvious reasons. First of all, because they were deep underground in protected caves, they could be more easily and more reliably dated as the oldest Paleolithic images in the world. Second, they were conveniently located near to European universities. Third, they suggested a European based “creative

explosion” which fitted Eurocentric ideas of racial superiority. Only relatively recently did scholars start to appreciate that a related, perhaps less obviously ancient, but certainly far richer and more comprehensible rock painting tradition was to be found in Southern Africa.

Europe contains some 300 of these underground rock art sites, whereas Southern Africa has approximately 15,000 sites, with new sites still being found regularly. Most of the European paintings are in dark, underground and inaccessible caverns. The Southern African art adorns open face rock shelters where people lived, ate and danced. Since the paintings are exposed to the elements they quickly fade, making dating much more difficult. However pieces of buried painted rock from the Apollo cave in Namibia have been positively dated at around 27,000 years.¹⁵ While it is true that there are no finely executed Southern African paintings which can be dated as far back as the European cave paintings, Chris Henshilwood’s discovery at Blombos Cave suggests a South African tradition of symbolic, and probably ‘religious,’ activity which antedates the European cave paintings by at least 40,000 years.

While there are significant differences between the African and European traditions, there are striking similarities. Both traditions contain abstract, complex patterns of grids, zig-zags and nested arcs. They both include naturalistic representations of many animals, including, in Europe, extinct species of bison, lion, rhinoceros and mammoth. The most intriguing figures in both traditions are the *therianthropes*—images combining human and animal features in a variety of combinations of limbs, hooves, fins, wings and horns. The best known is probably “The Sorcerer,” at Les Trois Freres. The figure has the ears and antlers of a stag, paw-like hands, human legs and a horse’s tail. Such images are common in the Southern African paintings but were largely ignored in interpreting the European paintings.

The history of the academic study of pre-historic art is itself a cautionary story of arrogance, ethnocentrism, and the power of preconceived ideas to determine perception. Because of the fact of their European location, French academics dominated the field. In

fact the majority of the paintings, for most of their history, have been off limits to the general public. During the decades of positivistic social sciences, the paintings were laboriously counted, measured, catalogued, sketched and photographed. But the more information we collected, the less we seemed to know about meaning. Virtually all the theories advocated, including the orthodoxies that dominated the field until the 1980's have now been thrown out as worthless.¹⁶

Since then the field has been split. On the one hand are the poststructuralist anthropologists, who in an overreaction to the projections of the previous generation of structuralists, content themselves with deconstruction, critique and dismantling meaning. In some cases post-structuralism has become almost ideological; a dogmatic insistence on the impossibility of meaning, which some might have mistaken for a fashionable mysticism. As one scholar put it "I don't mind stating uncategorically that it's impossible to know what the art means." Another added more revealingly ". . . many of us simply don't want to interpret them [the paintings]. . . If I knew what the art meant I'd be out of business."¹⁷

On the other hand there are the predominantly South African scholars who pointed out that valid interpretation was possible without insisting on certainty. The South Africans worked with multiple advantages: the first was a profusion of paintings. The second was an indigenous Bushman tradition of rock painting which continued until the end of the 19th century when early explorers and anthropologist had an opportunity to speak to the last Bushmen familiar with the painting tradition. The third was one of the largest collection of 19th century ethnographic primary sources of any hunting-gathering culture in the world: the Bleek and Lloyd manuscripts containing folktales, stories and myths from the last survivors of the Southern Bushmen. The fourth was a tradition of shamanic trance dancing still practiced in the Kalahari Desert by the last of the free-living Bushmen hunter-gatherers. Finally there was the rapidly growing body of research on comparative shamanism, and the psychology and ontology of altered states of consciousness. It was a synthesis waiting to happen.

The foundation for this paradigm was laid by the German philologist Wilhelm Bleek, who came to South Africa as an interpreter and in 1862 became curator of the Grey collection of the South African Library.¹⁸ Bleek was also one of the first scholars to hear an account from a Bushman guide who had direct experience of the rock painting tradition, and so became the first to recognize in the art, a graphic equivalent to the complex religious mythology he had collected from his informants.¹⁹

However Bleek's acknowledgement of a developed Bushman religious sensibility went against the prevailing racism, which preferred to see them as little more than animals, who could have no moral claim to land the white colonists coveted.²⁰ Bleek's material continued to be neglected during the positivistic 60's and 70's when archaeology followed a rigorous quantitative approach and neglected interpretive meaning. As the counting and cataloguing exhausted itself, the 'cognitive anthropologist,' Dr. David Lewis Williams led the search for meaning through creative synthesis. Together with an interdisciplinary team, he connected the dots between the paintings, contemporary Bushman ethnography, cross cultural studies on shamanism and our understanding of the evolution of human consciousness.

At the heart of this synthesis is the trance dance, the central religious and political ritual in the community life of the Bushman. And at the center of this ritual is the experience of the shamanic journey, which explores a psychological-spiritual topography correlated with shamanic traditions across the world. Shamanism recedes into the origins of consciousness and culture as a kind of Ur-religion. Cross cultural studies suggests it functions to explore the extremes of experience associated with the tension of the *metaxy*: leaving the ego constituted world of norms and society and approaching the *It-reality* of the world of wilderness and animals.²¹

Once the South African scholars demonstrated a link between the 19th century ethnography and the shamanic trance dance, and then between shamanism and Bushman paintings, it seemed reasonable to assume that the meticulously labored European paintings also had some religious-shamanic significance. We could then consider

shamanic paintings as material evidence for a primordial leap in being thousands of years prior to ‘civilization.’

This new synthesis illuminates Bushman society as exemplifying a politics organized around a more generally acknowledged i.e. more democratic, experience of our *metaxic* nature. Bushman political order suggests ways for reconstituting our politics around the truth quest, the core of something like Voegelin’s “new science of politics” where all are encouraged to think as political philosophers.

Trickster and The Early Times

Mythic narrative can be understood as a kind of living archaeology of consciousness preserving in symbols, metaphors and stories the oldest, deepest patterns of meaning. As consciousness differentiates into self-reflection, it surfaces in the imagination of individuals as pieces of narrative and metaphor which find their way into speech. In the words of one of the last surviving 19th Century /Xam Bushmen shamans, //Kabbo its as if the stories “float to one from a far-off place”:

My fellow men are those who can listen to the stories
That come to them from far-off, floating through the air.
Even now they hear them come from places far away,
These stories like the wind, floating like the winds.²²

Kabbo’s words make it sound as if the stories—the *kumkummi*—float across the *veldt* between isolated groups of bushman. But they also suggest stories float up, unbidden, from the deepest, earliest glimmerings of consciousness to be welcomed and put into words in moments of quiet receptivity as answers to the questions of ultimate concern. Who are we? Where do we come from? Where should we be going? Answers to these questions constitute cosmology as the largest frame of meaning for human existence

Bushman cosmology begins with an undifferentiated “early times” or “first times,” when “humans were like animals and animals like humans”.²³ At some point this primordial chaos transformed into the present order with humans acquiring fire and language, discovering their mortality and starting to live according to norms. The two most popular

and widely distributed myths across all the bushman groups deal with the acquisition of fire and the awareness of death—both defining aspects of the *metaxy*.²⁴ Fire is the catalyst for self-consciousness, making night-time available for conversation, story-telling, singing and dancing and reflection. This heightens awareness of death as the sense of the coming into being and the passing of all things. Such awareness puts pressure on the moment—the importance of choice and action, and with it the possibility of healing illness, settling conflict and seeking order. Here we have a pre-literate record of Veogelin's leap in being—the appearance of self-consciousness separating itself from an undifferentiated Eden.

Many of the stories recount the exploits of the trickster as an agent of transformation—a prankster, a shape shifter, neither fully one thing, nor the other; betwixt and between all moral and ontological categories. He (generally, but not always, male) is ubiquitous in Bushman mythology as the central character inhabiting the early times as well as the primary agent in its transformation into the present. He is the consummate embodiment of paradox—the personification of the movement of consciousness between the opposite poles of the *metaxic* situation. The descriptions are infinitely variable but all serve to shock human consciousness out of its tendency to freeze the tensional *metaxic-reality* into a *thing-reality*. Thus the trickster can be humanoid—a black man tall as a windmill dressed in loincloth riding a giant dog, or a tall white man on a horse with chalk white face and dark beard transforming from handsome to ugly. He can be embodied as a jackal or louse, or a part-human part-animal *therianthrope*; he can be incorporeal as the wind, or sunshine, or impossibly grotesque and monstrously deformed. He constantly reminds us we can never grasp the tension between the *It-reality* and the *thing-reality* as a thing.²⁵

Nevertheless we can identify two diametrically opposed categories of trickster behavior. On the one hand the trickster is a caricature of human frailties, a protagonist compulsively driven by gluttony and lust, an egotistical and bawdy prankster. On the other hand he is also the creator of order, the giver of norms, the bringer of fire and harbinger of mortality. Then in the next breath he inverts this order and outrageously transgresses its norms. His appetites can be so excessive that in some stories he kills his

father and tries to rape his mother with comical results. In another he gorges himself and then starts cutting off and eating pieces of his own flesh while his howls of agony are overridden by his greed. Then, in the ultimate reversal, he is the creator of the universe.

