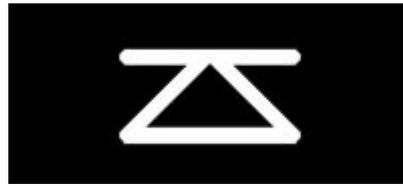


Zero State – what is it?



I could tell you right now – but that would spoil the story!

It actually started for me and Fiona at a club in Croydon, shortly after having our fingerprints taken and our identities checked on a scanner. We were there to see the band Xycogen and it's front-man Amon Zero perform live on stage in a cacophony of post Punk industrial/metal music, eye-liner and much “Fuck You!” nostalgia.

It turns out that Amon Zero is not merely a rock star but in his spare time manages to fit in a career as a post doctoral psychology research scientist at a prestigious university as well as being a prominent Transhumanist. It is in the latter capacity that I originally met him, and along with others received an invitation to the gig way back in 2010. Naturally we accepted, the only two out of all those invited, because we believe in supporting each other as members of a common group, when possible.

Taking a step back I should explain what Transhumanism (H+) is, especially as I personally once had an invitation to join an Odinist organization hastily withdrawn when they discovered it and objected to “...the rantings of an evil genius”. It is formally described as:

“Transhumanism is a class of philosophies of life that seek the continuation and acceleration of the evolution of intelligent life beyond its currently human form and human limitations by means of science and technology, guided by life-promoting principles and values.”

Which is designed to sound reasonable and moderate and not frighten the uninformed public too much. The reality is that extremists, such as myself and most other self styled Transhumanists want to use technology (in its widest possible sense) to abolish disease and death, reverse the ageing process, achieve immortality, eliminate involuntary suffering in all sentient creatures, create Gods and become Gods, raise the dead of past ages, re-engineer the entire universe and move into virtual reality Heavens through a hitech transmigration of souls. We think we can probably achieve many of these goals this century, barring global destruction and a return to the Dark Ages. So, who is this “we”? The answer is that it's largely a self selected global elite of scientists, engineers, philosophers and technophiles.

Superficially it appears to be composed of hardcore atheists but this belies a peculiar spiritual truth that is apparent not only in what can be described as its mythology but the background of many of its adherents. After one London meeting in the pub I did an impromptu survey which revealed that about one third had been involved in “the occult”, including an Oxford academic – but only when they were young!

The mythologies I referred to are twofold. The first is what is called “The Singularity” which crudely put is when a successful and runaway Artificial General Intelligence (i.e. AGI Messiah or Anti-Christ) is created and becomes godlike in its power (or their power). It is of course an analogue not only of the Christian Apocalypse but of Ragnarok, and many expect it between the years 2020 and 2060, with 2045 being the most common date chosen. I rather favour 2030, but I'm an optimist..

The second myth is that of the Simulation Argument, which is a powerful statistical argument that strongly suggests that all the above is in our past, and that we are not in the year 2012, nor is this baseline reality. That we are, in fact, in the process of being raised from the dead by just such Gods.

In fact, the whole enterprise has such powerful religious themes that various critics have accused it as being no more than a modern version of Gnosticism or Techno-Paganism. Anyway, all of this I discuss in my book *The Praxis*, which is available in conventional paper or cheap electronic form, with details at:

<http://www.neopax.com/praxis/index.html>

So, back to our story.

It turned out that both Amon and myself were very critical of several aspects of H+. The first is that most adherents to this philosophy tend to treat it as a scitech fanclub – imagine people posting technology stories to each other and (metaphorically) punching the air and shouting “Yeah!” every time another piece of the puzzle falls into place, but doing little else.

Another feature is the assumption that advancing technology, and of course the AGI Messiahs, will sort out the world's problems in the nick of time. They have a rather basic faith that everything will be all right in the end. We do not think so. In fact, unless people start to act now the next few decades will be disastrous on just about every front. There is a “perfect storm” approaching which is a mix of resource shortages, food shortages, peak oil, an energy deficit, the failure of the global financial system and the rise of technology led “soft tyrannies” embodying total surveillance. Not to mention wars and what seems to be a global coup by the rich who alone are “too big to fail”.

The third criticism can be described as “lack of community”. In such a world we cannot rely on some mysterious “them”, whether governments or corporations, to look after our interests and welfare. We need to look out for each other whenever possible – look after “our own kind” however we define it. That is, indeed, what I and Fiona were doing at the gig. It is part of what I and Fiona want from the Kith as (I suspect) do many Kith members. It is Fellowship in action.

A final criticism is the dismissal of religion by most Transhumanists. Religion, whether one likes it or not, is a major force in the world and will remain so, or even grow in influence over the next few decades. Ignoring this fact is not an option – we need to encourage our own alternatives to the intolerant monotheisms derived from the Middle East.

