

## The World is Pregnant

by Avi Katzman

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When Claudio Naranjo lectured on 'Music and Meaning' at the Confederation House in Jerusalem people were gathered on the stairs outside the hall, and some were even turned away for lack of space. The organizers, who were used to a turnout of much fewer people, did not expect such a large audience, even for a personage such as Naranjo.

It was an unusual and eclectic group. There were ultra-orthodox Jews and University professors, doctors and Bohemian types, new Russian immigrants and elderly citizens. What was even more astonishing was that news of the lecture was not advertised but passed on from word of mouth. No, these Jerusalemites were not suddenly turned on by 'music and meaning'. It was simply that for each of those present the name 'Naranjo' did something, and if not the name, then the phenomenon. At the end of the lecture he asked everyone to close their eyes in a visualization exercise. The lecture was over and many continued to sit quietly in silent contemplation.



Psychiatrist Claudio Naranjo is convinced that learning to listen intently to one another is our key to therapeutic understanding, Judy Stonehill writes

The week before, on Saturday night, there was a large gathering at the house of Colette -a site of pilgrimage for many Jerusalem mystics- where Naranjo spoke on the subject of 'The Myth of the Hero and the Journey of the Psyche'. Afterward there gathered a select few in a house on a hill in En Kerem, for an inter-personal journey that was dedicated to the memory of Yehiel De-nur.

Naranjo, 60, very charismatic, intuitively recognized in the short time he was here the potential for spiritual longing that Jerusalem holds. Born in Chile, he is a Medical Doctor, Psychoanalyst, Musicologist and Mystic, expert in Medical Anthropology, Neuropsychology and Psychotropic Drugs, Professor of Social Psychiatry and the Psychology of Art and Cultural Research. These are not his only achievements, of course. We did not mention his accomplishments as a prize winning pianist and his work with John Lilly on states of consciousness.

Were all these titles the reason that so many came to hear him? No. Naranjo came in the role of an emissary of the 60's. For better or worse, he is one of the few who stayed there, without changing. Even Allen Ginsburg trimmed his beard and now appears in suit and tie. Naranjo remains with long hair and a beard and sometimes wears a colorful cap and always leaves the impression of a man in robes, even if he's not wearing one.

"Naranjo", he says, means orange tree in Spanish. By way of information he immediately points out the Marranos in Spain chose for themselves the names of trees and plants. A known Kabbalist that he met explained to him that Naranjo is an offshoot of 'N'R'N-hai'

(Naran-lives,) 'N'R'N being an anagram in Hebrew for 'Neshama' (soul) 'Ruach' (spirit) and 'Nefesh' (psyche). No, he has no doubt as to his Jewish roots, as his mother was daughter to a family of Kohanim from Vilna and his genealogical tree reaches back to King David. His given name, 'Claudio', also has an explanation: it was simply in appreciation of a friend of the family, Claudio Areo. The laudable Chilean pianist was a dear friend of his mother's and lived in their house when he was born. The musicians Mischa Elman and Yascha Hornstein were also close friends of his mother, he adds, and others.

At age ten he heard the works of Chopin and fell in love with the piano, went on to play Schumann until today, at every opportunity, he plays Brahms. But his career as a composer was cut off because of his medical studies. Yes, he says, there is no doubt that music has a close connection to the raising of sacrifices- a musicologist friend of his has composed a brilliant Mass based on the foundation of sacrifices in the book of Psalms. Sacrifice and music are carved from the same bone, even though music is the more inwardly directed version of the two- the shofar, for instance, is clearly an example of this. And by the way, in the days of the Temple people came not only to sacrifice but mostly to hear the wondrous harmonies that resounded from the sacred musical instruments of the Levites.

Naranjo is glad to talk about his teacher and mentor, Tótila Albert, a Chilean sculptor who would sculpt in the day and write poetry in the night. His musical career began after the death of his father and the spiritual journey culminated in his writing poetry directly out of the spirit of the music. He would listen to Beethoven and 'reconstruct' the German words that were ingrained in the music. He had empirical proof, Naranjo emphasizes; they once found a book with a poem Beethoven recorded in his diary, that originated when he composed one of his sonatas - Tótila Albert had reconstructed the same poem from the spirit of the music, almost word for word.

To Totila Albert and his poems he is dedicating his next book 'The Poetry of Enlightenment', on the great poems of Western civilization that deal with the 'journey of the psyche' that is the process of awakening.

From the story of Gilgamesh by way of the divinely inspired texts, the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' of Homer, the 'Divine Comedy' of Dante, Goethe's 'Faust' up until Totila Albert.