No wonder early Europeans dismissed such stories as perverse and primitive rubbish. But after many years living with the *Ju /Twasi* Bushman in the eastern Kalahari, Lorna Marshall, the *grande dame* of Bushman anthropology, made the shrewd observation that such extreme self-contradictions seemed precisely the point of trickster teachings:

They tell stories of Trickster without restraint say his name out aloud, howl and roll on the ground with laughter at his exploits and humiliations. But when they speak of the Great one in the east sky they whisper and avoid speaking his name. They offered no explanation for the radical difference of character and function between the two beings. Yet they think that somehow in the rightness of things these two beings must be one so they are said to be.²⁶

Voegelin's philosophy of consciousness allows us to understand such stories as symbolizing a significant differentiation; an awareness of the ontological primacy of the split in consciousness. Such stories help keep the *metaxy* in awareness; they remind the community of the dangers of forgetting the tension between opposites; of lapsing into ego certainties allowing indulgence in brutality, greed and lust. The point is that the trickster is equally capable of the noble, the sublime and the transcendent; and the stories dramatize the full range of good and evil, making us aware of what is at stake, what drives the search for meaning.

Today such stories resonate with our experience of paradox as we try to comprehend the emerging scientific cosmology. Our cosmic story begins 13.7 billion years ago with the Big Bang, an unimaginably immense explosion of energy, a flaring forth . . . out of a single point at a moment in time, when time began . . . What could be more contradictory than this first fact of modern cosmology—that the ordered complexity of the earth, the delicate beauty of birds, flowers, forests and oceans all unfolded over eons out of an event of cosmic violence in which the universe exploded into existence from a single point. This is almost the limiting case of credulity. If one will believe this, one will believe anything. Yet as far as our best science can tell us—it is true!

Trickster stories remind us, as does Voegelin, that when talking such about ontologically primary realms, we are invariably forced into expressions of *coincidentia oppositorum*, a unity of opposites. From this tension comes creativity—order from chaos, novelty from order, and, in the realm of the human, the endless, kaleidoscopic play of human imagination, choice and action. The stories help access the energy of the early times as a creative force in the present—an “ever present origin” – to use Jean Gebser’s richly evocative phrase.

If You Don’t Dance You Die

Storytelling is not enough. Myth gives a framework of meaning to practice; and the central ordering religious-political in Bushman society is the healing, trance dance. Story telling is to the mind what the trance dance is to the body. Both sustain Bushman participation in the full community of being.²⁷ As Twele, a contemporary Bushman puts it:

[The dance] . . . is the favorite thing for all Bushmen to do. We dance when we are happy and we dance when we are sad. When we get ready to hunt we dance because it helps us find the animal, and then after the kill we bring home the meat and dance again. We also dance when we feel sick. It helps us take away the sickness and it keeps us well. The dance is the most important aspect of our lives. It is our prayer, our medicine, our teaching and our way of having fun. Everything we do is related to that dance.²⁸

On the face of it this exotic physical discipline seems as if it couldn’t be further from Voegelin’s truth quest. Yet it has a powerful experiential dimension attuning consciousness to the *metaxic* situation. The dance begins, like most Bushman activities, informally, with a few people collecting enough wood to keep the fire burning throughout the night.²⁹ Women gather around the fire, sit in a circle and start to clap and sing the ancient, haunting songs—intricate, contrapuntal chants weaving several different rhythms at once. The songs have few words, but the tune, together with the clapping and dancing, amplifies a kind of spiritual energy, or life-force called */num*. This is roughly equivalent to Henri Bergson’s *elan vitale*, Chinese *chi*, Sanskrit *prana*, Hawaiian *mana*, or Hebrew *ruach* –a vitalizing energy permeating all things.

The fire is the focal point, generating warmth, light and its own */num* which holds and concentrates the group energy. As the dancing, stamping, singing and clapping continues for hours, even through the night, the collective */num* of the group gradually builds like a charge of static electricity, concentrating in the bodies of the individual healers. Normally */num* rests at the base of the spine, but with activation it builds, slowly travelling up the spinal column. When it reaches the head it boils, producing a highly agitated emotional state called *kia* which is typically accompanied by jerking spasms, shaking, and shrieking. “You dance, dance, dance, dance. Then the */num* lifts you up in your belly and lifts you in your back and you start to shiver. */Num* makes you tremble; it is hot. Your eyes are open, but you don’t look around’ you hold your eyes still and look straight ahead.” Another healer put it this way: “In your backbone you feel a pointed something and it works its way up. The base of your spine is tingling, tingling, tingling, tingling. Then */num* makes your thoughts nothing in your head.”³⁰

Kia as is talked of as the deepest mystery—ultimately unknowable. Bushman who have an unusual capacity to activate and work with */num* are called */num k’ausi* —‘owners’ of *n/um*—what we would call shamans, healers or medicine men and women. Scholars have noted the similarity between the Bushman experience of *Kia* through dance and the Indian yoga activation of *kundalini* energy through a variety of disciplines. Like */num* *kundalini* energy resides at the base of the spine and is imagined as a coiled snake. As it is activated it rises, passing through and bringing online a hierarchy of energy (emotional-cognitive) centers called *chakra*’s. When it reaches the crown *chakra* it explodes in ecstatic visions and paranormal healing powers. The ancient Jewish mystical tradition of *Kabbalah* has a similar, even more intricate map of this inner emotional-cognitive landscape. The ten *sphirot* seem to be a more finely differentiated version of the yogic *chakras*, arranged in a complex “tree of life” configuration culminating again in the *keter* or crown *chakra*.

There is no strict sequence, but a typical progression to deep trance might start off with a range of perceptual and bodily distortions—flashing lights, illuminated patterns, feelings

of legs and arms elongating and experiences similar to floating, flying or swimming. Animals are often the gatekeeper to the spirit world. Reports from some of the old /Xam shamans describe entering trance and feeling the hair on the nape of one's neck standing up as one turns into a spirit lion, which can then travel great distances and act against enemies. The most common traditional spirit animal is the prized food antelope—the Eland—which when killed releases its /num to be channeled by anyone present. Sometimes a dance will be performed at the kill site.

With *kia* the /num *k'ausi* acquire extraordinary powers, as do yogis who activate *kundalini* energy. In the case of Bushmen this includes handling fire, 'seeing the insides of people', diagnosing illness, traveling great distances and climbing the 'ropes' or 'ladders' of light to "God's home." ". . . when you get into *kia*, you're looking around because you see everything, because you see what is troubling everybody." By negotiating this complex, invisible, inner landscape the shaman is vitalized and returns with a larger perspective which can bring balance and healing to human affairs.

The Anthropologist Bradford Keeney has added an important dimension to our understanding by becoming the first Westerner (possibly the first non-Bushman) to become a fully initiated Bushman shaman healer. His healing ability has been acknowledged by some of the most powerful Bushman healers, and the authenticity this acknowledgement recognized in turn by Western scholars of Bushman religion.³¹ Keeney uses the term 'kinesthetic trance' to connect dance induced trance to a variety of Afro-American spiritual groups like Umbanda and Candomble. We can understand this in psychological terms as a process in which the *extra-ordinariness* of the discipline—the endless, repetitive stamping, chanting, and clapping—gradually overwhelms the *ordinary* everyday mind, opening consciousness to the larger trans-rational field of information and energy. The ego functions by establishing subject-object dichotomy creating the *thing-reality*. Shamanic disciplines temporarily reverse this process. While the majority of Western and Eastern traditions access transcendence through meditational disciplines which quiet the mind, the dance attains similar states by the opposite—physical hyper-arousal.