This essentially was the start of Zero State, the desire to create a community with an emphasis on action i.e. to “do something”. The name was created by Amon, partly from his stage name and partly because it has multiple meanings, most notably from science where it refers to the lowest energy state of a system, the place to which everything returns when the energy runs out. The first four members were Amon, Max, myself and Fiona.

From the beginning it was decided that the “something” would be limited only by some basic principles and goals drawn up by Amon, and refined by others, to define ZS. There are eight of them defined here:

<http://zerostate.net/philosophy.html>

They are the way we would like the world to be. Briefly, the headings are: Change, Liberty, Construction, Action, Community, Work, Balance and Focus. Together they have evolved into a mission statement (sorry about the management-speak!) of dedication to mutual aid and global renewal in science, technology, art, politics, economics, environmentalism and spirituality. As such Zero State came into being officially on 1 May 2011 and had its first global conference in early May this year in Munich by which time it had gathered almost a thousand members worldwide spread across all major nations (except China, so far) and on all continents except Antarctica (but we are working on that one...). On a personal note, Fiona and I currently “run” the Phi Division, which concerns itself with

religion and politics.

It is only recently however that we thought about taking the name “State” seriously and started to define ourselves as a transnational state. This stemmed from two sources, one artistic and one historical. The NSK utopian artistic movement based around the band Laibach flourished during the early 1990s in Slovenia and the former Yugoslavia, and issued its own passports. Although meaningless legally some people actually used them to escape the Bosnian conflict because they appeared so realistic. The historical example is the Knights of Malta, a Sovereign Military Order that was a contemporary of Knights Templar. They survived into modern times, maintain diplomatic relations with 104 countries, have numerous ambassadors, have permanent observer status at the United Nations, issue their own passports, currency, stamps and even vehicle registration plates. Unlike us, they are immensely wealthy.

The current ZS projects are very diverse spanning economics with Bitcoin being a preferred internal currency, a stateless electronic currency that is coming under a lot of pressure from the conventional banking sector. We are also creating Darknet infrastructure in the Net based upon a system called *Tor* capable of evading censorship and government control in any nation. In the near future we intend to create a “skills exchange” that will put members in touch with each other locally for businesses reasons. The idea being that we preferentially hire, buy from, or sell to our own people.

Artistically we have Zero State Media which handles releases from associated bands and other artistic endeavours as well as upcoming audio-visual events, party parties included! It is also shaping up to become our “propaganda” arm.

There are political initiatives which although spun out from ZS are not ZS. One example is a political party registered in the UK names the Consensus, or to give it its full name, The Consensus of Democratic Futurist Parties:

<http://cdfp.org/>

It was created partly as an example to illustrate ZS principles as applied to a real geographical nation – in this case the UK.

Then there is The Praxis which is my attempt to put a rational theology in place based around Transhumanism and its implications, most especially the notion that we are living in an infinite multiverse and also a simulation. This in turn introduces another more specific kind of Fellowship as a response to such a reality because it has definite ethical imperatives, best summed up as “Be the kind of person others would unanimously like to see brought back from the dead”.

So, if ZS is the notional “state” then these can be seen as religious and political facets of that nation. They are, however, not intended to be exclusive. There is room for different political expressions as well as existing non-dogmatic religions and spiritual interpretations of the world. The only restrictions imposed being that they must be non-coercive in character as well as being rational, at least to the extent of not denying scientific fact. So if your religion believes that God created the world in 4004BC, buried dinosaur bones as a test of faith and all unbelievers are going to Hell, do not apply for membership!

Lastly, we are in the process of forging alliances with compatible organizations which range from the Pirate Party in various nations to Heathen and Pagan groups such as the Kith, Green and Animal Rights groups. Compatibility is decided by a number of criteria including the usual non-discriminatory ones. People are to be treated as individuals rather than as involuntary members of a class so racism, sexism, age-ism etc. are all out. We also look for a measure of democracy and where applicable, compatible aims.

All of these we would like to see represented periodically under an Althing, but that is for the future. We would also like to use the Thing as a potential model for an alternative judicial system within ZS for resolving disputes amongst members. The model of Iceland, past and present, is a continuing inspiration.

A very succinct summary of ZS is to be found under the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

<http://zerostate.net/ZS-FAQ.html>

So, what would we like you to do in response to this? Well, initially simply apply for a membership number by applying to membership@zerostate.net

If you are interested in finding out a bit more we have a Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/zerostate/>

Most of the real business at present is done on the Doctrine Zero mailing list:

<http://zerostate.net/links.html>

However, we will be re-launching our multi-lingual forum on our own servers in the next few months.

For those of you in or around London on 10 October 2012 Amon is giving a talk at the “Atlantis presents” series of talks (Atlantis is Britain's oldest occult bookshop). More information at:

<http://www.theatlantisbookshopevents.com/page2.htm>