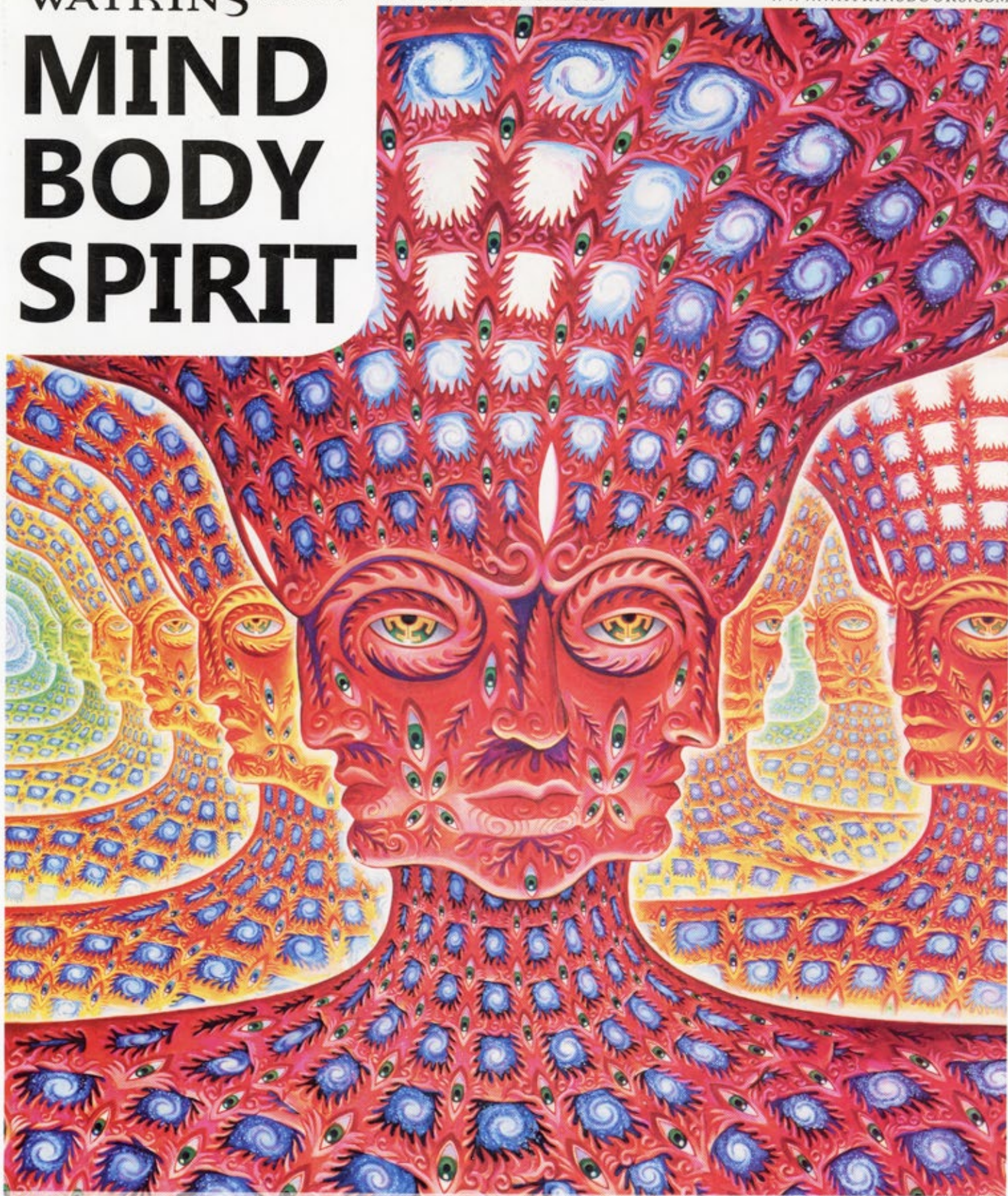


MIND BODY SPIRIT



Science & Psychic Phenomena > Dreaming the Soul Back Home > The Spiritual Gift of Madness > Fear & Fearlessness > The Music of Rumi > Who was Madame Blavatsky?

