

10,000 Heroes

SRI and the Manufacturing of the New Age

By Ty Brown, 2007

Part One

In 1968 the U.S. Office of Education commissioned Stanford Research Institute (later called SRI) to have a look into the future and report what they'd found there. SRI took it one step further and spelled out what "changes in the conceptual premises underlying Western society would lead to a desirable future." (*Changing Images of Man*, xvii)

The results were made into a book called "Changing Images of Man", edited by O.W. Markley and Willis W. Harman. You can download a copy of the 1982 reprint [here](#), courtesy of [Skilluminati Research](#). **This book is a conspiracy theorist's wet dream. It is nothing less than a blueprint for a vast social engineering project undertaken by the very highest levels of the military/industrial complex. The project, as we'll see, was already well underway by the time this study was commissioned, but in the late sixties and early seventies, thanks in part to this project, SRI was at the hub of just about every major development in the evolving "New Age" community.**

Conspiracy theorists within the Christian right see this book, now almost mythical in status, as evidence of a very long running project, indeed, comprised of a Satanic plot to rule the world. But we, especially those on the political left who would completely ignore such theories, will need learn to step out of our own ivory towers from which we scorn those "ignorant fundies" and re-examine how the elites in our society operate. For example, this document most certainly does represent an attempt to undermine Christianity. If nothing else, it is clear, that Christianity is not "useful" for the creation of the "desirable future" mentioned in the book's introduction. That's not to say that Christianity has not been manipulated in our society; it most certainly has and one need look no further than Pat Robertson's call for the assassination of Hugo Chavez to see that cynical manipulation in action. But ultimately, Christianity must go or be transformed into something quite different. As we'll see, that transformation is also well underway.

But if you think we'll need to resort to questionable interpretations of ancient Biblical prophecies to make the case that the SRI study represents an ongoing project to manipulate the very core values of our society, think again. One advantage we have in the effort to oppose this program...and it is imperative that we make such an effort...is the sheer arrogance of those undertaking it. You see, they didn't bother to hide their tracks. Who they are and what they represent are right out there in the open for all to see, sometimes in ways that I can only

interpret as a mocking, inside joke. In fact, the program of the “Image Changers” is so apparent, that it is rather stunning to me that so few on the left have written about this before.

Ultimately, this is not about some tiny secret cabal pulling the strings. It’s about how our national security state operates and how our corporate and military rulers find some variation of fascism to be far more convenient for their purposes. This democracy thing isn’t really working for them, and the ability of our capitalist system to keep a majority of the citizens of the industrialized countries lodged within the ranks of the “middle class” is coming to an end. So, how better to transition to some neo-feudalist post-capitalism than to ask the middle class themselves to embrace the coming downsizing as the beginning of a new, golden age. Oh sure, the transition is likely to be a bit...bumpy...say the Image Changers. But they have a plan for THAT, too.

SRI was an founded as a research institution within Stanford University in 1946, though the idea had been in the planning stages for nearly two decades. You can view SRI’s freshly scrubbed and sanitized timeline [here](#). Because no good conspiracy theory would be complete without it, we must note that the original plans were made at a [meeting held at Bohemian Grove](#), a wooded retreat with a very dubious history.

Soon after its establishment the institute was losing money. As everyone knows, the real money in higher academe is in government and particularly military research. A new director was brought in, Jesse E. Hobson, who aggressively pursued such contracts. By 1965, the vast majority of its projects were with the military.

To turn things around, SRI brought in an aggressive new director whose strategy was to go after the lucrative military R&D contracts. Under the new management, SRI researchers took on electronic miniaturization contracts for the Navy, electronic navigation and antenna systems design for the Air Force, communications research for the Army, and nuclear weapons testing and evaluation for the AEC. In just a few years SRI quintupled its contract revenues from \$2 to \$10 million and turned a \$60,000-a-year loss into a \$325,000 surplus. By 1955 SRI was earning half its income from defense contracts, many of them classified, and setting a pattern for the decade ahead. By 1965 government contracts accounted for 82 percent of SRI’s revenues, with military contracts accounting for 78 percent of the government share. ⁶¹ Those contracts included some controversial studies of land reform in Vietnam, counterinsurgency surveillance in Thailand, and chemical weapons. By 1968 SRI’s research program rivaled the university’s, in numbers if not in reputation, with 1,500 professional staff members (compared with 1,000 university faculty members) and annual contract revenues of \$64 million (compared with \$76 million for the university). ⁶² SRI’s military effort dwarfed the university’s. In 1969 SRI held \$28.7 million in military contracts, ranking it third among “think tanks” and nonprofit research corporations, just behind MITRE and just ahead of Rand. Stanford, by contrast, held \$16.4 million in military contracts that year, fourth on the university list. (from [The Cold War and American Science](#).)

Students at Stanford did what college students are supposed to do when word of the institute's extensive military and intelligence contracts began to leak out in the sixties: they kicked SRI's ass out of Stanford. In many ways, it was only a symbolic victory as SRI was simply "sold to itself" and renamed SRI, but it does suggest that these Image Changers are not all powerful.

Take a moment to look at the various unclassified [innovations described on SRI's website](#). It's an impressive list. It's also incomplete since most of the research was classified. Still, it's obvious that SRI was a hub of technological innovation. In fact, the very internet which allows you to read this expose on SRI was created via technology developed at SRI. I like that.

For our purposes, I'm going to confine this post to examine the projects and relationships at SRI in the late sixties and early seventies which are directly relevant to the Image Changing project. In later posts, we'll see exactly what the new "conceptual premises" were they hoped to instill in Western society, why they said these premises needed changing and in what ways it was suggested the government go about changing them.

Here then, are some of the people and programs to emerge from the SRI circle we will be examining in some detail. Many, many thanks to reader Wondererinthewilderness who continues to flood my inbox with all kinds of relevant links and articles. I am too lazy to credit each piece of information I obtained directly from her, but it is much appreciated.

