

DYNAMIC HUMANISM

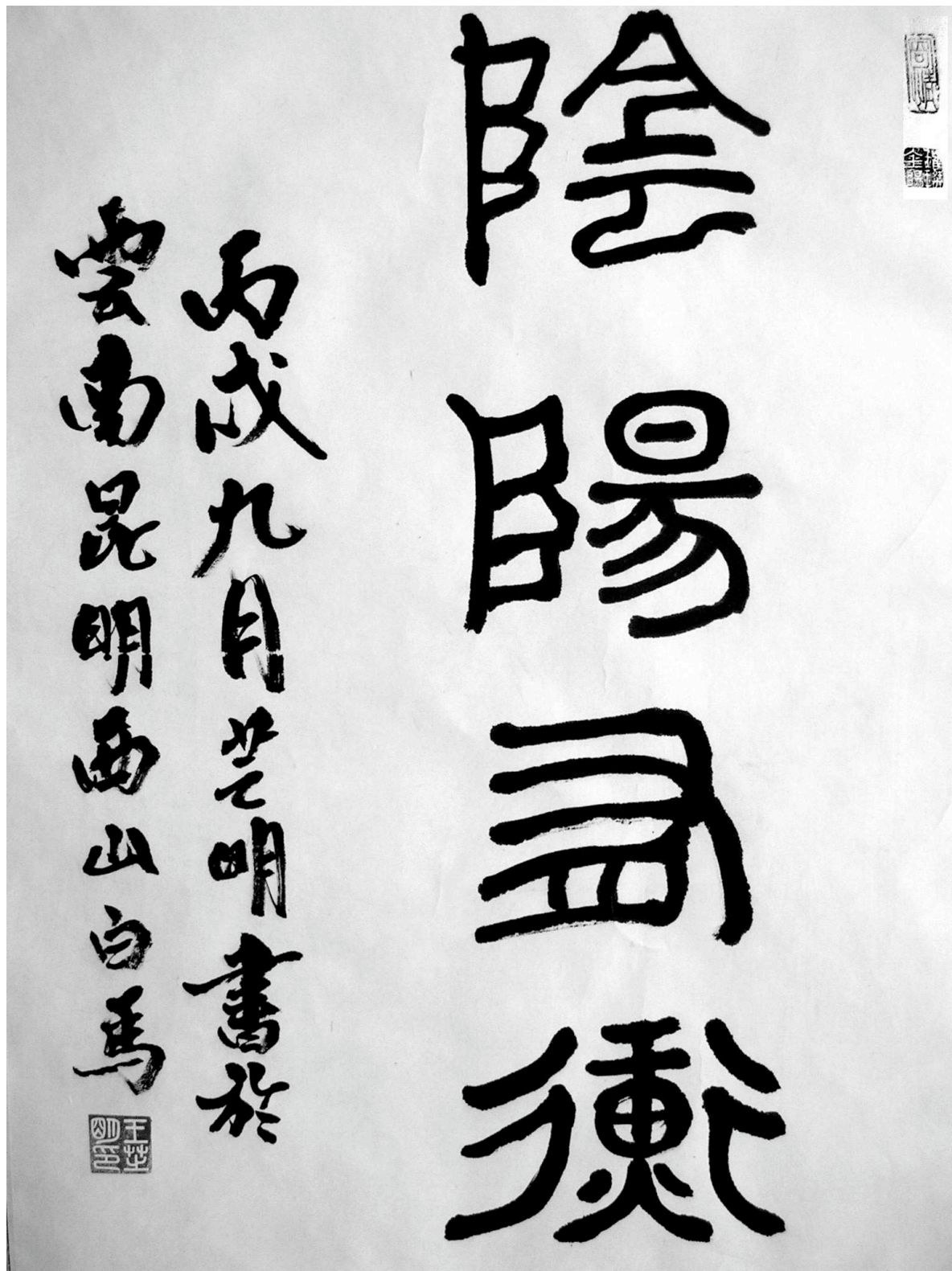
BALANCING COMPLEMENTARY HUMAN PERSPECTIVES AND MENTAL FACULTIES

Science and Spirituality
Intellect and Intuition

An Essay



Thomas A. Burns, Ph.D.



