

Nurturing Human Progress- Space Renaissance Congress 2011. By Stephanie Lynne Thorburn.

2011-08-04 14:57:36 - Space Renaissance Initiative (SRI) represents an aggregation of New-Humanists seeking fresh ideological, pragmatic approaches to some of humanity's most persistent contemporary challenges.



Socioastronomy: New website supporting the nascent sphere of Socioastronomy research.
Online Editor: Stephanie Lynne Thorburn.

At the heart of the group's philosophies and political programme is a nexus of fundamental issues that remain pivotal to defining postmodern times. Space Renaissance provides a suitable vision that encapsulates an analogy for the transformation of humanity's common future. The SRI's unified vision offers a constructive alternative to the skeptical dystopian elements of classic authors such as Huxley or Orwell and instead focuses on the realization of a new utopian Renaissance in human history.

At the close of the first Space Renaissance International Congress in July 2011, the organization resolved to undertake three specific projects presented for group discussion and approval. The projects under review encompassed a civilization risk assessment and management project, the identification of the most promising space industrialization development line and a project to determine the feasibility and design of a virtual O'Neill habitat to be settled at an Earth-Moon Lagrange point. The latter goal is a reference to the work of physicist Gerard O'Neill, a theorist central to the SRI manifesto, who first outlined the potentials for space industrial development and colonization in texts including 'The High Frontier- Human Colonies in Space', (1977).

Nurturing Human Progress.

Affiliated organizations and individuals represented through the SRI include the Human Synergy Project, the Moon Society, the Paradigm Shift Institute, NASA Goddard Space Flight Centre, Advanced Technology Working Group and Advanced Cavitation Institute for Alternative Energy, Nanotechnology. Thus, these diverse organizations all represent facets to the SRI manifesto and policy- the Space Renaissance are therefore intimately involved with not only space advocacy, but with the process of paradigm change and human progress. At a pragmatic level, consideration of the modus operandi of the SRI might provide fruitful sustenance when considering our collective need to establish a more secure basis for the future of human progress and survival. The implementation of a flexible intellectual capacity is necessary to ensure the continuation of human evolution.

At the time of writing, August 2011, we are facing a range of critical challenges internationally; our environmental crisis is now clearly not sustainable merely via rational amendments to social policy as the earthquake and subsequent tsunami in Japan have demonstrated. Natural disasters and the depletion of the environment are occurring concurrently through both anthropogenic and non-anthropogenic factors. Further, controversial topical issues such as the viability & safety of nuclear energy as discussed by theorists such as James Lovelock (1) in light of the crisis at Fukushima, have certainly become more pertinent. When studying the SRI philosophical manifesto for a recent paper, I was able to see the efficacy of the group's belief that humans need to be less parochial and more expansionist in their strategies and solutions to Earth's crises. I think there is certainly a persuasive case to be made for the view that space advocacy is not merely a trait of man and woman's inherent curiosity to explore beyond Earth's surface, but may be part of a natural process of survival. This equation leads toward the question of the productive role that the Space Renaissance could potentially fulfill, both socially and scientifically in future years? Essentially, the actualization of the group's strategic goals is political, requiring a change in financial public policy on space, combined with a significant reduction in the cost of space flight and exploration. More challenging still is the change that would also be required in our perceptual boundaries and philosophies on human development and our interrelation, or rather our interdependency on our own biosphere and beyond.

Conquering the High Frontier- Humans in Space.

The transformative ambitions held by the SRI as individuals and as a group are highly relevant to some of the most frustrating problems humans face in developing new viable sources of renewable energy, establishing sufficient living space and rendering ourselves less vulnerable to anthropogenic and non-anthropogenic disasters. The SRI is unlike some space advocacy group solely comprising scientists or enthusiasts devising new methods of technological advancement. The organization is essentially a democratic working group of an interdisciplinary nature. For the SRI, the ambition of becoming an exo-society, namely a society that has evolved sufficiently to ultimately live within an orbital space colony as theorized by O'Neill (2), would certainly demand a completely new cognitive perceptual schema. The act of establishing a space colony is still considered socially to be within the realms of science fiction and beyond the remit of ordinary contemplation. Space Renaissance evidently view space exploration as more than a potential act of conquest by mankind and simply as a progressive, attainable, multi-faceted ambition.

Space Renaissance is unique in not disassociating humanity from human progress via advocating merely the advancement of science. The organization instead has a desire to import in essence the most precious and salient aspects of human history, culture and knowledge since the Renaissance into a nascent unknown sphere beyond Earth, toward a new "rebirth" or Renaissance- thus continuing civilization and the human narrative through a

combination of historically informed continuity and necessary radical change. (3)

The SRI's press release following their first interactive Congress, emphasized a need to open new ways of looking at Earth and the Cosmos, nurturing progress and shared human values, whilst also seeking to break with limiting epistemological elements of past philosophies from the 19th and 20th centuries. Ideally, the SRI seeks new perspectives beyond the ideology of socialism and capitalism and has an ambitious agenda associated with sustainable human development and survival. The reflexive depth attributable to this fundamental manifesto for human advancement is novel and I believe worthy of our consideration as human kind endures significantly troubled times. Undoubtedly to stabilize our environmental demise, we should evoke answers increasingly on the basis of significant scientific and social advancements to reach out for a viable range of complex, insightful solutions.

Stephanie Lynne Thorburn, August 2011.

Footnotes:

1. Lovelock, J.E. (2006). *The Revenge of Gaia: Why the Earth is fighting back and how we can still save humanity*. Allen Lane.
2. O'Neill, G.K. (1977) *The High Frontier: Human Colonies in Space*. William Morrow, New York.
3. Autino et al. 9th September 2009. 'The Space Renaissance Initiative Manifesto'. (Available in pdf).

About Socioastronomy and Space Renaissance.

Socioastronomy is a new website supporting the emerging sphere of Socioastronomy research. The homepage features postgraduate papers forming a discourse analysis by Stephanie Lynne Thorburn on the Space Renaissance strategic theses. See: www.socioastronomy.webs.com Email feedback to: reikichi@rocketmail.com

The Space Renaissance Initiative is an international organization founded by President Adriano Autino. The SRI is a non-profit cultural and social association promoting the space industry, based on New-Humanist and Astro-Humanist principles. See: www.spacerenaissance.org/

Recommended Links: (Web links accessed August 2011.)

Adriano V. Autino, Patrick Collins, Alberto Cavallo. (2011). *Three Theses for the Space Renaissance*, see: - www.lulu.com/commerce/index.php?pt=10003567

SRI 4th Newsletter, 7th May 2011: - 'The responsibility for disasters is in the culture of under-estimation of risk, both local and global', by Adriano V. Autino- English language editor, Gail B. Leatherwood. - www.spacerenaissance.org/NEWS/SR_4_eng.pdf

'The Astrosociological Imagination and the Space Renaissance Initiative', by Stephanie Lynne Thorburn. 1st Paper in a discourse analysis on the SRI forming a literature review.

American Chronicle, Nov 2010: - www.americanchronicle.com/articles/view/197380

Author: Stephanie Lynne Thorburn

e-mail

Web: <http://www.stephaniethorburn.webs.com>

Telefon: 0781 257 8570