Remote Viewing

The official history of SRI's remote viewing program suggests that the initial research got underway in 1972 due to a proposal by Hal Puthoff. Allegedly, the remote viewing program was an attempt to train "psychic spies" who could view locations at any distance via psychic abilities. Puthoff suggests that this idea came about due to a meeting with psychic Ingo Swann who had read some proposal of Puthoff's about quantum processes in biology. This, like so much involving SRI, is a complete fabrication. In fact, Puthoff and Swann were both high level members of the Church of Scientology and the remote viewing techniques were based on Scientology procedures.

Puthoff will be of particular interest since immediately prior to coming to Stanford, Puthoff says he was a Naval intelligence officer and then a "civilian" employee of the National Security Agency. **The initial research for remote viewing at SRI was sponsored by the CIA via [MKULTRA](#).**

RV programs were then taken on by the military and CIA directly. Many of the major players would end up founding private remote viewing companies as well as becoming New Age gurus themselves. When we come to examine these men in more detail we'll find that they share two things in common, involvement in intelligence work and a tendency to lie like dogs about their own background. Another feature to notice is that remote viewers really suck. It's not just that they aren't accurate, but that they continue to promote outlandish ideas clearly designed for

“Image Changing” purposes. Often, we’ll see, this centers on the role of the planet Mars, though be warned, Ingo Swann was able to view naked aliens on the moon!

It’s also interesting to note that the very man who edited Changing Images, O. W. Markley, now says that they employed techniques for visualizing the future which sound suspiciously like remote viewing. That’s kind funny because the remote viewing program did not start, says Puthoff, till 1972, but according to [this link](#) provided by the fine folks at [Skilluminati](#), they were using these techniques in 1968.

In fact, the entire RV enterprise, whether or not it ever generated any results, was mostly a cover for more troubling mind control related research as well as the springboard for launching a bunch of military spooks into New Age prominence.

The Face on Mars

The primary man behind the whole “Face on Mars” craze is named Richard Hoagland, who claims he was working in 1983 at SRI on a project involving the “rings of Saturn” (likely a lie, but a significant one) when he learned about the anomalous features on Mars. Hoagland and a collection of others, either directly employed by or in the orbit of SRI, not only wanted to spread the word about these interesting geological features, but to convince the world that they were linked to Egypt. Egypt. Mars. Hang onto those thoughts, though if you’ve read my series on [Whitley Strieber](#), you’ll notice the significance. **Strieber became involved with these folks in the mid-eighties around the time the abduction experiences in *Communion* began.** There was no reference to Mars in *Communion* but by 1995 in *Secret School*, Mars was central to his story.

Uri Geller

Famed spoonbending psychic Uri Geller was brought to SRI by Andrija Puharich in 1973. The tests, led by astronaut and New Age guru Edgar Mitchell, showed Geller to have amazing powers with clairvoyance, telepathy, and telekinesis. Hmm. You can watch these tests in a film available in several parts at Youtube. Here’s [part one](#). And here’s a video of [Geller cheating](#) to make a spoon bend. So if Geller cheats and scientists were saying he’s legit...You don’t think...I mean they wouldn’t have...

Assuming as I do that Geller is simply a good stage magician and mentalist who was involved in an elaborate hoax (perhaps unwittingly) then we are left with a very disturbing implication: a premier scientific research institution deliberately faked significant scientific tests in order to promote Geller and the whole theme of psychic ability. Why would they do this? You’ll have to read the book or wait for future posts to get more information.

Andrija Puharich and The Nine

Puharich did not work for SRI though he was central to the Geller testing. But thanks to that testing, Puharich, who had a background in intelligence as well as in hypnotism and other mind control techniques, was not only able to promote Geller, but in doing so, promote the idea of “the Nine”, allegedly a discarnate group of intelligences who secretly rule the solar system and who turned out to be the collection of Egyptian gods called the “Ennead.” Nine. Lots of nines in this story. Naturally, the Nine discussed the Egypt/Mars connection. These entities were channeled not only by Geller but a variety of other folks, all of whom, of course, had to first be hypnotized by Puharich.

Puharich also received MKULTRA money to go to find really potent hallucinogens in places like Mexico.

And most disturbingly to me, anyway, after promoting Geller so heavily, Puharich was able to convince a bunch of parents to send their kids to his house in Ossining, NY to be trained in how to use their psychic abilities. Evidently this training involved lots of unsupervised hypnosis sessions by Puharich and the eventual discovery that each of these kids was actually an alien being come to earth for some purpose.

Mamas, don't let your babies get hypnotized by spy guys...

Scientology

This relationship was already made clear in the Remote Viewing section. However, it should be pointed out that Scientology, though not mentioned by name, seems awfully close to fitting the bill for the new religion suggested by SRI. And since we know they were “remote viewing” the future in order to determine this, that should be no surprise. Meanwhile, the lesser known occult background of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard consists of beliefs that are very much in line with the Freemasonic and Gurdjieffian belief systems considered desirable by SRI.

Scientology itself does not seem to promote any sort of Mars/Egypt connection nor really any of the specifics as offered by “The Nine”. Still, the relationship with SRI and, by extension, the CIA, along with Hubbard's expertise in mind control (even writing a handy “manual” attributed to evil communists) makes them an important part of this story.

Oh, and L. Ron thought he was the heir to Aleister Crowley and his role as “The Beast”. There, I said it.

Sphinx Excavations

During this period, SRI sent people to do a variety of remote sensing tests to determine if there were chambers underneath the Sphinx. This was “remote sensing” not “remote viewing”, though this is an interesting confusion in its own right. Remote sensing is simply the use of technology to get information about things we can't actually get to directly, such as underground structures. Among others chipping in for this work was the Association for

Research and Enlightenment, the foundation which preserves the legacy of “Sleeping Prophet” Edgar Cayce. He said there were chambers under the Sphinx, but the question is, why did SRI even care?