Mircea Eliade defined shamanism in his in his classical work as “archaic techniques of ecstasy.”³² What is striking about shamanism is the contrast between on the one hand, the extreme variety of its ‘psycho-technologies’ —including incessant dancing, chanting, drumming, fasting, thirsting, self-mutilation, wilderness isolation, meditation and eating hallucinogenic plants and mushrooms—and on the other hand, the broad universality of the experiential terrain uncovered.³³ Hans Peter Duerr’s encyclopedic and philosophically penetrating survey of shamanic religions concluded that they could all be understood as a psychological journey “crossing the boundary between civilization and wilderness,” where “wilderness’ represents the ultimately mysterious *It-reality*, and ‘civilization’ the “*thing-reality*.”³⁴

Duerr’s analysis makes it easier to understand shamanism emerging together with culture as a way of differentiating and balancing the primordial split in consciousness. Shamanic technologies then operate as a kind of passionate remembering, keeping the community in touch with the poles of the *metaxy*. They keep the early times in contact with the present times; ego differentiation in balance with consubstantiality and wilderness in balance with civilization. They help the human being remember his partnership in the community of being.

By going beyond the ego in *ex-stasis*—travelling outside oneself—the shaman accesses the lost experience, power and wisdom of consubstantiality. The shaman becoming eland is not a regression, but an intentional, disciplined return to the experience of partnership in the community of being. As the trancer returns, the new insights and energy are then integrated making possible further individuation and a more conscious connection to the community of being. Another way of saying this is that shamanic disciplines hold the tension between the *It-reality* and ego consciousness at a more differentiated level. The shaman returns from the other side—the upper-world or the under-world—armed with deeper broader understanding to heal the individual and the community. The experience is that of understanding the forces, principles and agents that underlie and transcend everyday reality. It is as if “one has been able to see the wiring under the circuit board of

culture,” to use Terrence McKenna techno-shamanic language. At the same time one is forced to recognize the reality of the bottomless mystery surrounding it all. This is experienced as simultaneously exquisite, terrifying and vitalizing. The residual emotion is one of deep gratitude at being alive, encouraging an attitude of compassion and loving kindness towards others.

The crucial point for rethinking a *metaxic* politics is that unlike the institutionalized religions of classical civilizations, shamanic experience is universally accessible, following the radically democratic and egalitarian ethos of hunter-gatherers. It is open to all. Men, women, young and old, mothers with babies slung on their backs, and even young children spontaneously join in. About half of all men and one third of the women become accomplished trancers capable of healing and visioning. Some have a calling and are gifted. But the dance has an immediate effect on everyone present—healing, invigorating and fostering loving communication between the participants.³⁵

The dance combines the means and ends of politics. A society composed of individuals who regularly experience the ecstasy of the dance are closer to the beauty of the mystery of existence. Having regular, direct experiences of the paradoxical ground of being they are more adept at negotiating the tension between the opposites of political and social life: the individual and the group; the fragmentation of discussion and the integration of the story. The centrality of shamanism to politics can be gauged by the comment of one hunter shaman “If we don’t dance, we die”.

The Rosetta Stone of Rock Art

In the Kalahari desert there are no rocks; therefore there can be no rock paintings, and Kalahari Bushmen have no cultural memory of painting. But when we return to the South African rock paintings we find many images representing elements of the dance and the trance experience. Thus there are images of circles of people sitting and clapping, dancers holding dancing sticks and fly whisks, both items only used for the dance. There are also depictions of nasal bleeding associated with deep trance, where the blood itself carries */num* and is sometimes streaked in characteristic fashion, on the cheeks of the

shaman.[‡] The lines, zig zags and nested arcs correspond to the early stages of trance. The images of the part-human part-animal therianthropes correspond to the deeper stages of trance as boundary crossing.

In *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, Herzog makes no mention of the southern African shamanic art. We see him interview the archeologist Jean Clottes, director of prehistory for the Midi-Pyrenees, who has the distinction of being one of the first European scholars to recognize the possible relevance to the European painting of the southern African shamanic art. But there is no word of this in the film.³⁶ Apparently Herzog's was inspired to make *Cave* after reading an article written by Judith Thurman in the *New Yorker*. Thurman's article is a concise and engaging account of Chavet, and a brief introduction to Paleolithic art and the current state of scholarly interpretation. She opens with a conclusion that seems to come straight from the post-structuralist skeptics: "What those first artists invented was a language of signs for which there will never be a Rosetta stone. . ." ³⁷

The Rosetta stone was inscribed with three languages. One language was the mysterious ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic, the other two, Greek and Demotic were both known and essentially the same. By "importing meaning" from the known languages the hieroglyphs could be deciphered. Despite the skeptic's dogmatic insistence on the impossibility of meaning, something like a Rosetta Stone of the South African paintings exists deep in the Drakensberg, the highest mountains in South Africa. This was the last refuge of the now extinct southern Bushman, and a kind of a wilderness temple containing some of the most detailed, carefully executed and complex of the Bushman paintings. There is a shelter at a place called Game Pass which depicts a large solitary eland with its head down, back legs crossed, and the hair on its shoulders erect, all signs of its death throes. (See attached sketch at end of the paper.) Touching the tail of the eland is an upright human-like figure, and like the dying eland, also painted with legs crossed; but instead of human feet the figure has painted hooves with the detailed fetlocks

[‡] Nose bleeding is thought to be due to some combination of exertion and dehydration. This was such a common feature of the dance that the Early European observers called the trance dance the dance of blood.

clearly visible. The figure has an antelope face and holds a clearly identifiable dancing stick. When an Eland has been shot and is dying, it lowers its head, bleeds, sweats, trembles, stumbles and falls. The dancing shaman entering trance, like the dying antelope, often bleeds from the nose, sweats, trembles stumbles and falls. The dancing stick supports the shaman so he or she can do the healing.³⁸

Our understanding of the painted scene is deepened by another account of the trance experience in a different context, documented by two South African film makers, Craig and Damon Foster, in their remarkable film *The Great Dance: A Hunter's Story*.³⁹ This tells the story of one of the last of the traditional San Bushmen hunters and shows how the activity of running down an antelope can induce profound alterations in consciousness fully equivalent to trance. The film follows three hunters from the /Gwi and !Xo bands of Bushman of the Central Kalahari Desert as they track and chase an adult Kudu—a large desert adapted antelope. We see how the discipline of tracking requires the hunter to act out the behavior of the animal. The hunt begins during the midday heat with temperatures reaching 110 degrees. The tracker tries to “put on kudu mind,” to think and feel like the animal he is following. Spotting the animal the hunters give chase. After several hours of running barefoot without stopping, only one hunter is left pursuing the exhausted animal, which suddenly stops and seems to give itself up to the hunter's spear.

Afterward the hunter describes an experience where the barriers between inner and outer, hunter and Kudu, seem to break down. He talks about “entering kudu mind . . . becoming kudu . . . feeling her blood boil . . . controlling her. . .” As her energy diminishes, his increases. Then he compares tracking to dancing: “tracking is like dancing . . . it makes your body happy . . . you are talking with God when you are doing these things.” Here we have the decisive connections. The focused discipline of hunting, tracking and running pushes consciousness beyond normal ego boundaries, closer to our animal nature. In such a state, as we cross the boundary between wilderness and civilization, as in the dance or the hunt, “our body is happy,” we become more ourselves by leaving ourselves. We approach the experience of consubstantiality and feel our closeness to the *It-reality*. We

are “talking with God” when we are doing these things. Such a profound experience conditions the attitude of the successful hunter to hunting and sharing; to the political economy of the community. Shamanism permeates economics and politics. When that happens, man is no longer “Nietzsche’s “sick animal.” Instead he is cured of the disease of *anoia*. The first human beings seem to have understood this.

The *Mandala* of Primal Politics

Reflecting on the emergence of San cosmology in the context of a Southern African wilderness allows us to differentiate Voegelin’s *metaxic* triad of reality-consciousness-language into a primal political *quaternium*. Appropriately enough this dynamic structure can be symbolized by a *mandala*, a circle subdivided into four quadrants by a cross—the most archaic and universal symbol for the divided whole. The word *mandala* comes from the Sanskrit for ‘circle. It was popularized by C. G. Jung who noticed its ubiquity in religious and healing traditions across the globe.⁴⁰ (See diagram.)

Thus as self-conscious humanity differentiates from nature we can immediately identify within the realm of humanity (‘civilization’) another tensional couplet—the autonomous individual and the close-knit community. Self-consciousness is in part constituted by the push-pull relation between these two poles—the individual becoming increasingly autonomous and creative, while the group simultaneously becomes more bonded through individual creativity in language and culture. Culture then, paradoxically tends to re-absorb the emerging individual. This push-pull dynamic is mediated and sharpened by language, which can also be seen to be composed of another tensional couplet, the two poles of speech. One is face-to-face discussion—the Socratic *dialektike*—the use of language to express the unique individual experience, questioning, criticizing, analyzing and taking structures of meaning apart. The complementary pole is story-telling— weaving the fragments of discussion into ever more integrated and inclusive narratives of meaning—ultimately expressing the cosmic story, answering the question of origin and destiny.

