

EXIT THEOREM

An interview with Alexander and Nicole Gratovsky
by Dimitry Solan



Alexander and Nicole Gratovsky are the founders of the Dolphin Embassy and the NOW Assembly, leaders of interdisciplinary expeditions, authors of books and films.

DS. I will start by saying that your projects include those of a scientific, practical, artistic nature... How would you primarily define yourself? Are you researchers? Artists? Or...?

NG. To define means to determine limitations. To restrict. We don't really like artificial limitations at all. And we certainly wouldn't want to do that to ourselves.

AG. We are really doing only one thing: trying to answer the question "Who are we?" What kind of creatures are we? The nature of man, the scope of human capabilities. Therefore, we resonate with the word "anthropologists".

DS. What is the most valuable thing you have learned about human nature from your many years of interaction with dolphins and whales?

NG. That humanity is a kind of giant planetary "ugly duckling." Very frightening - in deed, action, whole way of life. Ignorant, preoccupied only with itself, riddled with complexes, boring and spiteful. But there exists assumption that a swan may be hidden in it of such beauty that you can't take your eyes off it. Admittedly, hidden away deep and securely. Including from itself.

AG. Dolphins are the strongest predators and at the same time they are carriers of the most developed and ancient consciousness on the planet. They are able to stand up for themselves, but in the wild under no circumstances do they attack a human. This means that they see in a human some value that cannot be destroyed. Apparently, not yet realised at all, not manifested. From

their point of view, it is of such value that a human cannot be killed, no matter what he or she does due to his lack of intelligence. Now, however, this seems to us a fatal indulgence.

NG. As far as we understand, they know that under certain circumstances a human can suddenly manifest the ability to be different. These rare exceptions are worth a lot. In them, perhaps, there is a completely different, non-truncated "norm" of human fullness.

DS. Is it possible to create the necessary conditions or accelerate the process of such a transformation?

NG. Even if it is possible, it is unlikely it should be done. Untimely good is evil. Until you have gone through the natural process of development, it should not be provoked from "outside." It will not take root. Do you remember: in science fiction literature there were so-called "progressors"? They arrived on various planets and progressed them with a nudge. Until they realised that you can't do good prematurely and without consent.

AG. We were recently asked what we would do if we had a magic wand. Immediately you want to make everyone wise, kind and happy, right? But it won't work. All this is grown from within, on condition of independence of choices, mistakes, and responsibility for them. If you take away this freedom, you are also deprived of the result. One does not appear without the other. To make someone happy from the outside means to turn them into a puppet or a parasite. Although, perhaps, a very satisfied, well-fed and prosperous one. Made happy.

DS. Then what would you wish for if you had a magic wand?

NG. To learn to listen to the world. In order not to stroke its fur the wrong way, not to conquer it, but to help it. It's like how true prayer is referred to as great doing - it's not about asking God to help you, but about managing to help Him. Judging by what we know about man, he has this ability. So far - almost entirely unpacked. Unmanifested.

DS. For me, what you are saying has to do with the concept of evolution as I feel it. What do you think about that? At our previous meeting, did you not once say that you don't really believe in it?

AG. Rather, we do not really believe in a continuous gradualness, as a result of which a developed mind grows out of an amoeba "little by little, by itself." Dolphins and whales, for example, from a formal perspective, do not participate in the process of evolution. They are 50-70 million years old, they are 50 times older than we are, but judging by all the scientific data, they have not changed biologically in all this time. Simultaneously, they have the largest brain, the largest heart on the planet, etc. All of this is colossally redundant for their way of life that we are so far able to observe. Sharks, for example, are just fine with tiny brains. According to the theory of evolution, what is not used degrades and dies. How then can this gigantic brain continue to exist? It means that it is involved in something immeasurably larger and important right now. Something we don't even know about. Luckily, dolphins don't experience cognitive dissonance because they haven't read Darwin.

At the same time, if we talk about evolution, the formulation that Charles Bonnet gave it in the eighteenth century resonates for us. He said that God, when He created life, placed in it the ability to develop. The realisation of this ability is evolution.