Sidney Gottlieb

Gottlieb is the uber-baddie in MKULTRA and was the head of MKULTRA when it was providing startup funding for SRI’s remote viewing program. MKULTRA, under Gottlieb, also funded Puharich’s excursions to find magic mushrooms. Gottlieb had also been at Edgewood Arsenal, where U.S. Army chemical and biological warfare was developed when Puharich was recalled into the military and stationed there himself.

Louis Jolyon West

Despite having completely mocked research into psychic phenomena, West became a “medical advisor” to a private sector remote viewing program. Well, I say “private sector” but his role in this capacity was at [Scientific Applications International Corporation](#) which was infested with all kinds of high level intelligence and military officials in its leadership and basically took over SRI’s role in remote viewing. Oh and not to freak you out or anything, but SAIC also took over “Network Solutions.” Those are the guys that parcel out internet domains. Just sayin’.

Anyhow, West was the head of UCLA’s Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, which was involved in “behavior modification” experiments at Vacaville Prison, including on one Donald DeFreeze who would eventually form the Symbionese Liberation Army and kidnap Patty Hearst. Luckily, there was a handy group of psychic spies nearby at SRI, and remote viewer Pat Price was, amazingly, able to pick out a photograph of one of DeFreeze’s accomplices from a huge number of pictures. It’s almost like he knew ahead of time or something.

To complete this sordid circle, when Patty Hearst came to trial for her mind control induced role in a bank robbery, who but Jolyon West was called in as an expert witness.

Esalen

The Esalen Institute was not directly part of SRI, but it might as well have been. A center for New Age thought but also of some curious “cultural exchanges” with Soviet scientists, it could be considered the second focus for the ellipse that was the burgeoning New Age. I ordered a book about Esalen called *Upstart Spring* as part of this research. There is also another book called *Upstart Spring* about a cardiac surgeon or something and given my own ADHD, you can guess which one arrived in the mail. In any event, even without that particular source, it is safe to include Esalen in our list of people and places in the SRI orbit.

The Aviary

The Aviary is a group of government “insiders” who titillated the UFOlogy crowd for years with a wide range of disinformation. Many of these guys track back directly to SRI, such as Puthoff, or to other military or CIA remote viewing programs. Buncha spooks, if ya ask me. These men will be central to steering the UFO mythology and will found all sorts of UFO, remote viewing and “alternative spirituality” organizations.

Jack Sarfatti

A prominent physicist, Sarfatti received a number of phone calls from a “computer from the future” in 1953 while a student attending a “gifted program” sponsored by Sandia Labs and led by a convicted pedophile who would later marry Marion Zimmer Bradley. The calls would put him into a sort of trance. The computer told him that if he chose to, he would be at the center of a high level group of scientists in twenty years. Lo and behold, it came true, and most of those scientists were employed by or involved with SRI. Not to spoil the plot or anything, but he admits it could have been Puharich in a sort of “vocational manipulation” operation. Sarfatti’s not the only one to experience such a mysterious career push.

Ira Einhorn

Einhorn was a master networker and New Age showman who acted as a sort of information distribution hub for a wide variety of scientists, corporate bosses and alternative thinkers. Considered an informant by some on the “serious left” Einhorn came into the orbit of Puharich and a variety of other SRI-associated folks in the seventies. Einhorn started to crack up a bit after meeting Puharich, but that might have just been the constant flow of Ketamine provided by Einhorn’s shrink. Showing signs of a possible dissociative disorder, Jewish Einhorn had a long running abusive relationship with Holly Maddux, the daughter of a Texas Nazi. She could not seem to escape this always turbulent relationship with Einhorn, inexplicably compelled to keep returning to him. Eventually, Einhorn killed her and stuffed her in a trunk. It could have been a frame-up...but the facts are pretty damning. Einhorn fled the country and was finally extradited in 2001 and is currently in prison in Pennsylvania.

I could go but I will stop for now. But read it over again. These links are not tentative or speculative in any way. The connections to SRI are very direct. I’ll be providing plenty of documentation when addressing each of the above, but it’s not that hard to come by even while doing my best not to utilize sources whose own sources of information are unclear to me or otherwise unverifiable.

And the point is, if SRI had decided that a project was needed to shape the cultural space of the U.S. and the industrialized world and bring on the New Age, they sure had the firepower to do it. Perhaps it was all a big coincidence and at the very time SRI was calling for a “facilitated” paradigm shift, these New-Age change-agents simply started coming round. But that’s not likely, and when you add the darker connections to various MKULTRA programs, it starts to look like they went beyond “facilitating” and right into manipulation. Maybe I’m just jealous because

I never get calls from a computer from the future. Sure, some prerecorded telemarketing calls that sound kinda high tech...

But before looking into those details, I'll be looking at *Changing Images of Man* itself. Why do these guys think we need THEM to tell US what to believe? And how, exactly, are they proposing to get us to buy into it? According to the book, time is running out...but these guys ALWAYS say time is running out. Their predictions of doom, just like those of the aliens and all manner of New Age mystics, have still not yet materialized. But maybe it really is coming. Question is, are these the guys you trust to get us safely through to the other side?

Part Two

In part one, we had a look at who SRI actually is. To sum up: they are a research institution at the very heart of the military/industrial complex. There's nothing warm and fuzzy about it, and that fact that they want to guide us gently into the New Age should provide comfort to exactly no one.

Now I'd like to have a look at what's "wrong" with our society's "image of man" and why these images are not considered helpful for our future. But first, a little more on methodology. In short, the SRI methodology would have to be said to be a few footnotes shy of scholarly. Here's what they say in the introduction to the 1982 reprint:

First, we attempted to identify and assess the plausibility of a truly vast number of future possibilities for society. We next followed a method of analysis that determined which sequences of possible futures (that is, which "alternate future histories") appeared to be the most plausible in light of human history and to most usefully serve the needs of policy research and development. (p. xvii)

What method of analysis, you might ask? You might ask, but they didn't say. It wasn't till recently that one of the study's authors, O.W. Markley, revealed their...ahem... novel approach. (I'm shamelessly cribbing from the article at [skilluminati](#).)

