

October 6, 2005

Dear Mr. Lamb,

As a fan (to put it mildly) of C-SPAN--- I pay more attention to C-SPAN than anything else on tv—I wish to share with you a programming idea that deals with the most profound issue of our age. I know I've just said a mouthful, but please bear with me because many eminent people agree that it *is* the most profound issue of our time.

The matter I'm writing about concerns the evolution/intelligent design debate, but goes far, far beyond it.

I'm talking about the repression of the animist world view which has been eradicated from the minds of contemporary people but still exists in the minds of indigenous peoples. As a result of this blockade, there has developed, because of our way of thinking, a conception of existence which has had catastrophic consequences which we are experiencing everyday.

For many centuries, there has developed an unbridgeable gulf between our view of the world and reality, and the shattering consequences are being intensely felt. The issue goes far beyond the debate between evolution and religion since the animist world view challenges both conventional evolutionary and religious thinking.

Our present concern with environmentalism, pollution and global warming, for example, are only symptoms of a graver problem. The problem is this: We have fallen out of balance with nature, unlike indigenous peoples who know they are part of a living system and wish to preserve it. We, on the contrary, wish to exploit it. These problems are and have been of our own making as a result of seeing the world as pieces of real estate to be carved up for our self-serving ends rather than supporting a whole living system, human and animal, animate and inanimate.

Of course, there are voices raising the alarm but they are mute in contrast to the trumpets of scientific materialism. These critical voices represent, at bottom, a challenge to our limited, dangerous and blinkered world view. There are and have been other examples of the backlash against scientific materialism. The Romantic Age was a part of the critique of modernism; so was the Beat Generation; and so were the 1960's, but they were quickly overwhelmed by the forces of reaction.

I think it is important that C-SPAN examine this falling out of balance with nature. I also think that C-SPAN is the place where these issues can be presented and debated in full.

Why debated? Because the concept of animism is so foreign to our way of thinking and so challenging to our familiar scientific and religious beliefs that confrontations between what we know and what we ought to know are necessary.



What people, books, and other works are there that represent this challenge to our dangerously narrow view? In books, there are, for example, Jeremy Narby's "The Cosmic Serpent" and "Intelligence in Nature"; Oian Couliano's "Eros and Magic in the Renaissance"; Morris Berman's "The Re-Enchantment of the World"; Michael Taussig's writings; Thomas Pynchon's "Gravity's Rainbow"; and the film "The Thin Red Line" directed by Terrence Mallick. These are just a few examples. If some of these people and their contemporaries can be brought together with representatives of the scientific community to discuss and debate whether or not our human institutions have taken a dangerous and fatal turn, you will be doing a great service.

As you know, when Darwin's "Origin of Species" was published in 1859, ferocious debates took place in England. (I've written a film script about the matter.) At our turning point in world events, where wars rage, levees break, tsunamis engulf, religions battle each other, Orwellian lies are spread, environments break down, and a suffering earth warns us, I think and hope you will agree that it is time to confront the following question:

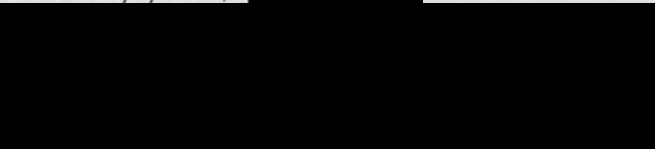
Has western man, over the past three or four centuries, in our conquest of the material world, taken a fatally wrong turn? Have we lost contact with our true role? Have we tried, consciously or not, to eradicate the world soul which has taught indigenous peoples, over many tens of thousands of years, that the world is alive and connected, and that the living things in this world are all on the same level?

As you can see, this animist view profoundly challenges scientific materialism and every aspect of the way we live today. We should question the path we have taken over the past three to four hundred years. The knowledge that indigenous peoples have gained over tens of thousand of years is on its way to being eradicated. Can we permit this? Can we change? Should we change? What do these changes entail? Is it too late to change?

These are some of the questions that C-SPAN, in the public interest and in the interests of humanity, should encourage and help to be addressed by scholars, teachers, writers, and people in the creative arts.

I hope you will seriously consider my proposal and help to develop these necessary debates. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,



Moriches, NY 11955

