*Radical Technology Revisited: Other Perspectives – Inner Technologies – Richard Elen*

**Other Perspectives – Inner Technologies**

While **The Book has a section on “Other Perspectives”, I didn’t actually contribute to it,** and the topic I might have covered – **Inner Technologies – Peter Russell covered**, and he did it in quite a different way to the way I’d have tackled it. **He considered it internally where I would have considered it externally.**

His piece is primarily about what he calls a **“Metaparadigm shift”** – a shift towards a more holistic model that has to be accepted **organically, emotionally and not merely intellectually**. He talks about the “**direct and personal experience of oneness with the whole of nature**”.

Perhaps at the time we might have thought we could experience that, transitorily, via hallucinogens.

But Russell is thinking of spiritual experience, and not via traditional religions.

He was also presenting a counterpoint to our preoccupation with redirecting and redeveloping technology and **supplying** new ones, instead looking at *the* ***demands*** *we make of technology* – the other side of the coin.

If society evolves to not need certain things, we don’t have to supply “cleaner” (for example) technologies to meet that previous demand.

Suppose we all focused on the need to **minimise generating waste**, for example, and developed our consciousness to do so – in the way that many of us have taken on recycling, but **including production processes and materials** too – and looked at deeper possibilities – less Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and more the Zero Waste Movement.

**When Godfrey asked me to address this topic I asked him why he was asking me, as I hadn’t contributed to The Book.**

Probably because Peter Sommer and I had edited the features section of UC17 (August 1976) under the heading “Inner Technologies”, and I had written a number of articles on the subject.

**They weren’t really “inner technologies” at all** – well there was little inner about them. “Alternative” they might have been.

We dealt with a lot of “Earth Mysteries” content in there - prehistoric cosmology, ancient sites, ley lines, dowsing, terrestrial zodiacs – plus Kirlian photography, and in other issues of Undercurrents we looked at other similar topics.

The nearest we get to these areas in The Book was a piece on pyramids and razor blades, which would probably have fitted very nicely into 1974’s Index of Possibilities and arguably wasn’t really Radical Tech at all.

The fact is that **most of the things we covered in Undercurrents 17, and other topics of this type have proved to be, essentially, worthless pseudoscience**. Take ley lines. Maybe there are alignments of ancient sites. Chris Hutton Squire and Pat Gadsby published an interesting computer-based project in UC17 that suggested that alignments were statistically valid. But the ideas that some of us had about energy lines linking the sites and being able to dowse for them… the **Dragon Project**, set up to research this found absolutely nothing of value in these approaches. Similarly, most of “alternative” medicine is worthless too, or a series of intentional scams. Indeed, there isn’t such a thing: if it works, it’s just called medicine.

**Just as well, therefore, that we never had a “party line” on them. We had articles for and against and let people make up their own minds.**

We also looked at various mind training techniques. I covered **Silva Mind Control**, for example, and there’s no doubt in my mind that there are some useful techniques in there. The same goes for **EST and its successor Landmark**, although the commercial aspects of the organisation are, or were, off-putting and some of the techniques could possibly be dangerous to certain people.

**But we did look into some of the areas that Pete Russell hinted at in his article in The Book and his idea of a “metaparadigm shift”.**

One place that I visited, along with Chris Hutton Squire, was the **Findhorn Foundation** near Inverness in Scotland. The largest intentional community in the UK, as far as I know, it was founded on spiritual principles (but without having any degree of official religious affiliation and happy to allow a vast range of practices). Their main starting point was a wish to be more in tune with Nature, in a quite sophisticated way that very much fits into Pete Russell’s suggestions.

Developing alternative technology was an obvious move for the Findhorn Foundation, experimenting with different types of organic food-growing, and with an early **thermal solar panel company** – **Weatherwise Alternative Energy Systems, now AES,** that today is the only panel manufacturer in the UK. They installed a group of **serious wind turbines** on the sand dunes many years ago and today produce significantly more electricity than they use. They developed a **“living machine” for sewage treatment**. They worked on **sustainable buildings and building materials** and established an **Ecovillage** that looks at sustainability not only in environmental terms, but also in social, economic and spiritual terms. They have the **lowest per-capita carbon footprint of any community in Europe.**

Perhaps these aren’t “Inner Technologies”. But perhaps they do represent a shift in the metaparadigm and one model of how it can be done.