The German speaking sculptor in South America, the man who changed his life and set him on the spiritual path was one of two of the most impressive teachers Naranjo had. The other was Tarthang Tulku, the Tibetan Lama who facilitated his awakening, in Berkeley, California, his place of residence from the time of the Fascist takeover of Chile by Pinochet.

In general, he had many teachers and passed more than one awakening. He experienced these in various ways on various journeys of the psyche. The first took place when he was 16, in a fevered delirium for forty days and forty nights from typhus, while reading a

book on Kabbalah. He didn't know then that he was graced with an awakening. But the true one came to him as revelation, when the Bolivian, Oscar Ichazo, sent him into the desert in northern Chile with meditation techniques from the Muslim Sufis. It was after the death of his 11 year old son, Naranjo experienced a rebirth, as he says. Afterwards he assisted Ichazo in establishing 'Arica' in California, an organization that emerged over the years as a cult that totally enslaved its followers. Naranjo claims that with time he disassociated himself from Ichazo. But in the beginning he had the magic of someone who came from the East with Gurdieffian knowledge and daring, and with his guidance Naranjo went into the desert for forty days and forty nights and was graced with enlightenment.

At the end of the 60's when teachers were a desirable commodity on the West Coast, Naranjo too became a 'teacher', that is, a charismatic Guru to thousands of students. Some years after, he says, when he discovered the manipulation and power games that went with it, he abandoned his students. Today there are all kinds, thirsty for therapy, in Spain, California, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He teaches them how to hear one another, trains them in deep listening of the inner music of their fellow man. He also tells them to listen to each other but not to take money for it. By the way, for himself he does take money, and puts out spiritual bestsellers one after another.

He had good teachers. There were the Indians and their magical substances from the wilds of South America, and the famous Suzuki, who taught him Zen Buddhism in California, and Fritz Perls who worked with him on Gestalt Therapy at Esalen, California, and the brilliant Rajneesh, and Ron Hubbard the Scientologist. It's possible to play 'Monopoly' of the 60's with Naranjo; you say the name of the cult and he will tell you when he spent time with its leader, and where. In each he was involved with spiritual healing, massage, techniques of relaxation and non-attachment, psychoactive substances, meditation.

No, he doesn't meditate any more. He just enjoys sitting quietly and watching, and he is also very busy finishing his next book and writing the next one.

And what brings him here, for the first time in his life, to Jerusalem? Providence, he says, providence. Providence in the guise of Rabbi Gedalia Fler from the Old City, a teacher of Kabbalah that he met in Berkeley. No, he is sorry to say he cannot study Kabbalah or anything else for that matter. He already knows too much and there's no room for more.

Is that the sad conclusion after all the study and hectic spiritual searching of the 60's, that it's not possible to learn anything at age 60, I asked. I want to learn without learning, says Naranjo in a typical Zen Buddhist way, to meditate without meditating. And maybe he's already come to this higher state, a medium of the higher realms disguised as a psychotherapist, or a monk hidden among the multitudes of a vast city. "I am an integrator," he says, "I try to build bridges, through language and experience, between all the ways to enlightenment."

IS THIS EXPRESSED BY SOME KIND OF POLITICAL STAND?

"Well, I just finished writing a book on the rectification of the world. Look; the kingdom to come, which is the ultimate society if it's ever to be realized, will not be the result of politics, or of social engineering, or of the economy. The rectification of the world will emerge from a radical transformation of humanity.

"The world crisis from all appearances is a reflection of the inner crisis that touches on our incapability for brotherhood, harmony, loving relationships. The society only reflects what is going in the personal realm of each and every one of us, what we allow to manifest, and it is very bad that it does.

"For many years I felt impotent in relation to the world situation, I sensed that I couldn't help. So then I chose to do what I can- psychotherapy on the personal plane. But in the last ten years, when I began to study the subject of society and history I was invited to join the 'Cub of Rome', a forum of volunteers, futurists and philosophers that are attempting to improve the world.

"I think that people who have trained with me can contribute considerably on a political level. Not from inside the political establishment, of course, but through the awakening of positive action. It is my opinion that we should reconsider the political weight and importance of education, of psychotherapy, of spirituality. If it is possible to change the world by inner transformation, then the first thing to foster and advance is alternative education. Because education is the oldest institution and the most out of touch in western societies. It has no relation to what we really need. And it is especially now that we are needing someone to educate us on connecting, training the heart, not the music of the great classics. Lately books have been published, especially in the circles of the new non-political left, ecologists and others, that criticize the intellectual approach, the worst of our Cartesian way of thinking, linear, the mentality of the industrial mind.