NG. It seems to us, and apparently dolphins agree with this, that humans have hidden possibilities of a completely different order that can be realised. Then it will be possible to talk of a full-fledged human. Although what has been happening during recent decades is not merely the realisation of

unrealised opportunities, but rather degradation, degeneration. By the way, "degeneration" is actually a mathematical term. It means loss of structural complexity and meanings, reduction, simplification. Death, according to one definition, is the sum of unrealised possibilities.

This dehumanisation is not at all a local, nor a regional phenomenon, but a species wide and planetary one. The number of gadgets that make the mundane side of life and death easier for humans grows on a daily basis, but this does not represent progress of the human, since his or her own abilities and competencies are degrading in parallel. Including the ability to concentrate one's own efforts - moral, mental and in terms of activity, thereby expanding one's boundaries. In this manner discovering solutions that are more viable and allow there to be more life around you. By developing more harmonious patterns of coexistence and maintenance of ecosystems, social systems, etc. All of this almost never happens now.

AG. The degeneration that is happening is definitely not a "growing pain," as we ourselves thought until recently, believing that humanity is still so young and therefore so immature that everything is still to come. There are species that reach old age rapidly. Without "studying life" and, therefore, with pathological distortions. Greetings to Dorian Grey. What is happening now with humanity is more reminiscent of Alzheimer's progressing at an early age than childish pranks.

DS. Is your new film, *I, Beast*, partly about that?

NG. It is on the theme of bestial within us, without understanding and overcoming which no evolution is possible. Without overcoming the inner monster.

DS. What you say resonates a lot and is very close to how I feel. It also seems to me that we are at an evolutionary dead end. How do you see possible ways out of it?

NG. When we conceived this film, its working title was *Exit Theorem*. Exit from the civilisational dead end that we have been talking and writing about publicly since 2012. All the terrible events that are happening these days are not the cause of the paralysis that has already happened, but its consequences. We were interested creating a work on the possibility of an exit. We have an assumption that there is a way out. It is a hypothesis, a theorem. But the proof of it is always purely individual. You can't get through the eye of a needle marching in formation, with songs and camels. It is surprising in that it has a shape, an outline, that do not deviate one iota from your own contour. This means that the one proving himself is included in the proof formula as the main component. That is, an element of the exit formula is the one exiting. Therefore, it is unique, like everything that happens on the path of life. That's what we made the film *Exit Theorem* about. Then at some point we realised it should be named differently - *I, Beast*. Because in this there is already a hint of the mandatory condition for exit. Recognition of the presence of the bestial in oneself, but also something greater, capable of identifying and overcoming it.

AG. *I, Beast* is a hint. It has the quality of repentance. Without this, there is no Metanoia - the process of uncompromising reorganisation of the brain that throws everything false away. The twelfth major arcana of the Tarot, the Hanged Man, is hung by the ankle. The world has turned upside down for him and he finally sees it clearly. He is calm, because now you can't do anything with him, he can no longer be deceived. Finally, he has a heart that is literally higher than his head. This peak experience is an explosive upheaval in which you realise that the world does not work the way you used to think and we are built differently. Here is the exit condition. If this revolution does not take place, it cannot be intellectually invented or constructed. It is not a concept, but an acute experience. The knocking out of the bottom of the barrel. Perhaps, as a

result of the very severe events taking place now, this revolution will occur and the bottom will be knocked out. Because otherwise we don't seem to be able to realise anything important.

DS. The NOW Assembly you created is dedicated, as I understand it, to finding this way out. In the Assembly's opinion, what are the chances?

AG. One of the groups within the Assembly is engaged in multifactorial modelling of complex social processes. Mankind, as they say, is the "Crown of Evolution". If the ultimate crown of all evolution has already come, then, apparently, it is possible to dismiss all the evolutionary leaders. But if the ultimate crown has not yet come, what are the chances for a continuation? Our group calculated the probability of an acceptably prosperous continuation of current humanity for more than one generation. It turns out significantly less than one percent.

The condition for the realisation of this minimal chance is this colossal and certainly extremely traumatic revolution of worldview, which implies the need to look, first of all, at our own nature in a completely different way.