Guided cognitive imagery is described as an appropriate technology of choice for intuition-based exploring, learning and teaching about alternative futures—especially suitable for futures involving cultural transformation. Two methodological approaches with case examples are described: (a) a *virtual time travel* method for visionary futures exploration and for experiencing the needs of future generations and (b) a set of *depth-intuition* methods for need finding, transforming perceived needs into opportunities, choosing between policy options, and transcendental exploration.

Although these “visionary futures” methods extend well beyond the conventional paradigm of the behavioral sciences, they are consistent with the canons of science in that they are trainable and can be replicated. Moreover, they can readily be used to help integrate the methodologies of social action research, futures research and political activism—a task which urgently needs to be done. [link](#)

In case you thought maybe Markley just stumbled onto “remote viewing” of the future sometime AFTER his tenure at SRI or that this was not, in fact, the methodology used in *Changing Images of Man*, think again (from the linked article above):

The pivotal event was this: In 1970, after about 18 months of intensive research to generate as many internally and sequentially plausible alternative future *histories* as we could derive from the existing literature of utopias, dystopias, science fiction scenarios, etc. and from our own unique qualitative modeling method (Harman, Markley and Rhyne, 1973), our first major results indicated that of some fifty of the most highly plausible alternative future histories for society, only a handful were by any stretch of the imagination desirable, and most of them involved deep-seated transformations of underlying attitudes, images and policies in response to problems involving over-population, resource depletion, pollution, dangerous weapons build-ups, etc. All of which Harman (1969; 1979) dubbed, “The World Macroproblem.”

A search of the literature and professional practices of cognitive, humanistic and transpersonal psychologists and workshop leaders, as well as those of other practitioners using tools and processes for accessing intuition led to the conclusion that the most appropriate technology for this purpose was that of *visual thinking and guided cognitive imagery* . Early research studies at SRI actually using this approach as a formal technique include the pioneering SRI studies of “Contemporary Societal Problems” (Markley & Curry, 1971), and “Societal Consequences of Changing Images of Man” (Campbell, et al, 1974; Markley & Harman, , 1982 based on Campbell et al’s work), the first known study to formally attempt the use of Kuhnian “paradigm” concepts in connection with the whole human society, not just scientific communities

There is a reason that these methods were not spelled out in the original book. As Markham mentions in a footnote:

As a professional side note, it is perhaps now appropriate to point out that we chose not to include an explicit mention of the more visionary methods in our statement of methodology because we considered them too far from the dominant paradigm of the social and behavioral sciences at that time to be credible as a formal research technique. **Whether this omission was ethically appropriate is now posed as a question for both students and professionals in relevant disciplines.**

Oh, thanks for posing the question, O.W. Here, let me pose an answer. The answer is, “no,” it wasn’t ethical. Where’s MY government grant? Meanwhile, let me summarize. They looked at a bunch of comic books and sci-fi novels to get a list of fifty possible futures. Then they magically flew into the future to figure out which ones looked nice. That about got it? We’ll have a closer look at remote viewing later in an article tentatively titled: “Why Do Famous Remote Viewers Suck at Remote Viewing?”

Part Three

So far, we’ve seen that SRI was able to narrow down the list of possible futures to only a very few which looked at all promising in their eyes. We also saw that the technique employed for this “future survey” were, at the very least, open to bias, preconception and interpretive error. “Bias, preconception and interpretive error” are, of course, academic euphemisms for “bullshit.” I really want to be accepted by academia, so I chose the fancier terms.

So we ought, then, to have a look at what those biases might be that shaped their understanding of our “possible futures.” And we began that in the last post by looking around the periphery just a bit. We saw that the quotes that opened the first chapter were from a mind control scientist (seeking, you understand, only to know how to PREVENT the commies from doing it) and an overtly Nazi scholar of myths. Not looking promising so far.

We also learned that the Kettering Foundation swooped in just in time to salvage this world-changing project because they just happened to be looking for a world-changing project that wouldn’t cost too much. Synchronicity is an amazing thing.

To understand fully what the Charles Kettering Foundation is about would require a much longer look at the role of foundations in controlling our society than I want to get into at the moment. But I’d like you to examine your own political understanding. If you are one who thinks that “liberal” and “conservative” are the only two ways of describing political ideology, then foundations like Kettering are likely to confuse you a bit. A look at [their site](#) will show you that they are always busy looking for ways to promote peace and nonviolent change. It’s amazing, actually, that Gandhi was able to succeed without a grant from them.

In that pivotal time we keep running into, the early seventies, something happened to Kettering, though. It went private and was no longer a grant-making body concerned with scientific discoveries.

Moving away from its tradition of basic scientific research, the foundation began to focus on basic political research - striving to understand how citizens and political systems can work together.

Some of us think that political systems are **made up** of citizens, but I digress. Kettering was also doing its bit to end the cold war with:

the Dartmouth Conferences, a series of high level discussions between prominent citizens of the U.S. and USSR which the foundation began to cosponsor in 1969.

As we'll see when we look more into the Esalen Institute, (think of Esalen as the "New Age Camp David" to the SRI's "White House") this was a central activity of all these pioneers of new thought. And while I can't verify that Kettering was a conduit for CIA money, as alleged in at least one article that shows up all over the internet, I can verify that anytime high level exchanges of information were taking place between U.S. and Soviet scientists or politicians, the CIA dipped into its overtime budget.

But those who think of yourselves as liberals, as I mentioned, will find some of this territory confusing. It's hard for you (and really, I have to include myself here sometimes) to remember that our country's elites are interested primarily in one thing: social control. They have most of the money and power, and they'd like to keep it that way. Whether they choose to hold onto it with club-wielding thugs wearing brown shirts or flakey New-Age gurus wearing Hawaiian shirts, is simply a matter of tactics.

So it will come as no surprise to you, then, to learn that Kettering was one of the original funders of the Trilateral Commission, along with the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Lilly Endowment and even the Thyssen Foundation. (Google Thyssen...when I say there are Nazi streams beneath the surface of our society, I'm not being paranoid. Google Henry Ford, for that matter.) I guess what I'm trying to say is that Kettering, despite the appealing rhetoric, is not your friend.

