

Krypton, or the Finches of Kahala

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This paper is devoted to a most elusive archetype able to create unusual physical displays (most likely still not violating the laws of causality, just finding some creative bypasses). I would like to attach the label “finches” to this essentially formless archetype. First, because of the mysterious birdlike ways of arriving, pecking, and taking off, a feel of esthetic quality, and something like quick fits of curiosity in its code & style of behavior. Second, this is to commemorate Darwin’s finches that turned out to be most useful in establishing some basic lines of a new theory. At a more general level, I would like to suppose that Consciousness produces teaching stories—like the ones involved with the finches archetype—as something most basic to its very functioning: To be conscious means to be self-teaching. This self-teaching, self-modifying property seems to be related to basic auto-catalytic activity of RNA molecules earlier hypothesized to be involved in memory coding. This leads to proposing a hypothesis of some primal and primordial undifferentiated unity of Consciousness, Memory, and RNA chemistry that precedes and serves as a universal ground to contemporary, more differentiated and special psychological phenomena.

Farewell, and here I am again. Maps and territories. Flowering individualities. The Sixth Element. Toward the beautiful world of Pele. The Magical Chant.

I HAVE returned to the beautiful world of Hawai’i...Each of the huge flowers that surround me seems to have a dormant individual soul. Often I have a feeling that the world of Hawai’i, this nursery of newborn souls, has kindly allowed human beings to be present here in this sacral space to witness and feel the mystery. I cannot help thinking that one must be very careful not to damage something important and unique that is taking place in this precious world. XXth century civilization of course has arrived here also—yes, this is true—but I wonder, when looking at the human faces that have been attracted to (or favored in) this world. I notice a feeling of inner quiet in so many of them—especially obvious when I am just allowing the wholeness, the gestalt of this world, to enter my mind and feelings.

Lucas Besson was perhaps trying to express something of the magical charm of the Pele

(Hawaiian volcano goddess) world in his movie “The Fifth Element.” Both vulnerable and potentially dangerous is the central figure of the myths and of the movie—the red-haired goddess—like her natural counterpart in the Hawaiian world. For someone in love with a mythological Pele image, the world of Besson would feel a bit too human, but then the film world has its own rules, and the personality of each of us has his/her own ways to ironically accept the trivial or to escape it.

Some traditional incantations (most uncommercial sounding) that I have been privileged to hear here seemed to carry a least distorted message of the original sacred Hawaiian world. I am an outsider here, of course, and my feelings even when having some spontaneity of a natural beginner’s mind, have certainly enough of my own ego bondage to be biased and distorted in so many ways. And still, I suppose that even my naive perception of this world carries some truth that is important for realizing the whole scope of our human experience (so effectively lost in sophisticated constructions and deconstructions of the scholarly approach). Is it not just this fullness of

human experience that could serve as a reliable guide in our relations with the world of physical reality?

I feel I must be very careful with my words in this world—and in this new paper of mine—as it is in the context of this most vulnerable world that I have gotten in touch with one of the most elusive archetypes, formless, close to, but not identical with the Numinous. Birdlike agility in the momentary realizations of this archetype leads me to calling it the finches archetype, even though I understand that these birds of the Timeless remain essentially beyond any true name or form.

In some cases, the finches can be involved even in editing images of some other archetypes. I feel that I must remain open to this possibility, if not for any other reason than because these words (about editing other archetypes) keep coming to my mind when I am pondering about these clever birds of Kahala. Certainly I haven't yet enough experiential material cross-evidenced by synchronicities or definite wakeful or dream images to speak about this point at the level of personal mythology (Feinstein & Krippner, 1988) that I have been documenting in my recent series of papers (Soidla, 1997b,c, 1998a,b,c,d, 1999a,b).

Two stories, both crazy. Birds' talk. From very wrong to reasonably wrong. (Finches of Kahala = Birds of the Shadow Realm of Consciousness = Birds of Hades = Birds of Bardo.)

I HAVE two stories that reveal the style of these innocent, clever birds, executors of the will of the Timeless. Both were painful, but still revealing some unearthly compassion.

The first story took place back home in St. Petersburg, but seemed to have some important symbolic connection with Hawaiian reality, and was in a way a prologue for the second story that will follow below. I received in the mail a sign "Beware of DOG" from my friend S in Hawai'i and thought that a good joke would be to transpose the "G" and "D" letters. (Not a very original idea.)

