

## The Root of Separation

Transcription of Charles Eisenstein's Interview

<https://charleseisenstein.org/video/the-root-of-separation/>

We seem so far from a world of interbeing right now. Like we have these glimpses of what the future could be or almost these pilot projects, these templates of how the world should be, but the dominant structures seem stronger than ever. So how are we going to get there? You know, all the stuff, whatever permaculture, restorative justice, I mean these things, we don't want them to stay marginal and alternative. They have to become the mainstream for our planet to make it. That only happens through crisis and breakdown, collapse.

The old story has to fall apart. It could fall apart in one traumatic collapse or it could be a series of worsening crises, each one of which loosens the hold of the old story upon our psyche. And I think that is happening already. Compared to when I was a kid, like forty-some years ago, I mean back then it was unquestionable that by the impossibly futuristic year 2000 we would have robot servants and space colonies, and we would live in this magic utopia. No one would have to work anymore, no one would get sick anymore, there wouldn't be crime anymore, there wouldn't be poverty. This was unquestionable. No one thinks that anymore. No one looks to the future as this glorious savior where the scientist are going to come and deliver us from our mortal suffering. No one thinks that.

Our confidence in our mythology is falling apart, it's eroding from the inside. It's hollowing out. So the surface is still intact. The structures on the surface are intact, but the core is hollowed out. We don't really believe in it. And that makes it very fragile. So I don't know how the transition is going to precede, but I know that it's nearing its end. I can't predict how it will play out, but that's the basic dynamics that are going on. It looks hopeless, but we're nearing the end stages of the old story.

Now as for how we got into this mess to begin with, you know for a while when I first started to try to understand the state of the planet, I tried to identify the source of the wrongness and it took me deeper and deeper and deeper. You know first maybe it was industry, and then it was capitalism, and then going deeper than that it was the whole mindset of domestication going back thousands of years. But that is built on the kind of conceptual domestication of the world through language. Representational language, maybe that was the error, the step into separation. But maybe it was even before that. Fire. Creating an artificial distinction between domestic and wild and allowing us to master other species with fire. Well maybe it was stone tools. Maybe it was the eukaryotic cell selfishly sequestering its DNA all for itself, you know unlike bacteria which share it freely.

So basically long story short, I decided that each stage, each unfolding of the story of separation builds on something that came before, going back to very very ancient roots, even prehuman roots. And I thought, if it's that inevitable... and it happened everywhere in the world, like everywhere where civilization got started all of the same thing began to appear. Division of labor, money, slavery, patriarchy, ecological degradation. Everywhere. So if it was inevitable, I thought it must be happening for a reason, for an evolutionary reason. And I don't know for how metaphysical or how theoretical I would want to get, but basically humanity went on this journey of separation in order to come back to unity, to reunion, to interbeing enriched by the journey. And we are being enriched, like there is been a lot of beauty that's come along with the horror of civilization.

I think that all species in nature have a gift to give toward the wellbeing of all or toward the evolution and the development of all. No species is useless. Nature doesn't make mistakes like that. Humans are no exception. We have unique gifts that are here for a reason. One way I look at it is that we have been kind of in the childhood of species, playing with our gifts and making a big mess. But we haven't gone through the initiation into adulthood that's required for us to turn our gifts toward their true purpose. What is the true purpose of our gifts, of culture and technology, of hand and mind? Like I

don't know. Yeah initially the purpose of our gifts is probably going to be to heal the damage that's been done as we have made messes playing with technology. After that, I don't know. Some people think that humans are the reproductive organ of Gaia that will take organic matter to other planets.

I think that it's something much more mysterious and unfathomable from the worldview that we live in today. I think it has to do with some of the mental or energetic capacities that human beings have that are barely recognized by conventional science, but that other cultures have developed to a high degree, that are marginal to the dominant culture, but that we discovered on the margins of our culture too. You know, it gets waved off as New Age or something like that, but the basic rule, the basic principle is that the next civilization will bring together everything that has been marginalized in the current civilization: marginalized cultures, marginalized people, marginalized genders, marginalized parts of ourselves. Those will come together. Those will be the new center. Things that were on the margins will become the new center.