However, it is this exact sort of confusion that has allowed the political and Christian right to look at some of this same material and decry a "Luciferian plot" to install a "one world government" under socialism. While I cringe at the thought of having to explain yet again that whatever it is the Rockefellers and their co-plutocrats are planning will NOT involve turning over their financial empires to state control (which is what socialism is), I also need to let those of you on the left know that this assessment, though lacking in sophistication, is not far off the mark. Even "Luciferian", as much as that sounds like kooky-spooky fundamentalist hyperventilation, is not completely inaccurate.

For those of you playing the home edition, I'll be having a look primarily at chapter two in this post. Remember, it's never too late to [get your own, "liberated" copy of Changing Images of Man](#) so you don't miss out on the fun.

Before a slightly more in depth discussion of various prevailing "images of man" there is a handy chart summarizing them and the time periods during which they developed along with their advantages and disadvantages for today. Here we find, for example, that in the mid-

paleolithic era, humans had a “hunter” image of themselves. Presumably, this spurred them on to hunt for stuff to kill. That, at least, is the Hegelian logic being employed here.

But SRI says all the right things about the hunter culture and its male dominant ideology, which now lives on primarily in its “militaristic equivalent.” Why, it could “jeopardize cross-cultural peace!” They do go on to note, however, that this particular image “may be necessary for police operations.”

Yeah...down with the MAN...except for the POLICE MAN, of course. We need them to keep bustin’ heads.

Anyway, you get this sort of analysis for a variety of religions and worldviews. Any worldview that promotes (or, more correctly, is interpreted to promote) harmony with the environment gets a thumbs up, as does any religion which suggests that the primary activity of importance for humans is inner realization. Social action gets two thumbs down, for sure.

Conservative Christians are justified in their concern that this mentality is hostile to Christianity because, well, it’s hostile to Christianity. When it comes to listing the “cost-benefit” analysis of all three of the “Semitic traditions”, of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, there is absolutely no upside offered. There is apparently nothing useful in those traditions. Here’s how it characterizes the Semite religions:

The human as mere creature fashioned of clay to serve the gods or some god, as a slave; but superior to and having dominion over nature. Notion of “chosen people.”

And in the column summarizing the current impact of this worldview, it suggests that the Semite view stands as an obstacle to a new emerging ecological understanding.

They will take this much further, however. **In the introduction, the authors complain that Judaism and Christianity are no longer filling their proper function.**

The mystical function of inspiring in the individual a sense of the profound meaning of the universe has been neglected almost entirely, as synagogues and churches, the traditional servants of this role, have become increasingly concerned with social justice.

I want you to reread that last paragraph, please. This was written within a very, very few years after the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. In fact, Thomas Merton hadn’t been dead long, either, come to think of it and it would be harder to find a Western writer within the Catholic tradition who understood mysticism more deeply than he. Problem is, these spiritual leaders, and many others like them, sought to combine this religious understanding with ACTION in the real world. The material world. THIS, I would argue, is the real “problem” that the Semitic tradition offers for the social engineers of SRI.

Listen to a fuller discussion of the “Semitic tradition”:

The first distinguishing characteristic of Semitic mythology, which arose after 3000 B.C., was its radical separation of Man from God, the first step of a “mythic dissociation” that has perhaps been completed only with the full flowering of objective science in modern times. The Semitic God was seen as a male Being “out there,” an image that closes the inward way of mysticism, since what is to be found within oneself is not divinity (as in India and the Far East) but only one’s “soul,” which may or may not be found in a proper relationship to God. A proper relationship can be achieved only by obedience to God’s commandments and membership in God’s favored tribe. Not as a free individual, but only as a member of the High God’s “chosen race” (or church, in later versions) is one effectively in God’s care. (p. 22)

Then, just to make sure you get how really fucked up the “Semites” were, they explain how racism against Black people originated with them as well, via the myth of Ham.

None of the other religions were judged based on such a literal treatment of foundational texts or a failure to recognize the complex evolution of millennia-old belief systems. And while I’d agree that there are certainly regressive and even repressive elements within traditional Judeo-Christian thought, the SRI characterization is incredibly offensive and divisive, and, worse yet, inaccurate. In fact you could take it even further, and I think the authors are in a long line of those who do. The “esoteric tradition” which we’ll see SRI wants to extend into common practice, equates Jews with materialism in a way not much different from the above. In fact, there’s a reason that most of the “channeled” aliens tend to talk about Jews and while this tradition predates this SRI study, they seem perfectly willing to embrace the underlying distinctions. We’ll see specific examples later, but some have already arisen in the “Nazis from Outer Space” series.

(Oh, to be fair, I should mention one sentence in this section which explains that Christianity also offers the theme of the “brotherhood of all men.” Thanks for noticing! However, in the acknowledgments the authors make it clear that this was a sort of last minute addition when someone happened to point out this theme that had somehow escaped their scholarly attention.)

So obviously Judaism, Christianity and Islam have nothing to offer. Well, that’s not completely true. The authors are quite enamored with a minority tradition within Christianity called [Gnosticism](#). The gnostic tradition could contribute to a “self-realization ethic”, says the handy chart, while traditional Judaism and Christianity need to be “incorporated into a larger synthesis.” I presume this means that the authors accept the dominance of this religious tradition and have learned from history that incorporating and co-opting it is easier than trying to stamp it out altogether. Druids, take note!

Gnosticism is too big a topic to tackle here, but it’s rather odd that they find it so pleasing. Sure, it emphasizes internal focus rather than external and it is certainly anti-materialistic, unlike those Semites, but Gnosticism itself goes way beyond that. Although it is quite possible that modern scholars are over-interpreting the Gnostic texts with agendas of their own, it seems clear that Gnostics thought that the material world was not just a distraction but was, in fact,

evil. Material reality was not the creation of GOD but of a lesser and malevolent deity called the “Demiurge.” To ESCAPE material reality via “gnosis,” spiritual knowledge,” was the goal. And the god of the Semites is what stands in our way. Some schools of Gnosticism took it even further. So it’s hard to see how this worldview would support the goal of building ecological awareness and concern.