NG. That this will happen to us in time is almost equal to a miracle. A miracle is precisely a desired event, the probability of which in the accepted system of visible cause-and-effect relationships is extremely small. But greater than zero. If we assume that the cause and effect are in different dimensions, different modalities (for example, the cause is invisible, but nonetheless significant, and its connection with the effect is non-local), this event is both possible and natural.

DS. Hoping for a miracle is not very common in today's world...

AG. Miracles hatch whimsically. What is unfolding in the world right now seems completely absurd. But humanity knows such a paradoxical technique as bringing things to the point of absurdity. Proof by contradiction. When a construction based on nonsense is destroyed by an excessive accumulation of nonsense. When the limit of nonsense is resolved by meaning. It feels like this limit is close.

DS. You mentioned individual passage through "the eye of the needle." But a collective exit can hardly be described in the same way. What do you think are its conditions?

AG. We are certain that consciousness is a field phenomenon. A field of a planetary scale. Since this is a field, all of its points are connected and any of them can be the bifurcation point. Speaking in different terms, "there are none distant among those close to you." You can't shoot another human because there's no more distance between us. Shooting someone else is suicide. We are all completely inseparable. The world is made of a single fabric, an indivisible canvas. This understanding leads to what physicists would call "a change in field characteristics." Alone, each must pass through his or her own "eye of the needle," but a change in field characteristics occurs only when the amplitude is sufficient. When there is a critical mass of humans who have experienced this Metanoia. How many humans are needed? Perhaps not very many, but thinking coherently. For example, one... But one that others will follow. Everything is rigidly arranged that the choice of exit, its theorem, formula, is purely individual. Only alone there is nowhere to go - like going into an airless space, because a cell outside of the body has a three-second autonomy of life. Others need to come out too. Those that don't wait to be taken out, but choose to go.

NG. The difficulty is that humans are primarily concerned about their psychological or everyday comfort, rather than their own ability to make efforts that go beyond this purely personal well-being. One gets the impression that humanity had a difficult childhood in which it felt unloved. Childhood trauma as a way of being... Which gave rise to a dramatic confidence in one's own learned helplessness.

AG. Exactly! Here's what should be done. Here you can unite with evolutionary leaders and other enthusiasts. It is necessary to build a School of Family Constellations of Humanity. Not everyone independently delving into their feelings of being unloved, but humanity as a whole. Where is papa? Because mom is understandable. She is on duty, you understand? Matter, from the word "mother." You went to business school and there you were clearly shown your mother and intelligibly taught how to appreciate her. And the father disappeared somewhere along the way. He interfered with the mother's evolutionary leadership and was sent into exile and oblivion. He, unlike matter, does not impose himself and does not assail the senses without being asked. This is convenient for matter, because it allows even talking about him to be considered indecent. It's as though he doesn't exist and we don't need this idea, "in the image and likeness" of which everything should develop. Instead, there is a black hole in his place, right at the centre of the individual. Dismemberment while alive. An end without a beginning, a bottom without a top. Coincidences without accomplishments. Only dense matter. Here, family constellations would be carried out, and, before you know it everyone would feel better.

DS. For me, this raises another question. It's one thing that people can't agree with each other. It's another thing that humanity as a species, in principle, cannot communicate with any other species on the planet, not to mention the planet itself. We had the desire to interview you, precisely because you are interacting with something bigger. Dolphins, other species and cultures, on some kind of planetary level... Is there any way out here that you have found?

NG. For us, the world is a unified, living and intelligent being. Breaking it into unrelated parts is like splitting a mosaic, scattering the fragments and trying to talk about the full picture based on a miserable set of randomly inherited pieces without seeing the interconnections. Part of this world, inconceivable without him, is man. As one of our friends put it, "man is unified through and through." This unity leads to a completely different concept of an individual, which is not found in psychology. This is an individual, at the centre of which, at the core, is something immeasurably greater, more powerful and brighter than itself. It is very strange how the great can be placed in the small. But man is a very strange creature.