THICH NHAT HANH . NEALE DONALD WALSCH .
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Issue 32, £3.95
 9772046397017

Cosmic Creativity & the Net of Being

by Alex Grey

COSMIC CREATIVITY

Creativity as a human trait is usually relegated to a select few, the creative geniuses of science and art. But creativity is a force fully operating in all of us now. Science tells us that our cosmos flared forth from nothingness fourteen billion years ago. This singularly most astonishing occurrence means everything came from one thing. From an explosive beginning, a staggeringly creative series of events then unfolded. The building blocks of the universe suddenly came into being, from superstring to quark to neutrino to atom, over billions of years evolving to molecule to cell to creature, each phase a momentously original development. Far from random selection, a divine intelligence and artistry appears at the very basis of existence. Now after almost four billion years, with 99.9999% of all previously existent life now dead, humanity is on the effervescent edge of earth's biological breaking wave of consciousness evolution.

Creativity is another name for evolution. Evolution and creativity are Spirit in action. Fundamental to existence, creativity is Spirit's voice, the uni-verse, the one song occurring in all phenomena. Every fresh moment contains the possibility to transcend the last. Our divine core, our pure empty witness consciousness, carries the same potential for creation that existed before the beginning of the universe. The force that birthed the cosmos lives as the creative urge in our souls. God created a cosmos in order to evolve beings capable of a conscious relationship with their Creator. Mystics are the most advanced antennae for God consciousness and communication.

The mystical visionary experience is a one on One love affair with our Creator. Merging with Source, a spark of Divine light is ignited within us, empowering transcendence from conventional solutions, toward imagining an original course.

In a breakthrough of transformative visions catalyzed by entheogenic meditative

experiences, Allyson and I shifted our creative focus toward manifesting icons of infinite interconnectedness. Nothing seemed a more important subject for our life's work or had more potential to forward the evolution of consciousness than depicting Oneness with the Divine and portraying our embeddedness in the web of life. After the soul awakens, how does the individual understand and communicate their profound relationship with the All, except through symbolism? Sacred art is theophany, the appearance of God, in manifest form. The highest function of creativity is the revelation of spirit. The deeper we tap into our yearning for creative expression, free from limitations, the clearer a channel we become for the cosmic creative force to manifest. Creation is activated evolutionary spirit. Creation is redemption. Redemption is divine rescue from the transgression of meaninglessness. When art helps those in need of inspiration, it can turn suffering into purpose. Art that is made with the intention to benefit others can become a spiritual practice. Creativity born from the power of love, directly from the soul, is a Sacred Mirror, reminding beholders that each of us is holy and that the world and our universe is a sacred place.

Over a century ago, the psychiatrist R.M. Bucke had a mystical experience that he called "cosmic consciousness." The characteristics of this brief but life-defining episode included the experience of an inner light; a sense of immortality, moral elevation, intellectual illumination; loss of the fear of death; loss of a sense of sin. In the state of cosmic consciousness, Bucke described the universe as "vividly like a living presence, not made of dead

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MEET THE AUTHOR

ALEX GREY is the author of *Sacred Mirrors*, *Transfigurations*, *The Mission of Art*, and *Art Psalms*. His work has graced numerous album covers including those of Nirvana, TOOL, and the Beastie Boys; appeared in *Newsweek* and *TIME Magazine*; and been exhibited throughout the world. In 2004, Alex and his wife, artist Allyson Grey, opened the Chapel of Sacred Mirrors (CoSM) in New York City, a gallery and sacred space for Alex's original paintings and other visionary artworks. In 2009, CoSM, now a church, moved from Manhattan to the Hudson Valley. Alex Grey and Allyson Grey live in Brooklyn and Wappinger, New York. Above: photo by Dean Chamberlain.