Anyway, it’s the horse they are betting on and luckily for us, say the authors, this Gnostic tradition has been maintained secretly for millennia:

Because the Gnostic path was condemned as heretical, of necessity it went underground, and hence its influence on our culture is much less visible than are the effects of the orthodox views. It and views like it, however, have been kept alive by secret societies such as the Sufis, Freemasons, and Rosicrucians, whose influence on the founding of the United States is attested to by the symbolism of the Great Seal of the United States, on the back of the dollar bill. The Semitic/Zoroastrian/orthodox Christian image meanwhile came into dominance in Western Europe. This image of the “human as separate” laid the groundwork for the industrial revolution to come. (p. 24)

Again, we have carts busy pulling stubborn horses, as many ignorant historians might suggest that the rise of cities, mercantilism and capitalism and all the subsequent effects on demographics and society led to the new understanding of Christianity which emerged in the Protestant reformation (later chapters do take this up a bit more thoroughly but just as backwardly). In addition, unless I am misreading this last paragraph, it seems to be suggesting that the U.S., founded as it was by Gnostic Freemasons, has escaped the ideology which gave rise to the industrial revolution. This, in sociology terms, is what is called a “very silly argument.”

But what are we to make of this call for a resurgence of the “secret” Gnostic tradition? Never mind whether Freemasonry and Sufism actually directly arise from the Gnostic tradition (and yeah, we’ll get to Dan Brown and all that eventually), the SRI authors believe that they do, or at least want US to believe that they do.

At the end of the review of these various traditions (and I left a great deal out, obviously) there is the announcement which pretends like it was not already made in the earlier section about the Gnostics. It is the celebration of the “Perennial Philosophy.” It goes on to describe the Perennial Philosophy as a viewpoint that was “formulated in the Vedic era of India, about 1500 B.C.” And they do gush about the PP. It suggests that the “basic nature of the universe is consciousness,” with which humans can participate. However, humans most often choose not to participate with this “cosmic consciousness” because they are basically going through life in a sort of “hypnotic sleep.” (Note that this language is very much in keeping with Gurdjieff, so influential on Strieber, and by a weird coincidence, the aliens who kept messing with him.)

The PP, say the *Images* authors, also suggests Human potential is limitless. “All knowledge, power and awareness are ultimately accessible to one’s consciousness.” The more one

becomes aware of his or her “higher self” the more one is motivated to continue moving toward it. Ultimately, this leads to a sort of spiritual evolution as all of humankind moves toward higher consciousness.

Well that sounds great...sign me up! But just in case...just in case, mind you, this defense research agency with money from the guardians of the ruling class aren't really interested in my spiritual awakening, we have to ask: Why?

Why do they want us to focus inward? Why do they chide the churches and synagogues for focusing too much on social change? Why do they choose the Freemasonic/Theosophical ideology rather than something like Buddhism?

There are two answers. One answer is explicit within the text. Whether or not the authors are correct in their predictions of upcoming apocalypse (so far so good, anyway) they are clear that humans have got to get used to the idea that they really need a lower standard of living and that they need to accept this as part of a glorious transformation of society and not get all pissy about it and go on strike or anything stupid like that. Strikes and other forms of social action which attempt to address economic and social injustice are too MATERIALISTIC. Too SEMITIC. The proper goal is to work on your own enlightenment. Then just sit back and watch the world evolve! This will become even more apparent in subsequent chapters.

The second answer will remain speculative for now. It's the one that conservative Christians will key in on first, with way too little attention paid to the more explicit reasoning provided in the text. And that is that the authors actually do represent a sort of underground religion with a relative unbroken tradition all the way back to Gnosticism or even Vedic India. For now, it's only important that we acknowledge that they BELIEVE they are, or at the very least that they want US to believe it.

Once again, I've run out of time before I ran out of steam. Let me tell you what's coming next. We'll look a bit more closely at precisely the ideas SRI want us to ditch such as...um...science... and then move on to have a look at HOW they feel we should be helped along toward the adoption of this “new” belief system. Playing good cop/bad cop they provide a few options, but the change must be made, you better believe it. Then we'll move on to compare what they said SHOULD happen in the coming decades regarding the quest to usher in this New Age thought, and what actually DID happen. We'll try to sort out how much of all this New Age business would have grown up more or less “naturally” and how much we can attribute its growth to this program of social manipulation....er...facilitation...as outlined in the text. We'll also consider the likely possibility that the manipulation started well before the book was written.

But when you start to understand what the Changing Images of Man program is all about, you see signs of it everywhere and in very many cases you can track particular people and movements directly back to SRI.

Part Four

Many of you who are following this series are probably waiting for the posts which start to flesh out the extent to which and the means by which SRI and a small circle of related scientists and spooks “injected” (to use their own word) a “new” religion into Western society. Please don’t worry...those posts are coming.

In fact, as you patiently trudge through a couple more articles of preliminary analysis of exactly what game it is the authors of *Changing Images* are playing, I’ll give you a little diversion. It’s called “Think Like Dream’s End.” Here’s how it works. I’m going to give you two names and your job, if you’d like to play along, is to be the first to say how they are connected. The dates don’t QUITE match up, but I think you’ll agree that the connection is significant if you can discover it before I write about it in detail.

Okay, name one is Richard Price, cofounder of the Esalen Institute. From what I read about the guy, I found him to be an honest seeker and also a man who had a pretty good bullshit detector, rejecting both Oscar Ichazo and the Bhagwan after brief stints with both. He died in 1985 under what I would have to say are mysterious circumstances. Lots of untimely deaths there at Esalen. More on that later.