We now have a single tensional complex—a quaternium—where each pole is in tensional relation with (and thus interpenetrates) all the others. All four elements—individuation, the community of equals, Socratic discussion and story-telling—help constitute, and are in part constituted by the truth quest, which can be then be placed at the center point of the *mandala*, where the four quadrants converge.

The San Bushmen clearly exemplify this primal order, typical of most traditional hunter gatherer where opposites are in a tensional balance: egalitarian and democratic, fostering individuality and creativity yet tightly bonded into a caring community.⁴¹ What helps makes this possible is the political economy of the small nomadic band—flexible, totally self sufficient and almost devoid of division of labor and hierarchy. The economic anthropologist Marshall Sahlins talks of hunter gatherers as the “original affluent society,” living in a kind of “Zen affluence” with 2-3 days of work a week per adult sufficient to provide food for the band. The material simplicity belies a rich social and spiritual life, flatly contradicting Thomas Hobbes’s assumption concerning a life in a state of nature without a strong central authority: “a war of all against all . . . “nasty, brutish and short.”⁴²

The self-sufficiency and small scale of the society provides the most unshakeable foundation for individual autonomy. At the same time this compact order makes possible trusting and caring relationships in a tightly bonded community. Both poles of the individual and community are highly differentiated. Each individual can participate in the full range of archetypal social roles—hunting, gathering, healing, dancing, singing, crafting clothes, tools and shelter and most importantly collective decision making. All of this makes possible a high degree of individuation.

The community exemplifies a deep democracy where the ideal of egalitarianism is pursued within an ethic of caring and sharing, according to need and ability. For example tradition dictates that when a skilled hunter makes a kill, the meat belongs not to him but the owner of the arrow fired. Arrows are traded and given as gifts. A hunter’s quiver contains many individually marked arrows belonging to others—perhaps an older woman

or a child or a man too old to hunt. The stingy are called “bags without openings” and told “only lions eat alone.” The owner of the arrow distributes the meat. Boastful individuals are ridiculed mercilessly. Beyond the ideal of generosity is deep love of company. People sit close together shoulders rubbing, sometime with ankles interlocked. Loneliness is intolerable and ostracism the greatest punishment.

What is surprising to Westerners is that despite the communalism, the individual stands out sharply; each is “a big frog in a small pond,” as Matthias Guenther puts it. The San are notoriously argumentative, independent and assertive and seemed at first, to lack any form of governance. When one anthropologist asked “do you have leaders,” he was given the answer “Yes, of course we have leaders. Everyone is a leader over himself.” (This was followed by great hilarity on the part of the informant). Then it became clear that politics is ubiquitous. Conflict resolution and decision-making take place in the course of ongoing discussion and storytelling—the two tensional poles in the *mandala* complex. Language is the glue that holds the opposites of individuation and communalism in dialectical tension. The camp is constantly filled with conversation – chatting joking, arguing and storytelling. Bushmen call themselves ‘lovers of argument’. Decisions are made and conflicts resolved in the course of the ebb and flow of everyday public discussion, in small groups and then larger gatherings, until all have been heard and a consensus arrived at. Elections would seem strange to the San, and disrespectful of individual diversity.

Because of the compact face-to-face situation the connection between self-interest and ‘the good of the whole’ is concrete and self evident. There is a collective appreciation of individuality and diversity, since the bigger, truer picture requires unrestricted participation in argument from diverse and empowered individuals. The crucial point is that everyone is engaged in politics through the dialectical back and forth of discussion. Everyone is motivated simultaneously by self-interest and altruism. Again we see the dialectical principle in operation. Opposites are in balance.

Since resources—the waterholes, the pans and the animals of the veld—are available to all, and since relevant knowledge is shared openly, virtually everyone has the capacity to go off on their own, should they wish, and live directly off the land, gather food, make clothing and build shelter. By contrast modern life with its inescapable division of labor and intensive specialization forces conformity and crushes the development of the whole person. Few of us could feed our families by hunting and gathering or growing our own food. Even fewer could build and repair a house, computer, car or phone. We need churches, synagogues and mosques to connect us to the deep mysteries of existence. No citizen is more compelled by dire survival necessity to conform, than the obedient wage earner, or the rule-bound bureaucrat in the hierarchies of our industrial societies. Ironically we could say that Bushman hunter-gatherers have an emotionally richer, more complete engagement with the archetypal experiences constituting our humanity than sophisticated city dwellers.

The small self sufficient community, living in a state of Zen-affluence produces collective wisdom and fosters the creative individual through a not-so-hidden hand of the marketplace of discussion. All contribute to the ongoing fluid collective understanding of how to pursue the good life within the community of being. Ultimately the big picture is the shared mythology, open ended, collectively constructed, passed down the generations connecting all to the community of being. The San give us an image of a loving community of Socratic individuals.

What holds the at its center, is the universal experience of humanity emerging from (other than, yet connected to) the surrounding wilderness and the mystery of the *It-reality*. We can understand shamanic boundary crossing as functioning to deepen each of the four quadrants by keeping each in a synergistic relationship with the surrounding wilderness and its mysterious origin. Wilderness can then be experienced as the most intimate presence, the closest face of the *It-reality*, and through it the mystery of creation.

The San Band as an Ultra-Polis—Everyone a Socrates.

With settled civilization comes division of labor, specialization and hierarchy. Each

quadrant of the *mandala* of primary values differentiates, often isolated from the ordering effect of the others. The integrated activities of the small self-sufficient group fragments. The opposing elements of primal politics become institutionalized. The more universally accessible technologies of shamanic religion, which empower the creative individual, are replaced by bureaucracies of church and state. Warfare and slavery appear. Walls are built between wilderness and civilization. The individual becomes deformed, no longer able to participate directly in collective decision making, no longer contributing to the collective cosmology, no longer having direct experience of the miracle of existence—the divine within and wilderness without. Interestingly shamanism continues as a subterranean current in most religious traditions with the archetype of the four primary values surviving below the surface, waiting to manifest in moments of crisis, transition and cultural creativity.

At various points, perhaps when the differentiation and deformation becomes too extreme precipitating a crisis of order. Crisis offers an opening, an opportunity for a re-awakening to the split unity of the *metaxy* and a re-emergence of the creative primal complex. The Greek polis during the classical period from 600-300 BC provides one of the most striking examples. The ideal of the polis recognized that fully actualizing our humanity as creative, morally autonomous beings required small scale, democratic, relatively egalitarian and self-sufficient structures. Thus the Greeks were the first to have an explicit theory of politics, albeit in embryonic form, where the highest good of the individual, the *arête* of the whole person, and the highest good of the community converged in the practice of both philosophy and democracy. It is thus the first self-conscious formulation of the elements of the *mandala* in dynamic balance as a model for order.

The genius of the Greeks was to hold for a short while, the tension between the ordering wisdom of the simple, egalitarian, self-sufficient, community and the illumination offered by differentiating civilization. In so doing they generated a burst of creative brilliance that hasn't been equaled since. This vision was only glimpsed and partially realized. The polis remained a patriarchal, warrior society, its most profound vision compromised by

slavery and empire.

But from this perspective we can see the San as the “ultra-polis”—smaller, more personal, more egalitarian, totally self-sufficient, with universal participation both in politics and the truth quest. In the primal situation the collective is not an abstraction like the “nation state” tends to be for us, but something concrete, graspable. All have direct experience of the community as a collection of unique individuals each with their idiosyncrasies, frailties and virtues—the good hunters, the generous and the selfish, the clowns, the gifted healers. The accessibility of shamanic trance and the ubiquity of trickster energy deepens and radicalizes the notion of the whole person. Bushman shamanism offers everyone direct access to what Emerson demanded for each of us—a philosophy based on an “original relationship to the universe”. Thus the cosmological whole is not an abstraction that can only be grasped through the specialized knowledge of a few experts. Everyone “talks to God”.

It is revealing that the simplest state of society offers such a rich inner life, where, as Guenther puts it, everyone becomes “an agent and author of his or her own political cosmology in a far more robust sense than what is required from a citizen of a nation state”. This brings us to the possibilities inherent in our own historical moment—everyone a John Locke, everyone a Socrates.

