# Coordination and Identity in the Age of Chaos

A pandemic response in the Information Age should not be narrow and top-down

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The last few years gave us much opportunity to evolve our societies. In the Age of Information, human information exchanges became fast, chaotic, polarizing, but ultimately helped to align us to new technologies and new relationships with science, institutions, and ourselves. This might radically change the way humanity will deal with future societal challenges, including pandemics.

We are leaving the Industrial Age. That age was a world of "big"; mass media, big governments, big schools, ever closer union(s), huge buildings, quantitative growth, uncontrolled top-down bureaucracy, and teaming up in ever bigger political structures to tackle "global problems". A natural response from this overdue age was to fight the pandemic top-down, utilizing a few selected experts and groups.

Information technology makes this kind of coordination obsolete. Douglas Adams already talked about how *many-to-many* communications (everybody talking to everybody *at the same time* using electronic communication devices) would change our societies (Adams 1998). Books like *The Sovereign Individual* (Rees-Mogg and Davidson 1997) and *The Third Wave* (Toffler 1980) hinted at a reversal of scale; no longer are products made for the masses, but new technology focuses in on the individual needs. Timothy Leary was joking about societies under "insectoid authority" that would temporally emerge before the dawn of a new age of space travel (Leary 197?--198?). In space, you need self-reliant units. During a pandemic, you better not rely on fragile global logistics (Dyatkin 2020).

## Copies, decentralization and decision making

The Age of Information is the Age of the Holy Copy, if we have to believe the Pirate religion, Kopimism. "Most parts of the world, from DNA to manufacturing, are built by copying (Romig 2012)." Information is copied, decentralized, non-local, hard to control. Making a copy of information is cheap. Everybody can create new information, new ideas; the democratic ideal itself transforms under the pressure of new information technology and becomes *fluid* (Halpern et al. 2021).

If one coordinating body, like the World Health Organization (WHO), makes mistakes, than potentially the whole world will go down. But if each country uses their own specialists, insights, cultures, political systems and so on, a wider spectrum of responses will emerge. Data collection, smart algorithms and advanced information and communication systems allow near-instantaneous comparison of results and insights. This higher level of variation makes better *selection* possible, similar to how nature itself works in the evolutionary process. Such bottom-up renewal and experimentation for the "New Economy" was already explored in the '90s in Stanford and Harvard (Taylor 1994).

Such a decentralized system is not only way more adaptable to an unpredictable virus; it also can utilize way more experts. It's akin to the development of the Linux kernel and other open source software; by decentralizing development and using a global communication network *at the same time* (Torvalds and Diamond 2002), we prepare ourselves for the Space Age.

This new age also decentralizes power structures like institutionalized science. Trust in political and scientific institutions from the Industrial Age is declining (Perry 2021). "The Science (TM)" is increasingly seen as having a stake in the old world, being dependent on financing and support from outdated structures. News media share the same fate (Fischer 2022). Some of the old institutions try to embrace and control the new technology, without changing their own organization and culture, without deeply understanding the coming age that is already emerging. Centralized digital money; sure. Would that work better in space or in insect societies?

**Deconstruction of industrial age beliefs**

The deconstruction of obsolete structures hurts. We are now living in "the coming anarchy" as Robert D. Kaplan called it in his famous paper (Kaplan 1994). Or let's call it the Age of Chaos. The nice thing about chaos is that some of its properties are well-understood. A complex system is non-linear, unpredictable, but nevertheless can have a few stable states and tends to return to such states ("strange attractors"). Earth's weather and climate are examples of such hard to predict systems. Current climate models and responses are still linear, industrial age designs.

Chaos theory also influenced spiritual thinking, which is very visible in "chaos magic" (Carroll 1987) and sub-cultural movements like Discordianism and the Church of the Subgenius. These currents question authority and practice "random belief", searching for the chaotic source of beliefs, imagination, and life itself. It hints at decentralized, individual belief systems, which is a good fit in a world where *truth finding* is decentralized. A multi-model or multi-reality consciousness enables an escape from "reality tunnels". Interestingly, they admit to have a postmodernist outlook, and recognize a few shortcomings – a lack of deep-rooted identity (which is the *point* of "random belief" practices).

Identities are transforming. Political scientists such as Manuel Castells wrote early on the power of identity (Castells 1997). New political cleavages are forming. Old left–right enmities from the Industrial Age no longer fit in the emerging Information Society. Maybe it's spiritual vs. materialist scientism, or urban culture vs. rural areas, or collectivism vs. individualism, but for the time being, it will also be old (industrial) world vs. the emerging space-oriented world.

It is telling that when Elon Musk, a space colonization enthusiast, bought Twitter, one of the most important *many-to-many* internet communication platforms, many people from the old industrial culture were upset and threatened to leave Twitter, often failing to do so – "The threat is stronger than its execution", would Aron Nimzowitsch say. But when they leave Twitter, they often move to the Mastodon, part of the Fediverse, an even more decentralized communications platform (Cohn and Mir 2022).