Second name is Bill Thetford. I’ll go ahead and reveal the wiki level info...he headed an MKULTRA project in the seventies and also just happened to be the guy “helping” Helen Schucman “channel” Jesus to create the “Course in Miracles” texts. That’s the easy stuff. Go find the connection between the two men if you can. I’ll reveal it in a future post as we begin introducing the Esalen Institute.

Okay, I hope you enjoy your web sleuthing. I wanted to discuss a bit more about the political purpose of the SRI effort, and I think it is pretty clear. Chapter three makes it even clearer with the discussion of “Economic Images of Man.”

I’ve suggested that we might want to rethink our condescending attitude toward those on the Christian right who look at *Changing Images* and other such efforts as signs of attempts to create a one-world, socialist government. If you read chapter three of the text, you’ll see that this is very much what it looks like they are up to. However, it won’t take too much digging to see that, as I’ve said before, the agenda being pushed here is not socialist at all. This is an important distinction not just because those on the right are missing the point but because those on the left who embrace socialism or at least are vaguely aware of the harms capitalism has wrought, might also mistake this sort of thinking for something progressive. It is not. Despite changing “mankind” to “humankind” in the re-issue of the book and similar sorts of

“liberal window dressing”, there is really nothing progressive in the text whatsoever.

Chapter three is a look at what’s wrong with the “economic image of man” that predominates today. Once again, we have the weird sort of logic that it is the economic “image” of man that preceded or somehow influenced the economic structure of society rather than the reverse. That’s not to say that “images” and ideas don’t have power, as they certainly do. But suggesting that the industrial revolution came about due to some new image of humanity just makes no sense. It’s quite common, you see, for society’s elites to try to idealize the facts on the ground as representative of the way things “ought to be” so that people won’t get too upset when they notice that they are getting screwed. Thus, when we read, for example, British leaders of the nineteenth century speaking of the duty of the Empire to bring Christianity and civilization to various “savage nations,” we don’t actually BELIEVE that this was the cause of imperialism. Well, most of us don’t, anyway.

Chapter three sometimes seems to acknowledge this cart and horse issue, in fact, but ultimately makes it clear that it is the ideology that created the industrial revolution and not the reverse.

That aside, we find that the authors are concerned about several elements about this “economic image of man.” The first item on the agenda is “rationalism.” While I am sympathetic to the idea that rational thought has some limits, I grow concerned when I see an overall attack on the idea of rationalism in general:

“(During the Enlightenment period)...there developed an invidious distinction between reason and emotion.” (p. 46)

Invidious? I had to look the word up to make sure I understood what they were saying. Sure enough, it meant what I thought it meant: “calculated to create ill will.” This confirmed for me something I’d begun suspecting when I first started looking at this material, which is that one goal of this movement is to undermine rationality. At the time I called it “sapping” which was the practice during Medieval sieges of undermining the foundations of city walls until the eventually collapse. Such, I feared, is what the “New Age” is doing to intellectual life in our country. Rationality is not perfect, but it is sometimes the only weapon we have against...well...IRRATIONALITY.

Next comes an indictment of individualism. But if you think the authors are presenting the evils of individualism as counterpoint to enlightened socialist actions, think again. It’s not the Paris communes they hold up for our admiration, but the “collectivist image” of...

Medieval Europe?

Man also had a collectivist image of the person during the Middle Ages: “Each citizen, serf or

priest or knight, knew his place in the hierarchy of church and feudalism; and all emotions were channeled in community and religious ceremonies" (the text is here quoting Rollo May). (p. 47)

The text goes on to say that the Renaissance led to a "new confidence" in the individual's ability "to overcome problems and forge a life of his own" but lest you be confused about where their sympathy really lies, notice the description of the collectivist spirit found in the Middle Ages and also in Greece (?).

In earlier societies, humans perceived themselves as inseparable components of the seamless web of being which extended throughout their natural and social environments. (pp. 46 - 47)

In the Middle Ages, something like 98% of the population were serfs and peasants. In Greece, at one point, the number of slaves in Athens outnumbered the "free" men. While many may have felt resigned to their fate, this does not suggest that these folks sat around waxing mystical about their sacred place in the web of life. And there were certainly rebellions along the way in both societies.

The evocation of the ideal of a tri-partite culture of peasant, priest and warrior, should be disturbing. This image of a warrior caste protecting the priestly caste as the rest of us toil happily in the fields (except Frodo, who had to destroy the Ring, of course) is profoundly reactionary. (While I like to think of Sauron and his orcs as fascist overlords seeking world domination and thus allow myself to enjoy the LOTR films, it's hard not to notice that all the bad guy soldiers are dark-skinned or dressed like Arabs and that the film (and the book, of course) promotes this very same vision of a sacred elect who go about the business of ruling the world while the rest of us grow cabbages. Sadly, much of fantasy and sci-fi literature is rife with this sort of reactionary or even fascist ideology.)

Other concerns in the text are images of "man as master" of nature. Once again, this is laid at the feet of the Judeo-Christian tradition. I believe it was Jesus who said, "Blessed are the clearcutters, for they harvest efficiently."

A larger section is focused on "materialism." And here we become a bit confused. For Christianity, which was just credited for giving all those miserable serfs satisfaction with the mystical role of serfdom, is now blamed for just the opposite. Now it is the Christians who are driving the rise of materialism:

Where in the past the acquisition of wealth had been disdainfully regarded, at least theoretically, it now (under Calvinism) was strongly favored. (p. 48)

Perhaps it is fair to say that Calvin was advocating the idea of acquisition of wealth via personal effort and not simply by inheritance. In any event, he EMBRACED the changes that emerging

capitalism was bringing to society, he did not CAUSE them.

Why the bad socio-historical analysis? Well, because the authors need us to accept the idea that our problem in the U.S. is that we have too MUCH wealth. We have, in their words, a “poverty of abundance”. No one denies that the crass materialism foisted upon us by the masters of marketing leaves many of us with an emptiness and disquiet. But given the previous discussion idealizing feudalism, one shudders to predict where this line of thinking will lead our image-changers.