Future Primal—A Revolutionary Approach to Political Revolutions

Over half a century ago Voegelin in a *New Science of Politics* called for an integral science of politics—the restoration of political science to its “full grandeur . . . as the science of human existence in society and history, as well as of the principles of order in general”.⁴³ Its inclusive scope, philosophical penetration and sense of urgency in response to the crisis of civilization, puts it in the category of a paradigmatic work in political philosophy. Writing in the aftermath of a century of revolutions culminating in two world wars and Soviet totalitarianism, Voegelin excoriated the various ‘gnostic’ political religions—the blood soaked “isms”—of modernity, and went on to identify the Liberal democracies of the United States and Great Britain as offering the best

environment for a politics based on the *metaxic* structure of the human condition. However as I have argued, when we put Voegelin's understanding of the truth quest into the larger narrative of the evolution of primal societies, we can differentiate the seed structure of a paradigm for a politics of the *metaxy*, which constitutes a revolutionary deepening of the liberal revolutions.

The prevailing model of academic political science with its neglect of political philosophy, and its focus on quantifiable areas like voting studies, institutional analysis and public policy, can be seen as an example of what Thomas Kuhn called normal science. This is inquiry as sort of puzzle solving within the institutional paradigm of what the university considers valuable questions and appropriate methods and rules for investigation. Since the university exists within the institutions of industrial capitalism, it is also shaped by the prevailing intellectual market place, the bureaucratic model of organization with its structures of reward and punishment, and the general values and epistemology of Liberalism. A paradigm enters crisis when the rules for puzzle solving stop producing useful solutions and start producing unsolvable puzzles. At such a time we would expect the return of an interest in foundational issues, and support for a more creative political philosophy, what Kuhn called "extraordinary" or "revolutionary" science.

Clearly the Liberal paradigm is in crisis and we are seeing a revival of interest in big picture thinking. We cannot regress behind a pre-Kuhnian, pre-Voegelinian awareness and think we can come up with a simple replacement for the Liberalism. We now know that all paradigms and structures of meaning are inherently limited. Yet without an alternative order we live within the tyranny of existing institutions based on a bankrupt philosophical paradigm. Kuhn clarification of scientific revolutions allows us to take to a new level, the revolutionary implications of Voegelin's truth quest. This would be a paradigm of order at a higher level of self-consciousness than previous paradigms in that it would incorporate in its model of order—its vision of the Good Life—the ongoing practice of constructing, critiquing and reconstructing paradigms of political order.

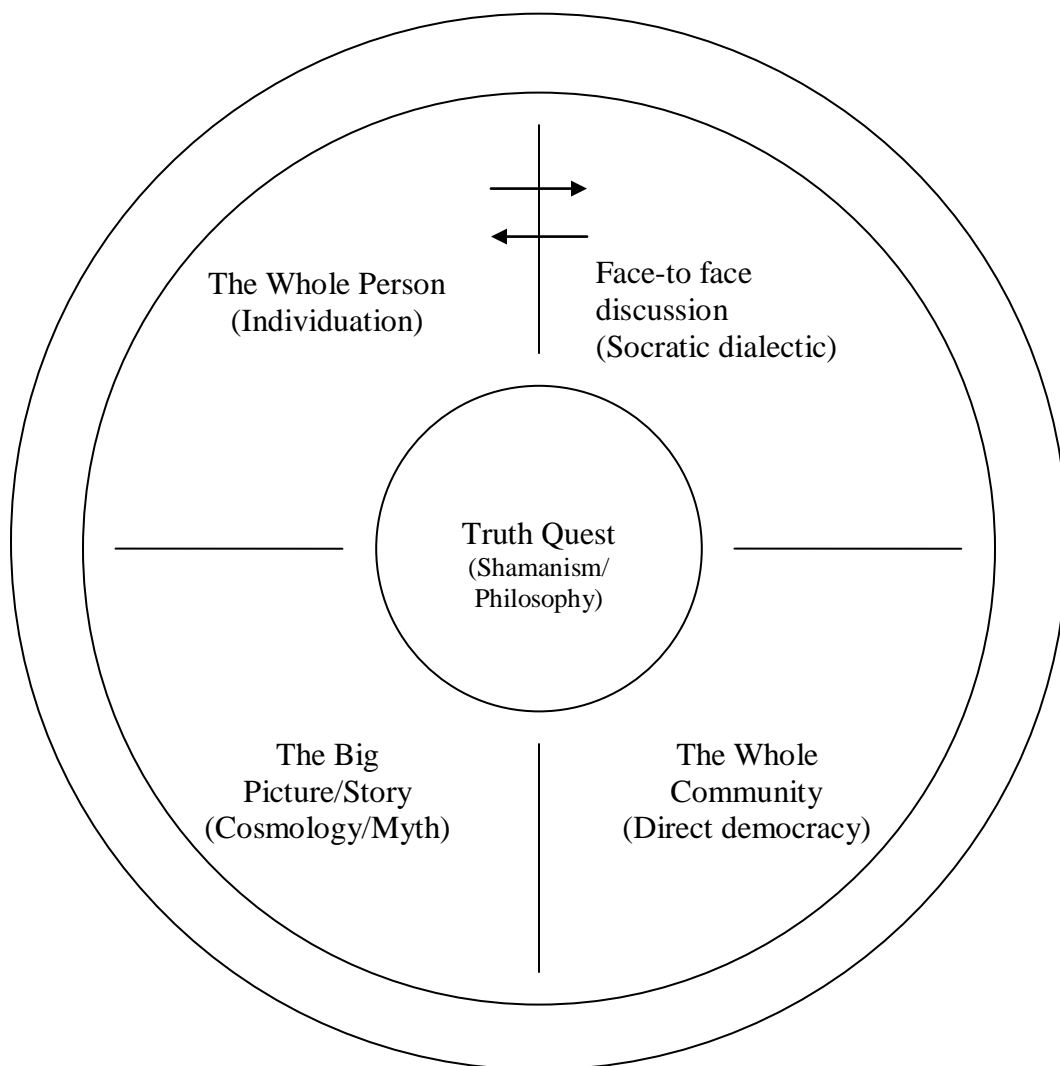
The perspective of primal can make such a possibility more concrete. When we look at what the great revolutionary paradigm builders of Western philosophy *actually did*, as opposed to what they told us we should do, we can see practices roughly congruent with those described by the primal *mandala* dynamic. Thus Socrates and Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke, Descartes and Marx were all passionately involved in the troubles of their times. They were all responding out of heightened awareness to the human predicament of living in the ‘in-between’. They experienced the limitations of the prevailing big picture as a more or less deeply felt crisis of order, requiring diagnosis and therapy according to a vision of political health. Their grand systems reflected their personal universe of experience, and were refracted through some degree of critical self-examination. Their visions tended to be world-views; creative works of synthesis touching on the foundational issues of politics: human nature, the individual, the community, the natural world, government, economics and epistemology. These big pictures were shaped to some degree by the logic of the dialectic—face-to face discussion carried out in a spirit of egalitarianism among a virtual, if not an actual, democratic community of philosophers. Finally they were all concerned directly and indirectly with action, with saving or transforming their worlds. Here we can see their ‘method’ touches all the elements of the *mandala* dynamic—individuation, democratic discussion and integration of knowledge into big pictures guiding action.

Now we can more easily see the revolutionary potential of the primal *mandala*. It offers a model for a “revolutionary political science” which is simultaneously the core of a political order attuned to the *metaxy*. Or putting it the other way round, it offers a model of political order which is simultaneously a way of searching for order. It inserts into the heart of practical politics the revolutionary discipline previously reserved for the creative geniuses of classical political philosophy. Using the language of paradigms we can say that the primal *mandala* complex can be understood as *a paradigm for a politics which has, at its center, the practice of political paradigm deconstruction and reconstruction*. In this sense it could also be regarded as a *meta-paradigm* for politics. It is a politics attuned to the *in-between*; to the irreducible mystery of existence, which requires the continual transformation of frozen political and social constructs in the light of the

ongoing quest. We are back to the Socratic teaching: the search for the deeper, broader, more compelling truth of the human condition becomes the *summum bonum*, the “essence of the good” for society as a whole.