ON THE WEB

www.alexgrey.com
www.allysongrey.com
www.cosm.org



Cosmic Creativity, 2012, acrylic on canvas.

matter." In his book on the subject published in 1901, Bucke suggested that the experience of cosmic consciousness was occurring with greater frequency as humanity evolved, with notably expanded reports in modern times. The mystic realms reflected in the art of today's visionary cosmonauts mirror the universe within, and attest to the truth of Bucke's statement.

Stars are being born and dying in the great nebula, clouds of interstellar gas and dust. Planetary systems are in a state of dynamic flux, developing increasing complexity with the capacity to host life and awareness. The earliest known illustration of a "whirlpool galaxy," created by Lord Earl of Rosse in 1845, influenced Van Gogh's composition of "Starry Night," painted in 1889. Science has revolutionized ▶



Net of Being, 2002-7, oil on linen

our comprehension of the vastness of the cosmos. An entire genre of "Cosmic Art" developed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries by artists who consciously aligned themselves with the force that moves the stars.

Realization and alignment with our source activates and empowers our channels of invention and discovery. Uniting with the nature-field expands the identity of the individual beyond the bounds of body and ego, toward universal Self realization. The word cosm (acronym for Chapel of Sacred Mirrors) indicates a realm or world—microcosm, mesocosm, macrocosm, anthropocosm. The original Greek word "kosmos" refers both to order and adornment. The universe is a harmonious arrangement with a deep and beautiful order. The stars are the ornament of heaven. "Cosmetic," meaning adornment, shares the root word cosmos. The adorned becomes aligned with celestial order. We put on make-up or wear an amulet to beautify ourselves, for good luck, protection or to connect with spirit. Art aligns the appreciator with the ornamental beauty of the cosmos. Ornament is human consciousness mirroring and expressing the abundance of creative Nature. Divine Imagination overflows with numinous flora and fauna, an endless well of patterns springing from a single paisley mustard seed, spirally growing, interweaving, disobeying the gravity of death and spreading via the visionary domain throughout world culture.

The inner realms undulate with infinite iridescent swirls and artists of all times,

everywhere, labor to express a fragment of the fantastic richness, immersed in the elemental flow of life, the cascade of rivers and clouds, the rhythm of mountains and valleys, the swirl of flames and galaxies. Fractal wave fronts from both inner and outer worlds collide in the art of ornament. The artist participates in the flow of universal creativity that is both the adorning energy and the order of the cosmos.

NET OF BEING

"All history is one immortal being who continually learns... This is the Immortal One whom we worship without knowing their name... and we are that being."

—Pascal

In 2003, deep in the jungles of Brazil, while on an ayahuasca journey, I entered a great net of being, a fiery jewel-like web of Godselfs weaving an endless anthropocosmic tapestry. It was a realm of universal beings with an omnidirectional topology of interconnected heads and hearts, fusing boundless wisdom and love. A luminous ball inside the basket-like head of each four faced God was the heartglow shining an eerie under-light for the level of Godheads above and beyond sight. The flaming lattice of eyes and galaxies revealed a new order of the x-y-z axis, an endless soul-field of infinite consciousness.

The word "seraphim" comes from the Hebrew verb saraph, meaning 'to burn,' seraphim meaning, "the burning one." Because angels are light beings, the Net of Being, an infinite circuitry made of fiery-light,

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"As we evolve toward global consciousness, the Net of Being icon is offered as a symbol of the newly emergent networked self."



Painting Net of Being in studio, Brooklyn, New York, 2004

represents the ideal agency through which the Divine may manifest. An angel is a spiritual being dedicated to the service of divine purpose. Angels do as commanded by the Absolute, the Great Mystery. The great Sufi mystic Ib'n Arabi said that the imagination is our angel where "God meets God."