"And if all these defects and mistakes are in essence psychological- then I really do have something to contribute to society. I am convinced that this imbalance is directly related to the lack of harmony between the father, mother and child within us. This runs through all cultures. For hundreds and thousands of years the justification for patriarchal society was adaptation and survival but now it has become obsolete."

The conversation is a nostalgic trip back to those faraway years, with all of the rich expression and distant images, back to a past that is almost non-existent today. This magical mystery tour was what turned on many of the class of '65: most of whom became lawyers, doctors, insurance dealers.

But not Naranjo "I think that there are ups and downs. The wave rises and after the awakening, the spiritual honeymoon, comes the dark night of the soul. I am convinced that the 60's were the years of planting. There was a vision, but now the optimism has disappeared. In the 60's I was very connected to the humanist movement in psychology, and as the editor of 'Humanist Psychology' I was witness to the changing tone of the articles: in the beginning we had Fritz Perls writing on Gestalt. And there was

expectation, trust and innocence. There was the understanding that our first concern was to heal ourselves and the Tao would take care of the rest.

"Then the people in the humanist movement took up a new thread. They began to say 'hey, how did we overlook this, why didn't we have social responsibility?' And people wanted to shake their identification from everything they were feeling, from all the romanticism of the 60's. Most of them started communes, communities. They sensed that it would be easier to set up their own ideal worlds, far from the corruption of Babylon, from civilization.

"I think it's apparent that I am more faithful to the spirit of the 60's than then most of the people around. I think that although the message seems to have been denied, something did pass from the minority, from the anti-culture to the culture, and what was once anti-cultural has moved into a level of questioning that society as a whole is asking itself.

HOW CAN WE KNOW IF THE 'NEW AGE' IS JUST AT A LULL, OR IF IT HAS MAYBE GONE FROM THE WORLD?

"I haven't thought of it, but my impression is that it's not dead but transforming. For example, the institution where I worked, which was the only one of its kind in America, Esalen Institute, that brought together the basics of education, therapy and spirituality, turned into an archetype for institutions of a new kind, centers for growth. Today there are hundreds of these all over the world that are doing important work where meaningful human transformation is going on.

"And many people are in this process. The honeymoon of the 60's is over, but there's a long pregnancy in the aftermath. Forty years the Israelites wandered in the desert until they came to the Promised Land. Imagine that you are interviewing one of those Israelites in the desert, twenty years after the revelation on Mt. Sanai. You ask him: "Look, many years ago there was a revelation, there was awareness, and all that grace, what's happening with you now?" What would he answer? It's clear that after twenty years in the desert it all seems lost. We are now at that point.

"In science, one of the components of a good solution is its elegance. It would be very un-elegant to assume the pessimistic outlook that this whole natural process of development is lost, wasted. Let's say that human history is a sick plant, a plant that grew and grew and was prey to a virus, so that alongside the development of its basic structure there's a parasite growing. I think that this particular plant, the human race, has not yet flowered, has not given fruit, has not yet overcome its parasite."

WHAT DO THE 60'S REPRESENT?

"I think they represent the call from within in a new way. The 60's were a giant arena of experimentation, of all shades and kinds, but experimentation with longing for new answers. After the religious, philosophical, and traditional models were found to be inadequate, there was nothing anyone could do. Then they began to search for other

things, from diving and parachute jumping to get high, all the way to survival in the jungle and group meetings in the nude. All these were really attempts to breakdown existing forms and to discover new ways of life and experience.

"My impression is that people are no longer interested in new things, not looking for a new guru, not looking for charismatic leaders, because they've heard so much about everything and now they are integrating at their own pace. I lean toward the idea that their spiritual development is bound to continue. I believe that the future of the world is hanging on the spiritualization of a vast amount of individuals. We will save the planet only if there will be added meaning and alternatives to life other than basic survival, beyond solutions on the engineering level."

"All the religions of history were spoiled by society and caused a lot of damage. But then there's the tale about the hero who has to rescue the treasure from the dragon. And the idea is that we have to take the good and the bad and know how to chew and spit out what we can't digest."

**COULD YOU SPECIFY HOW TO CHEW? WHAT TO AVOID, WHO IS THE HERO, WHO IS THE TRUE TEACHER AND WHO'S A FAKE?**

"We can generalize. But to begin it must be said that there's a limit as to what can be said here. I am familiar with many "traditional" answers. An Indian guru, for example, would say that the true guru is one who has risen beyond the vanities of sex and money, and that he can bless, not only teach. In addition, there are the things that are understood of itself, like the need for a higher ethos, generosity, true knowledge. I think this is very true in life. You must have a certain awareness to know who you are. So when I'm asked about gurus I say that it's a little like marriage- everyone gets what they deserve. There's Karma".

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