The fight against "disinformation" really is a struggle for power. Old institutions want to preserve their power to create reality tunnels and claim ownership of Truth, like how old kings and religious leaders clung to power when their obsolete structures and views were under threat of the Enlightenment. Their fate will be similar if they cannot change themselves. These old institutions, and the people representing them, need a *belief shift* but such cannot be done without a brain reset.

Leary would suggest LSD combined with the right set and setting, although he later got more interested in personal computers and cyberpunk (Leary and Horowitz 1994). Given the increasingly inward looking response of people dependent on the obsolete structures, fed by a rising global class (Freeland 2011), such a reset is unlikely. What cannot adapt will eventually go the way of the Dodo, of will fall like the tower of Babel, if you are into such symbolism.

Meanwhile, sometimes you have to banish negative chaos with laughter. Or as they say in the fantasy world of Warhammer 40K, "Cegorach ..., also known as the Laughing God, survived because his mocking nature distanced him from the collective psychic corruption and decadence of the ancient Aeldari Empire whose reflection in the Empyrean eventually became the Chaos God Slaanesh" (Fandom 2022).

## Rising above the mass product

Conspiracies exist, and the biggest conspiracy, The Conspiracy, is those of the Normalcy, as they say in the Church of the Subgenius (Carleton 2014). So, "Praise BOB!" Jokes (?) aside, the old world of mass education, mass communications and big industries also depends on mass formation, a phenomenon well described by Mattias Desmet in relation to the pandemic response (Desmet 2022) and in occult circles known as egregore takeover (Stavish 2018). While where are currently in a phase of recognizing and understanding such mass formations, we are not yet consciously creating our own "egregores" in response, as would chaos magicians do. In Leary's eight-circuit model, we are still stuck in circuit five, a passive state (Leary 1987), but he expected a shift to the sixth circuit where creative communications become possible.

The working unit of the future will be very small, but also highly connected. Human societies will become more complex, more "chaotic", more adaptable. They will be more dynamic and self-organizing, first like insect societies. Ants have such an organizational model, decentralized. And colonies are super-organisms utilizing a collective hive-mind (Wilson and Hölldobler 2008). But we are more than insects. Our brains are worlds not yet fully explored, waiting for new circuits to be activated. This might be an Age of Chaos, but from this age, *if* we survive it, new creative and liberating worlds await us.

When we manage to overcome the information overload, and apply smart filters to the incoming signals on the interconnected communication circuits, new models of coordination and cooperation arise. Working solutions will quickly be copied, adapted, and copied again, by small and ever changing groups of people. That leaves the search for stability, meaning and identity unanswered. Likely, many of us will look into the past, like the Romantic philosophers did when confronted with the Enlightenment.

## Not without roots will we conquer

Our future will have roots on our past. Many "leading" politicians and ideologues want to get rid of everything related to Tradition – the same people are equally are afraid of the emerging cyberculture. But activating and surviving new Information Age patterns needs a rethinking of our bodies, traditions, roots.

Plotinus, a leading neoplatonic philosopher, already wrote about "The One" in relation to the many, to the manifest. St. Augustine adapted the ideas of Plotinus to Christianity. This "One" or "God" was later called "Chaos", non-duality giving rise to duality, the world beyond space and time giving birth to space and time. The struggle against the obsolete world of mass control and the current state of chaos is not without pain and death, literally so; still there is some Source, change, movement towards a new understanding of the world, of our societies, and of ourselves.

Plato's world of Forms or Ideas inspired Plotinus and St. Augustine. Carl Jung brought the concept to the realm of psychology and christened it "archetypes" (Jung 1934). They are subconscious currents, deeply rooted in our minds, with an energy of their own; they want to express themselves. Each culture, each religion and each individual gives different form to them, but they share the same evolutionary source, maybe even the same *numinous* source. As above, so below. Quantum mechanics meets depth psychology. The world is chaotic, random; but structured around Forms, Ideas and strange attractors at the same time. The One is God, Order, also Chaos, the *unified field*, maybe, but the many also exists, a creative-destructive expression giving life.

That might be what the Hindu sages called *maya*, illusion, but it's an illusion created by the gods, so we better take good care of it. (Interestingly, the closely related old Persians regarded the *Ahura* as creators of physical and moral order, while in India, the same *Asura* were later regarded as evil because they created illusion.)

Space age religiosity is awaiting. The Catholic priest Giordano Bruno suggested that other worlds in the universe might exist and subsequently he was burned at the stake. A smart pope might want to say Bruno was maybe right and God's creative power is not limited to our earth – St. Augustine would probably have agreed with such a statement. Religion will, while honoring their traditions and roots, possibly adapt to, as Aleister Crowley called it, "the new aeon" (Wikipedia 2022).

The reader is invited to participate in caring for his biological roots, his traditional and ancestral beliefs, his racial or tribal identity, and his technological and cultural achievements, but don't put them to the grave by freezing them. They need watering and changing and growing in anticipation of the Space Age, where reaching for the stars is made possible by unveiling a guiding star.

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