AG. When we agreed on today's meeting, you asked where we see ourselves in the theatre of life. We wanted to clarify, why "in the theatre"? If you don't want to just ask: "Who do you see yourself as in life?" and need some kind of subordinate word, then you can put anything in the place of theatre. We would prefer, for example, "the gas station of life." In this gas station, we see ourselves as a hose through which fuel is pumped, the energy of life, Life itself. This "gas station of life" does not belong to us. We didn't make it. It's not due to our merit that life passes through us. But our concern is that this hose that we are should let life through. Thanks to which on this side there becomes more of it. Life, joy, meaning, love. Accordingly, our task is quite simple: to clean the hose. So that it lets through as much as possible. This is a different concept of an individual, you know? Unified through and through. This is an individual, at the centre of which there is immeasurably more - an inexhaustible source of life. Human concerns, on the contrary, are taken over to the other side. The person takes care of what's outside. Because the human model currently accepted as the foundation of civilisation is oriented in the opposite direction: a human consumes from outside into himself, scooping up what he can reach like a snowplough. As much as possible, so much is good.

This is a different anthropology. Another system of anthropological coordinates. It is about different capabilities and possibilities of a human. To quote Charles Bonnet: "During the creation of man, possibilities were placed in him that can be developed." This year the theme of our Assembly, this time in Georgia, was "The Ability to Love." This ability is inherent in each of us. It was given to us initially as a dowry. This is not due to our merit. In fact, love does not belong

to me. But the possibility to manifest it is my personal challenge. Its realisation turns a human semi-finished product into a human being.

It can be described differently. The Strugatskys once wrote a story in which the characters explored the so-called third impulse system. A human has, as you know, two signalling systems. The first is the sense organs. They prick me, I twitch because I have a sense of touch, and also smell, sight, hearing, taste. It is quite a reactive story, the first signalling system. There is a second one. It is speech. Including, accordingly, the ability to build abstract models - of speech and communication, conceptual constructs, to interpret a situation, to reason. Now a hypothesis: there is a third signal system. It is found in a minimal number of humans, a few hundred per ten billion, for all of humanity, but this is enough for evolution to take place and the Future to happen.

NG. This third signal system, which is of a field and imaginative nature, relates to a human having the possibility to communicate directly with the universe. And this communication is not just reactive, but also creative, generative, constructive. You are able to take a bearing on an image, a possibility, a meaning that exists in the Universe. Then this image begins to live, because it passes through you, and so it becomes saturated with flesh, becomes incarnated.

It is indeed an act of great doing. We are convinced that this gift is present in a human, this third signal system is inherent in him or her. But this is a completely different human destiny and concept of an individual, which comes from the core to the outside. Instead of a human consuming and excreting - a human generating.

We intend to provide evidence for the existence of the Third Signalling System in the coming months.

DS. Thank you, that was very vivid. But on the path of such evolution - do you have any understanding of evolutionary leadership in the current world? Is it more someone who says: "Hey, come with me into the future"? Or the possibility to inspire people, to open up this ability to love in them? Do you feel like you are such people? If so, how do you do it? How do you inspire and how do you bring people together for your projects?

AG. To be honest, we are not at all concerned with leadership ambitions. We are just very interested in doing what we are interested in doing. We have a friend who wrote "public figure" on his business card a number of years ago. Why not "evolutionary leader" or, say, "hope of a generation"? The grandchildren will figure it out, this is their competence. There is no need to prompt them. It could turn out to be awkward.

But we know for sure that evolutionary leaders are not the many business-like people with plastic badges on their jackets, who tirelessly stand at flipcharts with turquoise felt-tip pens, selling schemes of pre-packaged algorithmic happiness to bored participants.

NG. An evolutionary leader is someone who cannot overcome their interest and goes off-road beyond the well-trodden rut. Who widens the corridors. But not heroically, sacrificially or instructively, but in such a way that a desire arises to unite - with their life itself. Because when you look at him or her, your own life becomes richer, brighter, stronger. This does not mean that they always have everything without problems. It means that they live life to the fullest, to full height, enthusiastically, with all sincerity, and what they do, they do because it makes everything around them more full of life and less of death. Each such human is like a magnet. Whether you like it or not, people will gather around them, no matter what they do. Even if they stand at a flipchart with a felt-tip pen.

DS. It is as if what you say contains some kind of hints. Sincerity of experiencing, the ability to love, a certain transparency, permeability, letting something greater pass through oneself. To what extent is this something that can be developed in oneself by some effort, without expecting that "maybe it will happen by itself"?