So I did. A kind of warning bell went off in me, but then am I not transpersonal enough to be above such Christianized superstitions? The feeling of being beyond some level of teaching was certainly a most vulgar thing to be identified with—but this was exactly where I was. I changed the letters around, and being proud with the result, taped it to the wall of my room. A nice display of spiritual materialism (Trungpa, 1987)

it was. And then what?—After several days, on my way to work at my Institute, I discovered that my office and home keys, attached to a Hawaiian leather key holder—a gift of S that was quite dear to me—had mysteriously found a way out of my pocket which now had a large hole in it. Never before had something like this happened to me, at

least in so drastic a way. At the same time, my purse with some cash (one must know the current economic situation in Russia to appreciate the importance of this point) had most compassionately remained in the same pocket. I retraced my steps but could not find the key holder in the deep snow. So I went on to the Institute, did away with the poster, and—yes!—the deeper message now dawned somewhere in my mind. This message has still not received its proper evaluation yet—that could be quite sharp and clear—most likely needing a larger hologram piece to get more focused. But soon, just one more step made the picture much clearer to me.

The other story took place in Hawai'i, and—yes!—in a way helped to put the former story into a more proper frame. A windless day it was, and I wrote an e-mail message to my wife back in Russia describing it. I made a comparison between trees and palms—the latter seemed to be especially responsive to winds—and in a rather fancy and baroquely worded message stated a most simple thing—that there was not the slightest movement—not even any quivering of leaves—in the world around me this morning. But in a way, the seemingly so trivial thought I wrote down was perceived by some part of my mind as being mysteriously wrong; wrong in making these comparisons at all, too involved in "obvious"



Drawing by Mindie K. Ching

appearances of this world. As a result, the short text I wrote was stylistically alien, as if derived from some alternative “me.” There was a simplistic obviousness in what I had written, a dangerous fascination and even obsession with the trivial. The merely obvious was, in a way, enthroned, taking on the appearance of a final truth. I had been not only too sure of something, but had been sure in a most vulgar way. As if I had entered a space of overwhelming vulgarity of thought and managed to be insensitive enough not to grow quite aware of this. (Really, I just suppressed my sensitivity, as I had felt some passing shadow of doubt, had perceived a seemingly out-of-any-normal-proportion warning of some metaphysical danger. But, as if being too surprised with this warning, I did not take it seriously.) To put it in other words, what happened was a most insignificant event, not worth a second thought, so casual, so normal on the physical reality level. At the same time it seemed to have great importance, to be not only wrong but very wrong on some more subtle, but in a way, more basic level. These are some facets of the event that happened. And this metaphysical obsession with vulgarity (or what?) did not pass unnoticed by the Timeless. After some hours we were passing, by car, a palm tree that seemed to be in a state of most unbelievably great agitation—as if a local invisible storm was solely tormenting this single tree. Neighboring trees were untouched by any wind, even leaves hardly seemed to be in any motion. It’s difficult to communicate how shocking this sight was for me. To witness something so...exaggerated, so impossible, so real, so physical, and, at the same time, obviously a message that was directed to me alone. The message, en passant, confirmed the warning that had visited my mind earlier. What followed was like a hammer falling upon some hardened structures of my ego, crushing nutshells of sundry latent seeds of thoughts and actions. For some minutes, possibly hours, I felt quite lost. If anything of this kind is possible in my life, then...I was not able to finish the thought. But then some process of understanding slowly, slowly, began to put things together. I was not lost anymore, not even lonely with my secret. The presence of the Timeless grew overwhelming. Thank you, Timeless...

I had gotten some intuition of the archetype involved: too formless to put into exact wording—one could just attempt comparing it with, say, D. Andreev’s (1997) demons of national feelings, or with my own Bee or Black Hen archetypes (Soidla, 1998a, 1999a) to feel the difference. But certainly it feels recognizable.

Executing timeless messages in fleeting actions, the representatives of this archetype do not remain in touch for long. Creating displays that are sometimes quite noisy, they disappear leaving no trace. Winged creatures, hermetic messengers of the Timeless, they deserve a better name, but I would like to attach to them the label “finches.” First, because of their mysterious birdlike ways of arriving, pecking, and taking off, a feel of esthetic quality, and something like quick fits of (sometimes apparently compassionate) curiosity in their code & style of behavior. Second, this is to commemorate Darwin’s finches that turned out to be most useful in establishing some basic lines of his new theory. I hope the messengers will not dislike this name, this somewhat idiosyncratic label. Isn’t it, in a way, their own will to appear to me this way?

(Bestowing this name, I am honoring, on the physical level, the pink-beaked Javanese finches tenderly chirping outside the window of the room where I am writing this paper. They have grown to be almost a part of my Hawaiian personality.)

A strange turn—on the way back from HOT (Hawai’i Opera Theatre) on the first day I began writing this paper, an old woman, just behind me, stumbled on the sidewalk and had a bad fall. Several people rushed over to help her, but my own reactions were not quick enough to be of any real use, due to some most usual egoistic inner hesitation. I hate this in myself—and what? No improvements so far—at least in the cases when I must act instantly, when I have no time to think and to recall previous incidents of the same associative memory cluster. Was my being at this point of space and time today also connected with the strategy of the finches? Must learn more about it—and about my everyday self. These kinds of stories I have been exposed to before; finches are just following up these lines, as I obviously need more teaching of this kind. Or was this last story woven in some creative new way? I’ll see one day, maybe.