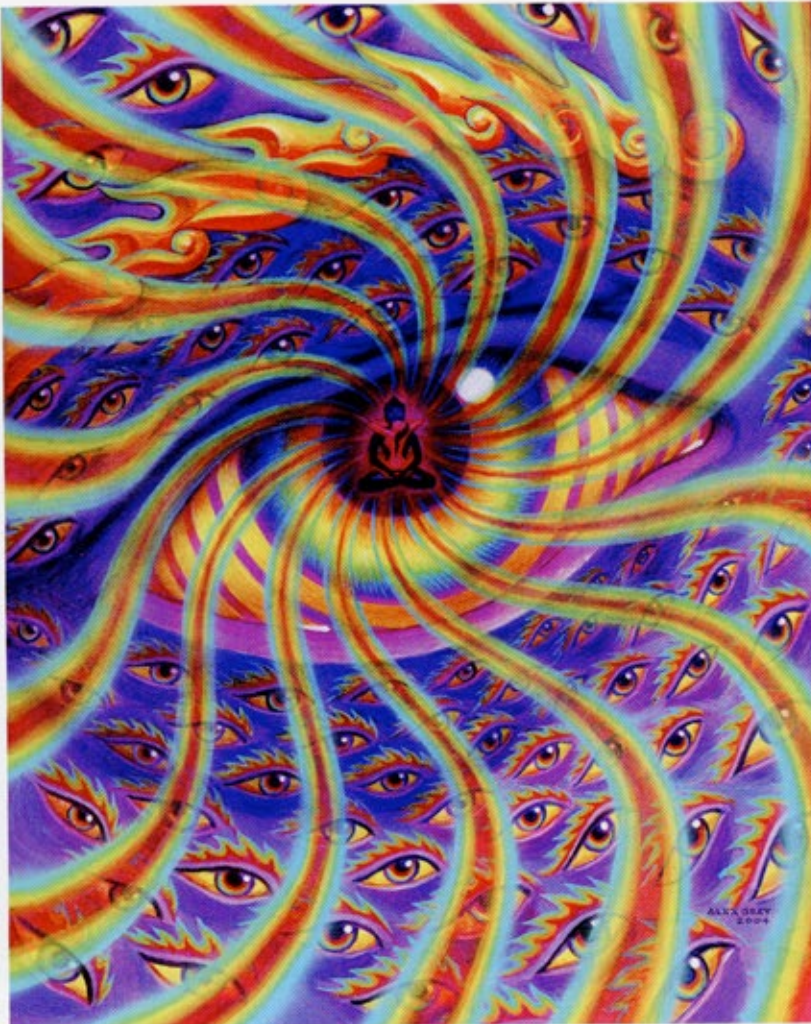
A symbol of the infinite, creative, visionary imagination, Net of Being is an interwoven thoroughfare in which God is simultaneously, super-consciously operative in every dimension of space. The grid of Godheads gaze at each other with mirror-like inter-reflectivity evocative of the mythic Jewel Net of Indra or Buddhafields from the Avatamsaka Sutra. Arching foreheads of the QuadGods act as pillars in a topology of angel-tecture creating an endless web of forever receding corridors. Peace, power, and nobility are qualities attributable to the watchful faces.

For centuries, Hua-yen Buddhist sages have used the mythic archetype of Indra's Net to describe total interconnectedness of all phenomena. In the visionary Heavens, Indra's net stretches out infinitely in all directions. A jewel hangs in each vertex reflecting every other Jewel in the Net. Symbolically, the Jewel is each one of us, every individual intimately united with every other being and thing by conscious reflection. Through perception and

imagination, we become microcosmic storehouses of our world and the vastness of the Universe. The self is a receptacle of the multiverse. All appearances, apparently occurring in outer world space/time, are reflections and projections from our inner world, an endless hall of mirrors made of consciousness, reflecting a higher, deeper reality.