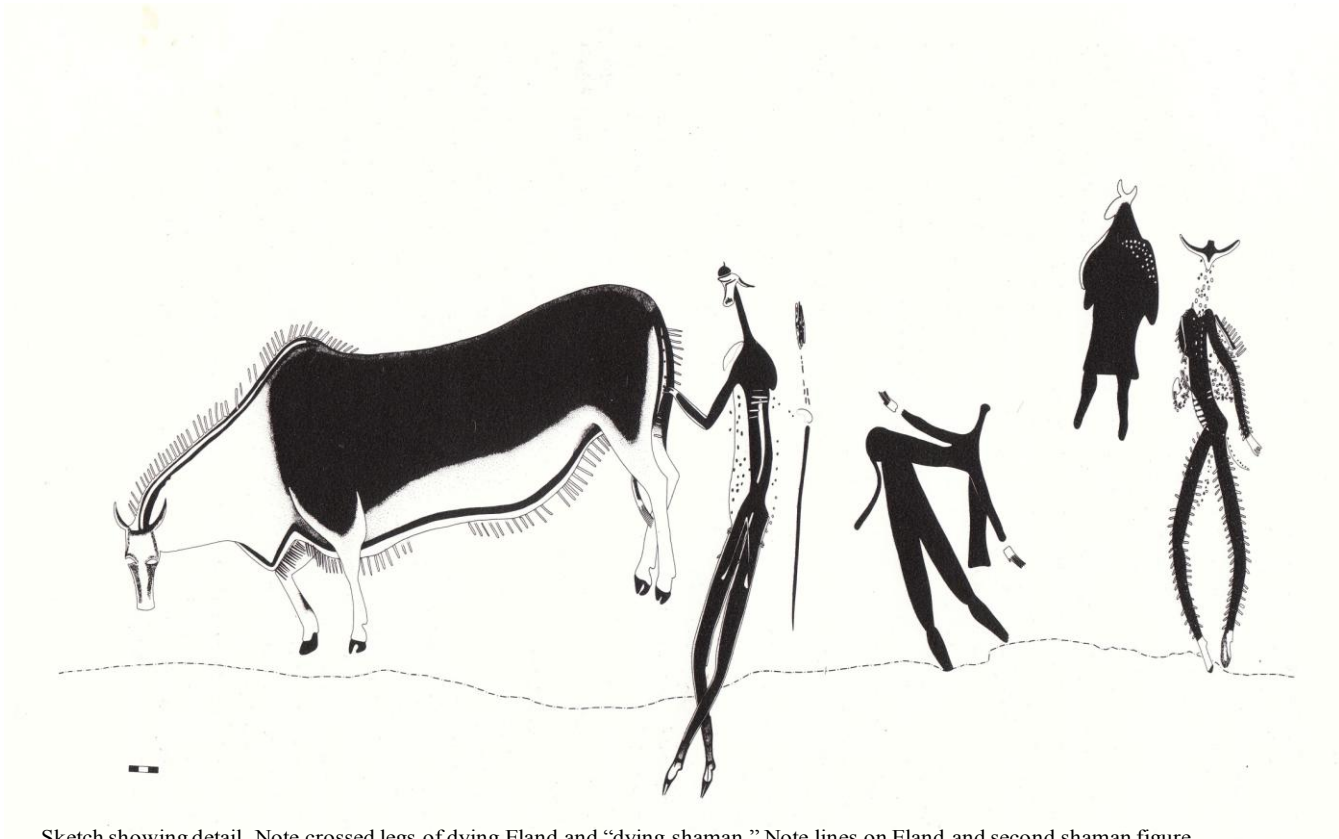
Like a spinning gyroscope the *mandala* dynamic keeps our thinking and our action moving within the essentials of what it means to be a conscious, questing human being at this extraordinarily decisive moment on our marvelous evolving planet. It offers a model for political transformation without violence, since it works continually to challenge the lure of power and privilege with the beauty of the path with a heart—the pursuit of the quest. Such practice would constitute something like the “new science of politics” Voegelin called for more than half a century ago. It would also constitute the “new politics” we need to heal the soul of the individual and society from the disease of *anoia*, our forgetting our participation in the community of being. ⁴⁴

Diagram: *Mandala of a metaxic (primal) politics*



CIVILIZATION

WILDERNESS



Sketch showing detail. Note crossed legs of dying Eland and “dying shaman.” Note lines on Eland and second shaman figure representing hair or perhaps /num, magical potency being transferred from Eland to shaman. Note also shaman holding a dancing stick and the adjacent figure in characteristic trance posture—bent over arms outstretched behind (Sketch: D. L. Williams)

ENDNOTES

¹*Cave of Forgotten Dreams* premiered at the Toronto Film festival in September 2010.

² Eric Voegelin, *Order and History Volume One: Israel and Revelation* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press 1986), p.1 Voegelin gives a formulation of the mystery of consciousness at the beginning and end of his Five Volume series *Order and History*. His most precise formulation is in Volume 5. Unfortunately since this is the most condensed and abstract of his works, it is often neglected.

³ Consciousness allows us to grasp the distinction between both realities through symbols—language and cultures. But the human condition is constituted by the tension between the two. We are really dealing with a paradoxical complex represented by three connected terms *reality-consciousness-culture* (or to use Voegelin's formulation *reality-consciousness-language*). We cannot grasp one term without referring to the other two. For a general discussion of Voegelin's use of the term *metaxy* see James Rhodes, "What is the Metaxy: Diotema and Voegelin." 2003.

⁴ We can restate the situation in more precise language following Voegelin more closely: We wake up to self-consciousness within something larger—nature, the earth, the evolving universe—ultimately an ineffable reality which Voegelin simply calls the '*It-reality*'. Consciousness emerges out of this *It-reality* with its capacity to grasp the world and its objects symbolically through language as 'things'. This is the dimension of reality our materialistic civilization spends most of its time in—the world of 'things'. Voegelin calls this the '*thing-reality*'. But if we reflect on this situation it becomes clear we can never fully grasp the larger *It-reality* as a 'thing' since consciousness itself is part of the *It-reality*. Similarly we can never fully step outside of ourselves *consciously* to grasp 'consciousness' as a 'thing'. There is a blind spot at the center of human existence, an irreducible paradox which has to do with the fundamentally mysterious nature of consciousness: the simple fact that we can grasp two realities yet never fully step outside of either. We need to recognize that human existence is constituted *in-between* the *It-reality* and the *thing-reality*. Voegelin puts it like this: "... consciousness has a structural dimension by which it belongs, not to man in his bodily existence, but to the reality in which man, the other partners to the community of being, and the participatory relations among them occur. If the spatial metaphor be still permitted, the luminosity of consciousness is located somewhere "between" human consciousness in bodily existence and reality intended in its mode of 'thingness'. Eric Voegelin, *Order and History Vol 5: In Search of Order* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press 1986.), p.16.

⁵ The Evolutionary biologist E.O. Wilson's conservative estimate is that we are eliminating 24,000 species of living organisms from the face of the earth every year—over 70 species a day. Edward O. Wilson, *The Diversity of Life*. (NY: Norton 1992) p. 280. See also E.O. Wilson *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth*. (NY: Norton 2006) p. 5. A recent report in *The Sunday Guardian* supports E.O. Wilson's gloomy estimates. The article quotes Simon Stuart, chair of the Species Survival Commission for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the body which officially declares species threatened and extinct: "all the evidence suggests . . . that E.O Wilson's predictions are correct and that the rate of species loss could reach 10,000 times the background rate in two decades." Juliette Jowit. "Humans Driving Extinction Faster than Species can Evolve." *The Sunday Guardian* July 7 2010.
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/mar/07/extinction-species-evolve>

⁶ Thomas Hollweck (ed.) translated from the German by Sandy Adler, Thomas A. Hollweck and William Petropolus, *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Vol 30: Selected Correspondence 1950-1984*. See in particular Voegelin's letters to Marie Koenig. Also personal communication with Prof. Manfred Henningsen, Voegelin's research assistant in the United States. Honolulu, Hawaii 2010.

⁷ Since the experience of a 'creator' was of a reality prior to, and beyond human consciousness, it was also beyond words and descriptions. This might explain the prohibition on pronouncing the written name of God which the scribes wrote the first four Hebrew letters of the divine revelation: "Yehiyeh, asher, Ehiyeh" *Yod, Heh, Vav, Heh*— I will be that which I am"— referred to in Greek as the tetragrammaton. Attempts to pronounce the four letters sound like 'Yahweh' or 'Jehovah'. But this is a non-Jewish practice. Since the destruction of the second temple, when observant Jews encounter the unpronounceable tetragrammaton they simply substitute the word *Adonai*— 'my Lord'—suggesting an It-reality whose meaning disappears as one attempts to grasp it as a thing.