The stuff our dreams are made of.

IN THE above stories—as well as in the stories told earlier (Soidla, 1995a,b,c, 1997b, 1998a,b,c,d, 1999a,b)—something very basic, something very ancient, from the very ground of consciousness seems to arise periodically to make some changes in the field of my individual consciousness. I have a definite feeling that this is not some kind of later epiphenomenon that is at work here, but some most basic, most ancient phenomenon of consciousness, ancient as consciousness itself.

I would like to state this intuition in the following way: ***To be conscious means to be self-teaching***, both capable of, and subject to it.

I must add here that self-teaching is not different from ordinary teaching. Like ordinary teaching, it leads to a new state of mind that was not previously available. Self-teaching is not inferior to teaching by some other person; quite the contrary, it is more basic, more fundamental. But certainly on this most fundamental level, self-teaching is often disguised as a teaching by someone else, as a part of consciousness arising to teach a lesson to another part. And one must not mistake the Self—the higher, metaphysically more “real” organizing center of the field of consciousness—for the ego, that is a limited, temporary center of it. “Who am I?” (Talks, 1972) is the question that allows seeing the phenomena involved in teaching in their proper perspective.

In other words, consciousness seems to be capable of self-modification (self-teaching) as one of its most basic properties. (The formless archetype of finches discussed here particularly feels to be of ancient origin.) Does it suggest something about the material basis of consciousness? Possibly yes, as there is a class of macromolecules both carrying tremendous amounts of information and at the same time capable of auto-catalytic self-modification like in the process of auto-splicing (Watson, Hopkins, Steitz, & Weiner, 1987). The macromolecule with these unique properties is RNA, and this very speculative, very intuitive conclusion adds some weight also to the ideas of RNA involvement in memory coding (Soidla, 1993b, 1995b, 1996, 1997a,c, 1998b; for some more hypothetical

further reaches of the RNA world, see Soidla, 1993a, 1997a).

One can even suppose the existence of some primordial undifferentiated unity of RNA properties, consciousness, and memory. In its later evolution, this proto-unity differentiated and gave rise to the contemporary great variety of biochemical, neurological, and mental phenomena, still retaining in their very basic level some seeds, some possibilities inherent in the primordial state (like the ability of self-modification).

A cryptic saying: When I am in the field of illusion.

WHEN I am deeply merged in the field of illusion...I can still find an option—I would name it Krypton—or rather the option itself will find my limited self. Krypton (and this means: Worm, Black Hen, Finches) will reach me now and then in many different creative ways. In other words—a cryptic world of subtler illusions is here, “behind the filmiest of screens,” ready to help me to see through the heavy and dense illusion of my life.

Click, click.

I AM reading the *Honolulu Weekly*. No, I am just pretending to read it. Yes!—now I am really reading it. And now again pretending. Click, click. My friend S is dancing around me with his camera, snapping one picture after another, darting back and forth. What a gracious paparazzo this professor has been, hidden behind his academic mask. I feel that he is flapping his wings and is now practically soaring above my head. I am trying not to look at him. Click, click. I sense how moments of continuous flow are fixed, become privileged moments; in some cases S seems to guess rather well, the moments that had been fixed feel indeed special, precious. S’s attention energy resonates with my attention energy, stops the flow, reveals (or creates) hidden (sometimes deep) structures in the undifferentiated being. Where is the real? Where is the illusory? Click. Click.



I LEARNED soon after that S's camera—as a result of some mysterious mistake—did not really function during the shoot; the film was not winding, and so, in the end, no photos were taken at all, the precious special moments were not fixed. Or were they? The finches I have been speaking about are really Javanese sparrows. Nothing is exactly as it had appeared to me. There certainly was a quite normal explanation behind the palm tree passionately waving to me (as I wrote these words down now I again saw this most unbelievable emotionally involving picture in my mind). Maybe it was a series of gusts of wind, a minor local whirlwind in the yard the tree was growing in? These rational explanations still do not sound very convincing to my inner, deeply affected witness of this display, but then, really, who cares? Illusions are dissolving in an illusory world, one way or another. RNA seems to remain for a while; teaching, certainly. These subtle, compassionate, painful complexes of experiences coming (and going) with birds' wings...: the holistic ("natural multimedia") complexes of intuitions, ideas, images, synchronicities; the emerging new creative directions for attention energy; the interwoven experiences of writing texts, editing texts, living texts. All this—yes!—remains, but merges in an undifferentiated flow.

The illusory world ceaselessly displays countless ways towards Self, towards Reality.

Thank you, Consciousness, thank you, Timeless.

Thank you, finches of Kahala.

Thank you, other messengers of the Timeless.

Thank you, Source, Self,...

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