



Our focus for February will be on what is arguably the sharpest tool in our collective toolkit, namely the Creative Imagination. To begin a shade before the Beginning, imagine, if you will, a ‘nicens little boy named baby tuck-oo’ (from the 1st page of James Joyce’s “Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man”) morphing into a Man of Sorrows with an uncreated Borgesian Aleph-like sphere of Sunyata (a Sanskrit term for ‘Emptiness, the LumiNous Abyss’ that gave the Western world its concept of ‘Zero’) at the HeArt of his Crown of

Thorns. (As you can see, we’re far from bereft of a subspecies aeternitatis of Phildickian creativity : ) One of the best would-be definitions of the Creative Imagination I’m aware of is Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s magisterial “The primary Imagination I hold to be the living Power & prime Agent of all human Perception, & as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal Act of Creation in the Infinite I AM.” This extraordinary InSight is remarkably akin in Spirit to Coleridge’s older contemporary William Blake, for whom “The Imagination is not a state, it is human existence itself.”

Which in its turn echoes the German philosopher Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788)’s insistence that “We are all capable of being prophets. All phenomena are dreams, riddles, & visions, which have their significance & secret meaning.” Once one has the requisite Key, “The book of Nature & the book of history are nothing but ciphers & hidden signs.” For the German Romantic philosopher & poet Novalis (1772-1801), who lost the love & muse of his life, Sophie von Kuhn, when he was 25, the same age Dante was when Beatrice died, “My love has grown to a flame / that has consumed everything earthly.” In a similar vein, Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), a Goethe-caliber polymath & founder of the University of Berlin in 1810, writes “Everything that is receptive to the colors of the Imagination falls into the realm of Art.”

In light of The Holter Museum’s Art for Survival & its Healing Arts program in conjunction with St. Peter’s Hospital, it merits mentioning in this context that in his “Pollen: Aphorisms & Fragments,” Novalis states that “Poetry is the great art of the construction of transcendental well-being. Thus the artist/poet is the transcendental physician.” After all, according to Novalis, “The higher Imagination is the artistic/poetic sense itself.”