⁸ Chris S. Henshilwood, and C. W Marean, "Remodelling the origins of modern human behaviour." In : *The Human Genome and Africa Part One: History and Archaeology*. ed. H. Soodyall. Cape Town, South Africa: Human Sciences Research Council Press. 2006. Edited version available on Blombos Cave Project website <http://www.svf.uib.no/sfu/blombos/>

⁹ Until 1925 all the major hominid fossils were found outside of Africa in Eurasia, confirming the reinforcing the Eurocentric conceit that our definitive humanity could not have emerged from the "backward dark continent of Africa". When the South African anatomist Raymond Dart identified a skull found at a limestone quarry called Taung as a hominid several million years old, few took him seriously. Decades would pass before the monumental achievements of the Leakey family and a new generation of paleontologists discovered and identified in the Southern Africa Rift the most continuous and complete record of fossils marking all the significant evolutionary leaps between Ape and homo-sapiens. Only here do we find the evidence linking the first dispersion out of Africa between 2 and 1.5 million years ago, of the first true human, *Homo erectus*, to the final dispersion of modern *Homo sapiens* perhaps 100,000 years ago. The oldest stone artifacts dated to 2.5 million years, are from the Gona and Awash regions of the Rift Valley, Ethiopia. As we shall see recent research now suggests the last leap into modern human self-consciousness took place along the coast tip of South Africa.

¹⁰ Deacon and Deacon. Ibid. 1999. p.150.

¹¹ Curtis W. Marean, Bar-Matthews, M, Bernatchez, J., Fisher, E., Goldberg, P., Herries, A.I.R., Jacobs, Z., Jerardino, A., Karkanas, P., Minichillo, T., Nilssen, P.J., Thompson, E., Watts, I., Williams, H.W., 2007. Early Human use of marine resources and pigment in South Africa during the Middle Pleistocene. *Nature*. 449, October 2007. p.905-908. C.W. For a more recent update see Curtis W. Marean "Pinnacle Point Cave 13B (Western Cape Province, South Africa) in context: The Cape Floral kingdom, shellfish, and modern human origins." *Journal of Human Evolution*, 59, pp. 425-443.

¹² d'Errico, Francesco, Christopher Henshilwood and Peter Nilssen. "An engraved bone fragment from c. 70,000-year-old Middle Stone Age levels at Blombos Cave, South Africa: Implications for the origin of symbolism and language." *Antiquity* 2001 vol.75:309-318. For a preliminary overview of the finds at Blombos see also Chris Henshilwood, J. C. Sealy, R. Yates, K. Cruz-

Uribe, P. Goldberg, F. E. Grine, R. G. Klein, C. Poggenpohl, K. van Niekerk, and I. Watts. "Blombos Cave, Southern Cape, South Africa: Preliminary report on the 1992-1999 excavations of the Middle Stone Age levels." *Journal of Archaeological Science* 2001, vol. 28(4):421-448.

¹³ Chris S. Henshilwood, and C. W. Marean, Ibid.2006 ("Remodelling the origins of modern human behaviour.") p.9.

¹⁴ The largest genetic mapping project ever undertaken was led by the Oxford geneticist Spencer Wells as scientist in residence at National Geographic and director of the See *The Journey of Man: A Genetic Odyssey*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2002 and the BBC documentary by the same name. See also Spencer Wells, *Deep Ancestry: Inside the Genographic Project . The Landmark DNA Quest to Decipher our Distant Past*. (Washington DC: National Geographic 2006.) For a popular synthesis of the recent genetic and archaeological research on human origins see Nicholas Wade. *Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors*. (NY: Penguin 2006.). The Journal *Nature* recently reported on research which refined Wells recognition of the Southern African San Bushmen as our shared ancestors. The report documented the complete sequencing of the genome of five elderly men representing five different tribes of the San Bushmen. Each tribe speaks a different language, but all are part of the *Khoisan* click language group which linguistic research also suggests is the oldest surviving language group on earth. Only *Khoisan* share the Y chromosome haplogroup marking them as the closest living relatives of the original Bushman Adam, from which all of humankind descended. Tracking through the Y chromosome is more precise than with mitochondrial DNA since the Y chromosome is inherited by men, unchanged from the father. Stephen C. Shuster et. al. "Complete Khoisan and Bantu Genome from Southern Africa" *Nature*. Vol. 463 18th February 2010. Macmillan Publishers Ltd. p 857, 943-947. The journal *Science* reported even more recently on additional evidence for the antiquity of the Khoisan click languages. See Quentin D. Atkinson "Phonemic Diversity Supports a Serial Founder Effect Model of Language Expansion from Africa." *Science* 15 April 2011:Vol. 332 no. 6027 pp. 346-349.

¹⁵ W.E. Wendt. "Art Mobilier' from the Apollo 11 Cave, South West Africa: Africa's Oldest Dated Works of Art" *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* Vol. 31, No. 121/122 (Jun., 1976), pp. 5-11 Published by: South African Archaeological Society. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3888265>. Wendt estimates with "near certainty" that the art was created between 27,000 to 25,000 years before the present.

¹⁶ For an illuminating fully illustrated comparison of the South African and European rock paintings see Jean Clottes and David Lewis Williams, *The Shamans of Prehistory: Trance and Magic in the Painted Caves*. (NY: Harry Abrams Inc.,1996) This book is also a good example of collaboration between French and South African archeologists which could be a model for academia, helping prevent the endless obfuscating battles between intellectuals with turf to protect. Jean Clottes is former director of Prehistory for the Midi-Pyrenees, and was then general consultant and advisor on prehistory to the French ministry of Culture. For a more comprehensively developed understanding see David Lewis Williams, *Mind in the Cave: Consciousness and the Origins of Art* (NY: Thames and Hudson. 2002). Graham Hancock also provides a wonderfully readable, irreverent but erudite, account of the field from someone who has first-hand experience with the shamanic states of consciousness the art seems to depict. Graham Hancock *Supernatural: Meetings with the Ancient Teachers of Mankind*. (NY: Consortium Books 2006). He makes the obvious point that from the perspective of a practitioner, much of the academic debate can be compared to two virgins discussioning the relative merit of the positions in the *Kama Sutra*.

¹⁷ Judith Thurman, "Letters from Southern France; First Impression: What does the world's oldest art say about us?" *New Yorker* June 23rd 2008. p. 9. It was this article which apparently inspired Herzog to make *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*.

¹⁸ Bleek obtained permission from the governor to have a few of the /Xam prisoners live with him, his wife, and sister-in-law, Lucy Lloyd, for the purpose of learning their language and culture. Between 1870 and his death in 1881 Bleek and Lloyd recorded some 12,000 pages of folklore, mythology and stories from six main informants, at least one of whom, //Kabbo, whose name means "dream", seems to have been a shaman. Together with a /Xam dictionary this constitutes one of the largest collections on a single, now extinct group of hunter-gatherers. For an important collection of papers providing an assessment of this invaluable collection see Janette Deacon and Thomas A. Dowson (eds.) *Voices from the Past: /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Lloyd Collection*. (Johannesburg South Africa: Witwatersrand University Press, 1996.) Most of the Bleek Lloyd collections and related material from four different institutions has now been brought together and digitized. This archival wealth from the South African National Library, Iziko South African Museum, Unisa (The University of South Africa) and the University of Cape Town is indexed, catalogued and available, free, online at <http://lloydbleekcollection.cs.uct.ac.za/>

¹⁹ This account came indirectly from a magistrate, Joseph Orpen, who while on a policing expedition in the Drakensberg, hired a Bushman guide by the name Qing who still had first-hand experience of the painting tradition and knew the meanings of the paintings. Orpen published sketches of the paintings and Qing's explanations in a local journal which was brought to the attention of Bleek. David Lewis Williams, *Discovering Southern African Rock Art*, (Cape Town, South Africa: David Phillip, 1996), p.35.

²⁰ For a lucid brief history of Southern African Rock Art see David Lewis Williams, *Discovering Southern African Rock Art*, (Cape Town, South Africa: David Phillip, 1996).

²¹ One of the more philosophically sophisticated treatments of cross cultural shamanism is that of H.P. Duerr, *Dreamtime: Concerning the Boundary between Civilization and Wilderness*. Basil Blackwell: NY 1985. Duerr's thesis concerning crossing the boundary between civilization and wilderness is roughly congruent with Voegelin's "dialectical exploration of the *metaxy*. See later.

²² Stephen Watson. *Return of the Moon: Versions from the /Xam*. Cape Town South Africa: Carrefour Press 1991. p.71. This story from the late 19th century was told to Wilhelm Bleek by the /Xam shaman Kabbo falls into the category of what the /Xam know collectively as *kumkummi* —a mixture of mythology, history, folklore and news.