AG. On the one hand, there are verbs that do not make sense in the imperative mood. For example, "love" or "believe." Even I can't say to myself that, "I don't believe in anything, but from next week I will believe." No boss, no coercion can force a person to do this. It can only happen from within. Only through. On the other hand, Merab Mamardashvili said that a person is not something frozen, but a moment of ultimate effort to go beyond oneself.

What constitutes such an effort now, when, it would seem, nothing personally depends on a human - like a grain of sand in an avalanche rushing down a slope. Where is the notorious freedom of choice when spinning in this avalanche, like in a washing machine? What can one choose? However, one can choose. A human can choose what to think about and what to think. Choose what is important. Ultimately, choose oneself. In the current centrifuge, in times such as now, although also in all others, this is the most difficult effort. But it's enough.

This is the exit through the rabbit hole. Because when you choose yourself, the avalanche in which you are a grain of sand loses its power over you. A few years ago, when we met with leading researchers into social insects, we talked about ant circles or "mills of death." Now this story has been widely replicated. But let's recall it. There is a leader that runs frantically, smelling of pheromones so strongly that the whole enchanted anthill rushes after him, thinking that he knows best, and they all rush in a circle like this until they fall dead from exhaustion. That's leadership... It is very difficult to resist various kinds of pheromones. In one European country there once existed (for a very short time, however) the Order "For Victory in Defiance of an Order." Because if everyone follows a nonsensical order, it may turn out that in the finale there will be no one to give orders to. Do you remember, one Russian poet in a foreign land once said: "The only thing to be afraid of is the one who says: I know what to do"? So, here "the art of remaining in the minority" is perhaps the most important thing.

For this reason, we have recently formulated for ourselves a topic that is extremely interesting now - the "rules of exceptions." Research and practice of exceptions to the rules. This is the doorway to Narnia. There is "normality," or what is described by a set of norms, within which everything has already been trampled down, and the "mill of death" is already in full spin. But there are exceptions to the rules and, perhaps, in these exceptions lies hope.

NG. It is obvious that now in all countries (civilisation is something global) the screws are being tightened so that everything that is an exception to the rule is, if possible, banned, cut out, "cured." The system, having exhausted itself, defends itself hysterically, blacking out everything that differs from the canon. It can no longer patch up the holes in the walls, it simply drives people away from them, because there, behind the wall, is life. The exceptions are holes in the wall. Doorways. That's why we created a bureau of exceptions, the "White Hole." Not a black hole, where everything is sucked in, but a white one, where light seems to beat from out of nowhere. An agency for travel through rabbit holes. And we affirm that the door to Narnia is right where you are. One has only to carefully tap the walls...

DS. Yes, this is an unusual approach to travel. In that case, let me make an inversion of the process that is happening now, in which I ask something, you answer, and readers receive your answers. What is the most important question you could ask them?

NG. We once imagined a different civilisation, in all respects except one, exactly the same as ours. Only one small detail made it completely different: their form of greeting was not “how is life?” Not, “what do you get from life? But, "what does it get from you?” “What do you do for it?” “What do you feed it?” “What do you give it?” “What do you please life with?” This is the question.

AG. In this regard, returning to the topic of evolutionary leaders. Today, it is definitely not the so-called "experts" nor “experienced connoisseurs.” Experience is always an extrapolation of the past, its reanimation. Once the past is complete and realised, there is no way to extrapolate it further. An expert is like a caterpillar that teaches you how to crawl correctly, but there is nowhere else to crawl. And it is not even able to imagine flight - it cannot be obtained from its caterpillar brain in any way. So, an experienced connoisseur today is someone who knows how to reproduce the path that led to a dead end.

Whereas attentive amateurs will come out of it, not afraid of a lack of experience. People who dare to open a door that is not marked on the architectural plans of the cocooned building that has turned itself into a fortress. Capable of taking a bearing on the way out through what knocks inside of them - beyond the slogans and signs of the loud apocalyptic consensus. And with confidence move towards this bearing.

DS. I think that’s a great place to end.

NG. Yes. In order to begin. Thank you.