One place it leads is to a great big, “Nevermind!” For, despite suggesting that an overabundance of wealth has led to our society’s spiritual ennui (while acknowledging that we do have many living in poverty who have not yet learned to accept their role in the web of life), the authors remind us again that this is merely temporary. Surely, very soon, an economic collapse is bound to occur. Perhaps it will be due to diminishing stockpiles of food or energy resources. Perhaps it will be due to overpopulation. Perhaps it will be due to the fact that our economic system is based on innumerable short term decisions made without any centralized concern regarding long term consequences. Or perhaps it will be due to the fact that the increasing complexity of our system means that no central agency CAN oversee these processes and that any misstep in one sector can lead ultimately to collapse of the whole system.

Whatever the cause, rest assured: the bad times are coming. And our “economic image of man” is in no position to handle it. And what’s worse, there are only two things we can do about it. One, is to let the big corporations continue on their path and simply adapt our “images” to fit that dynamic.

The other possibility is that the “industrial state dynamic” is either “self-limiting” or else can be controlled by society in some way according to a new “image of man.” Unfortunately, the ways of controlling the industrial state dynamic do not include, according to chapter seven, taking on the power of global capital. In chapter eight, where the details of what this new society ought to look like are spelled out, we are told that the industrial dynamic can be dealt with in two ways. One, the “new socialism” would involve nationalizing certain industries and regulating multinationals more heavily. I’m not sure what’s “new” about that sort of socialism but the authors prefer “new privatism.” This is the idea that huge multinational corporations can be led toward more socially responsible policies by the granting or withdrawing of “legitimacy” by various stakeholders, such as stockholders, employees (whose interests always match those of the stockholders, natch) and society at large. No government intervention needed!

In fact, without irony as far as I can tell, the authors state:

It may seem wildly utopian in 1974 to think of the multinational corporations as potentially among our most effective mechanisms for husbanding the earth’s resources and optimizing

their use for human benefits — the current popular image of the corporation tends to be more that of the spoiler and exploiter. But the power of legitimation is strong, as discussed in chapter 7 and the concept is growing that business must “derive its just powers from the consent of those affected by its actions.” (p. 196)

I guess that didn't work out too well.

In the later chapters of the book, as we'll see, the authors adopt a sort of good cop/bad cop routine. Bad times are coming, they say, and so we can accept harsh, overt authoritarianism or this “evolutionary transformation” approach. As we'll see, sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between the two. In fact, one footnote from a good natured critic named David Cahoon notes that the “bad cop” scenario of “friendly fascism” seemed already to be with us in 1974 and finds little comfort in *Changing Images* :

I wish I could see this whole thing more positively and creatively, but so far I can't, and your discussion just seems to reinforce my pessimism, though I'm certain the opposite is your intent! (p. 179, footnote A).

I agree with Cahoon. Even the “good cop” scenario is problematic. Economic bad times are coming and even the good cop scenario suggests a period of authoritarianism will be needed to get us through the “turbulent” period ahead. Meanwhile, resistance to the “industrial state dynamic” is futile, and the best approach is not to directly confront the obscene level of control these multinationals exercise in the world but engage in some vaguely defined withdrawal of “legitimacy” to the worst offenders.

In short, it's clear to me that much of this plan for transformation was a direct response to more revolutionary movements springing up all over, both violent and nonviolent. Somehow, these movements needed to be co-opted and/or redirected. Charles Reich, author of *The Greening of America*, said it best:

The meaning of liberation is that the individual is free to build his own philosophy and values, his own life-style, and his own culture from a new beginning.

I found this quote in *The Upstart Spring*, by Walter Truett Anderson, which is a history of Esalen from which I will draw heavily in the future. Anderson had this comment about the Reich philosophy:

If you thought about it, this was a lot easier than participating in some social transition, in which you had to work with others, take into account their visions of the future and build it a brick or two at a time.

Anderson further quotes Reich;

There is nobody whatever on the other side. Nobody wants war except the machine. And even businessmen, once liberated, would like to roll in the grass and lie in the sun. There is no need to fight any group of people in America...There is no reason to fight the machine. (Anderson, p. 232)

And this is why *Changing Images* is a bit of a parlor trick. It adopts many of the concerns and even some of the language of the various social movements of the late sixties and somehow twists it all about so the only movement that matters is the one of self-actualization, or, to put it bluntly, navel gazing. Meanwhile, it subtly reminds us that concern for our own material well-being is, for lack of a better word, materialistic. Those who fight for economic causes are unenlightened and stuck in an old and dying paradigm. Don't fight the machine.

It would be one thing if the ideas in this book were just tossed out there like ideas in other books. But these ideas were "injected," to use the authors' own words, into our culture in a calculated, coordinated and sophisticated way. Whether by experimenting with the new idea of "networking" via Ira Einhorn, for example, or new methods of psychological manipulation via various therapy groups such as est, or by, quite literally, dosing as many potential leaders as possible with LSD and other hallucinogens, or even engaging in direct mind control techniques as were likely employed on various "channelers" who brought us messages from aliens and from Jesus, the overall effect was to manipulate a sizable and important segment of society away from social action and toward introspection.

And I'm afraid the agenda goes a bit further than rendering potential revolutionaries ineffectual. As we've noted already, the particular system of thought being promoted so often tracks back directly to theosophy, Freemasonry and similar strains of the Western occult tradition. And while one could speculate about longer running, more deeply seated "conspiracies", and we won't shy away from that speculation even though it leads us into more minefields than I care to think about, there's at least one other reason for this emphasis.

The Western occult tradition that this strain of thought draws from: Blavatsky/theosophy, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, Gurdjieff's teachings, etc, despite their rhetoric of directly accessing the cosmic realm, are extremely hierarchical and elitist. The masters of the universe themselves, or their representatives here on earth, make direct contact with only a very few teachers who then may pass this knowledge on as they see fit. And there aren't that many teachers out there. I mean did YOU get invited to attend a "secret school"? So where does that leave the rest of us?

Growing cabbages, of course.