²³ Mathias Guenther's *Tricksters and Trancers: Bushman Religion and Society*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1999) is the most comprehensive and philosophically nuanced study of Bushman Cosmology. He makes clear that Bushman mythology recognizes something comparable to the primary "leap in being." In *Israel and Revelation* Voegelin dismisses primal metaphysics too quickly. He categorizes primal societies (prior to the Hebrews) as "cosmological"—not yet having apprehending the split in human existence and consequently living in an enchanted world where humanity has not clearly differentiated itself from the other members of the community of being: "where . . . everything that meets us has force and will and feelings, where animal and plants can be men and gods, where men can be divine and gods are kings. . . ." (Voegelin, *Ibid.* 1958, p. 24). He sees such societies as pre-critical." They are still

“bewildered and confused by the experience of consubstantiality because variegated materials are classified under too few heads.” When Voegelin wrote this he didn’t have available the more philosophically sophisticated studies like those of Matthias Guenther’s. It is significant that in his later work Voegelin recognized that differentiation did not necessarily correspond to order in society and that:

“... the truth of reality is always fully present in man’s (sic) experience and that what changes are the degrees of differentiation. Cosmological culture are not a domain of primitive ‘idolatry’ ‘polytheism’ or ‘paganism’, but highly sophisticated fields of mythical imagination quite capable of finding proper symbols for the concrete or typical case of divine presence in a cosmos in which divine reality is omnipresent. (Voegelin Ibid. 1999a 195-6).

²⁴ Sigrid Schmidt counted some 57 varieties of mythic story concerning the origin of death and 28 of stories about the acquisition of Fire. S. Schmidt, “The Relevance of Bleek/Llyod Folktales to the General Khoisan Tradition” in Janette Deacon and Thomas Dowson, *Voices from the Past: /Xam Bushmen and the Bleek and Llyod Collection*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press 1996. Guenther counts 70 versions of origin of death stories. Ibid. p. 102, 160.

²⁵ Guenther, 1999. Ibid. p.98

²⁶ Marshall, Lorna J. 1999. *The Nyae Nyae !Kung: Beliefs and Rites*. Harvard University Cambridge Massachusetts: Peabody Museum monographs. 1999. p.9

²⁷ The standard work on Bushman trance healing has long been Richard Katz’s *Boiling Energy: Trance and Healing among the Kalahari !Kung*. Bradford Keeney, a cultural anthropologist has recently taken this work on to a new level by become the first Westerner to be fully initiated as bushman shaman healer. This has allowed him not only to interpret trance healing but integrate it into Western healing practices. See his remarkable story in *Bushman Shaman Awakening the Spirit through Ecstatic Dance*. (Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books. 2005).

²⁸ Bradford Keeney. *Bushman Shaman: Awakening the Spirit through Ecstatic Dance*. Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books 2005. p.49.

²⁹ The following description is distilled from the ethnographic literature and my own limited experience as an observer/participant on two occasions, on at Nyae Nyae in 1999 and the other in the central Kalahari near Dakar in 2007. Richard Katz was the first to do an in depth study of trance healing with the Ju/Twasi San as part of the Harvard Kalahari Research Group in the late sixties. As a community psychologist Katz recognized the futility of false objectivity, and included his reactions in his observations. At the same time he wanted to avoid what he called a “reductive approach” distorting the uniqueness of a Bushman experience by reducing it to categories familiar to other religious and healing traditions. See his *Boiling Energy: Trance and Healing among the Kalahari !Kung [Ju/Twasi]* as the standard systematic study. It has been updated with Megan Biesele and Verna St. Denis, in *Healing Makes Our Hearts Happy Spirituality and Cultural Transformation among the Kalahari Ju/hoansi [Ju/Twasi]* Rochester Vermont: Inner Traditions 1997. Bradford Keeney has added an important dimension as the first Westerner to be fully initiated as bushman shaman healer See his remarkable story in *Bushman Shaman Awakening the Spirit through Ecstatic Dance*. (Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books. 2005); also *Ropes to God: Experience the Bushman Spiritual Universe*. (Ringing Rocks Press: Philadelphia 2003).

³⁰ Katz Ibid. p.42.

³¹ Bradford Keeney, *Bushman Shaman Awakening the Spirit through Ecstatic Dance*. (Rochester, Vermont: Destiny Books. 2005); For testimony from David Lewis Williams and others scholars of Bushman religion regarding Keeney's authority see *Ropes to God: Experience the Bushman Spiritual Universe*. (Ringier Rocks Press: Philadelphia 2003)p. 74-75.

³² Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964).

³³ Peter Furst, *Hallucinogens and Culture* (San Francisco: Chandler and Sharp '76) p.10

³⁴ H.P. Duerr 1985. Ibid.

³⁵ Eliade suggested Siberian origins for shamanism, and considered the use of hallucinogenic plants and fungi to be a degenerate form of trance, comparable to alcoholic intoxication. The weight of scholarship suggests he was wrong on both counts. Although the bushman go into trance without the use of psycho-active plants, many indigenous and hunting gathering societies have a long history of ingesting hallucinogenic substance. Such substance are more accurately called entheogens since their one consistent effect is to manifest an experience of "encountering God"—experiencing the *It-reality*. Contemporary and indigenous participants in *ayahuasca* shamanism (the hallucinogenic brew widely used throughout the indigenous tribes of South America) report quite specific personal as well as more metaphysical insights during the journeying often culminating in a profound experience of consubstantiality—full identification with the cosmic community. Such reports correspond in striking ways to the reports of Bushmen shamans. The landmark publication was that of the Czech psychiatrist Stanislav Grof documenting the results of thousands of controlled sessions using the most powerful of all hallucinogens Lysergic Acid Diethylamide 25 (LSD 25) in *Realms of the Human Unconscious: Observations from LSD Research*. For a comparable mapping of the phenomenology of the *ayahuasca* experience see the encyclopedic work of the Israeli psychologist/linguist Benny Shannon *Antipodes of the Mind: Charting the Phenomenology of the Ayahuasca experience*.

³⁶ Jean Clottes and David Lewis Williams, *The Shamans of Prehistory: Trance and Magic in the Painted Caves*. (NY: Harry Abrams Inc., 1996). While post-structuralists criticized this as "importing meaning from other traditions," the work is an excellent example of collaboration and how synthesis—the bigger picture—can illuminate meaning.

³⁷ Judith Thurman, "Letter from Southern France: First Impression. What does the world's oldest art say about us?" *New Yorker*. June 23, 2008.

³⁸ For a black and white sketch see J. D. Lewis Williams, Ibid. "The World of Man and the World of Spirit: An Interpretation of the Linton Rock Paintings." Margaret Shaw Lecture 2. (Cape Town: The South African Museum Press. 1988). For a beautiful photographic collection see David Lewis Williams, *Images of Mystery: Rock Art of the Drakensberg* (Cape Town South Africa: Double Storey Books, 2003). See also J. D. Lewis Williams, 2002 Ibid. for a general theory of interpreting South Africa Rock Art.

³⁹ *The Great Dance: A Hunter's Story*. By Craig and Damon Foster. Earthrise and Liquid Pictures. Off the Shelf production 2000.

⁴⁰ *Mandalas* appear in Navajo sand paintings, as objects of meditation in Tibetan Buddhism and medieval Christianity and in the dreams and paintings of Jung's psychiatric patients during healing. Some of the oldest *mandalas* are petroglyphs going back 35,000 years.

⁴¹ See Eleanor Leacock and Richard Lee, *Politics and History in Band Societies*, Harvard: Harvard University Press 1982. This establishes the base line consensus regarding the political order of hunter gatherers.

⁴² The classical study was that of Marshall Sahlins *Stone Age Economics*. (Chicago: Aldine Atherton Inc 1972) p 1. Richard Lee calculated under good conditions 2.7 days of work for men and 2.1 for women to supply the necessities of life, see Richard Lee, *Politics, Sexual and Non-Sexual in Egalitarian Society*, in Eleanor Leacock and Richard Lee (eds.) *Politics and History in Band Societies* (N.Y.: Cambridge University '82), p.40. Under normal condition life in the Kalahari is not easy.

⁴³ Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press. 1952/1987 p.2. Interestingly the book became an unexpected best-seller and has remained in print since its publication. Its inclusive scope, philosophical penetration and sense of urgency in response to the crisis of civilization, puts it in the category of a paradigmatic work in political philosophy.

⁴⁴ It is the task of another larger work to explore contemporary examples of policies, institutions and practices giving intimations of such a new order. See Louis Herman, *Future Primal*. (San Francisco: New World Library, 2012 forthcoming). In this work I also suggest that organizing society around the quest at this critical moment in human evolution could constitute a leap in complexity consciousness that some thinkers anticipate as an impending singularity in human evolutions—another leap in being. We are after all only in the childhood of our species existence, struggling to deal with the most astounding of all evolutionary novelties—creative self-consciousness. The leap would not leave our primate embedded humanity behind, as the techno-fantasies of the transhumanists would like to believe, but would rather be like coming into the full glory of our mature humanity, enabling us to live at more at peace with ourselves and with the entire, evolving, community of beings.