Inside each of us is a witnessing presence, here symbolized as a Godself node in the Net of Being. At the deepest levels of self-reflection, mystics worldwide have declared the oneness of the witness. The Shema, watchword of Judaism, contains the declaration, "Adonai is One." Adherents of Islam declare, "To know oneself is to know Allah." The Advaita Vedanta canon proclaims, "I am that. That in whom reside all beings and who resides in all beings, who is the giver of grace to all, the Supreme Soul of the universe, the limitless being—I am that." Each node or pillar is the causal body of an individual, symbol of our infinite interconnectedness with everything. Contemplating the Godself image, the viewer enters a unifying theophany, an integrated transcendental order, vast and luminous, of the framework of reality.

In the Godself image we see a head with anthropic elements, a neck, a funnelling forehead, eyes, noses, mouths, sense organs, quadratically distributed around the head to ▶



Libration through Seeing, 2004, oil on wood

symbolize an expanded perceptual receptivity. The head is beyond gender, beyond racial type. The body of the being is all other beings. The structure of the space has architectonic and philosophical implications for understanding space and self. Each head is a "node of awareness" in an apparently omnidirectional grid of interconnected heads and hearts. Because the Godheads directly face each other throughout the net, and we are facing the same infinite being, we are imaginably drawn into the web, recognizing ourselves as one of the nodes.

The viewer is essential to complete the circuit of creative wisdom energy embedded in the Net of Being, and Godself images. The seer or witness in the viewer is stirred to deep self remembrance by recognizing the "soul made perceptible," and "anamnesis" occurs. Socrates' theory of anamnesis suggests that the soul is immortal, and repeatedly incarnates; knowledge is actually in the soul from eternity, but each time the soul is incarnated its knowledge is forgotten in the shock of birth, and the blizzard of new perceptions. What one perceives to be learning, then, is actually the recovery of what one has forgotten. Remembering the ultimate realities, where the small self gives way to the expansive Godself, places us in the presence of the Eternal Now, linked with a

constantly learning and evolving yet immobile relationship to our deepest being. By recalling our profound unity with everyone and everything, we recover our ethical foundations.

The Net of Being, and Godself images visually reassert the fundamental tenet of Mahayana Buddhism, that "there is no separate self, no independently arising phenomena." The Bodhisattvic altruistic approach is based on this fundamental insight into the illusion of our egoic separateness. The Bodhisattva seeks enlightenment not only for themselves but for the sake of all beings, and recognizes no final enlightenment until all are liberated. Jesus declared his unity with the continuum of all beings, "Whatsoever you do to the least of my children, thou doest unto me." Christ's statement grounds us in the moral framework of reciprocity, a "two-way" relationship between one's self and others that involves both sides equally and in a mutual fashion. Every world religion contains a derivation of the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Harming one, harms all. Likewise healing and uplifting the individual raises the collective.

As we evolve toward global consciousness, the Net of Being icon is offered as a symbol of the newly emergent networked self. Our human identity has been unconsciously restructured by the spread of online lifestyles. Texting and email connects us almost instantaneously with people at any geographic location. We understand ourselves to be connected to a network of billions of computer and cell phone users. Now a web of global intelligence is evolving and developing with every advance of technology and has rapidly become a presence in most people's lives throughout the world. This appears to be fulfilling Teilhard deChardin's theory of the emergent Noosphere.

The Noosphere is the thinking layer of the planet earth, powered by evolving human intelligence and causing dramatic shifts in the planet, just as the geosphere gave birth to the biosphere, the biosphere has given birth to the Noosphere. Worldspirit is the highest refinement of the Noosphere, a felt unity with all creation, and the eco-crisis in progress.

In building a planetary civilization based on spiritual values, the Net of Being image points to the integral relationship of the individual with the social and Gaian network. Our motive for spiritual transformation and moral development is recognized as the spontaneously ascending creative impulse that furthers the evolution of consciousness. At humanity's current crucial juncture, we know our mistakes can be fatal to the lifeworld. So we must be the most responsible we can, because we cut a future path that others will follow. May every breath we take and move we make be for the betterment of the whole net of beings. ◉

FURTHER READING

NET OF BEING by Alex Grey with Allyson Grey, published by Inner Traditions, hardback with over 200 reproductions of Grey's artwork (208 pages).