Above is a black and white photograph of an old style calligraphic painting created especially for the author and this work by painter and calligrapher Wang Zhiming of Baima, Xishan, Kunming, Yunnan, China, 2006.

Explanation: The four main characters are: Yin, Yang, You, and Heng, read top to bottom. The meaning of the calligraphy is that everything in the universe and in life has two sides – Positive and Negative [Yin -Yang]. The two sides are opposite to each other but at the same time they depend on each other, contain each other, transform each other, and restrict each other. “You” represents the natural and human force to sustain balance, and “Heng” means balance. So, the overall meaning of Zhiming’s calligraphy is that our most productive position as humans in life is to seek balance in all things by aligning ourselves with the natural force for balance while recognizing that the essence of everything in our existence contains simultaneously both positive and negative being. Both sides are always present and in balance as transformations of one another. Our challenge as humans is to recognize the dual nature of reality and to locate ourselves and live balanced lives from within this dynamic awareness.

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DEDICATION

TO

INGER

Who has enormously enriched my life adventure for 45 years and counting,
Who has attended the slow birth of Dynamic Humanism through every iteration,
Who embodies the Balance this essay recommends much more so than myself,

Takk for Alt!

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INTRODUCTION

Dynamic Humanism is an extended essay in three parts.

In Part One I first suggest the Basic Knowledge Framework that is our launching pad for asking questions about human existence, human capability, and the reality humans inhabit. In the central section of Part One, I discuss the social and cultural need for a satisfactory solution to the critical challenge which now faces the human species – to resolve the conflict between secular humanism and religious fundamentalism. This conflict in its many forms currently puts the species and its future at significant risk, and I argue that this conflict is in fact unnecessary. I propose Dynamic Humanism as the basis for this resolution. In the third section of Part One, I outline the role of Art in Dynamic Humanism, art in the most general sense being a central interest in my personal life and professional career.

In Part Two I offer a detailed presentation of the Material – Spiritual Perspective Continuum. I propose this continuum as a way to heuristically encapsulate reality and human capability – a worldview that encourages balanced and dynamic development of human intellect and intuition. Where Part One has a social focus, Part Two is addressed to the individual trying to make life choices that can lead to optimal development within Western or American Culture. I have developed the Material – Spiritual Perspective Continuum Chart [pp. 28-29] to provide a two-page overview of the proposed dynamic Worldview, and I have cited the letter and number identifiers for sections in the chart to key the discussion in the text to this Chart.

In Part Three I discuss the role of emotion in providing the positive or negative charge which infuses the worldview continuum with differential value and which motivates action. I summarize the discussion in the Continuum of Emotions section in a Chart [p. 62] and explore the extent and implications of the overlay between the Material – Spiritual Perspective Continuum and the Continuum of Emotions.

Part Two of this essay is something that I have developed and refined over the past 30 years. Part One is an application of the view presented in Part Two to the domain of society and culture, which I have been developing over the last three years. The Continuum of Emotions part of the essay has emerged only in the last nine months. While I regard what I have to say about emotions as a work in progress, I nevertheless recognize the crucial role emotion plays in behavior, life, society and culture. As a result, I wanted to at least make a start on exploring the connections between the thoughts and conclusions from the worldview conception and a consideration of the role emotions play in this worldview.

Background

In a sense, this essay is a way to frame the thoughts about life and culture that my professional career as a social scientist and my personal life have evoked to this point in my own development. So that you have a sense of where I am coming from in this essay and the range of experience that has formed the foundation for this document, I offer a little background about myself. I began putting this essay together in 1998 at age 57, after retiring from academia and entering the pragmatic world of small community dynamics in Chiloquin, Oregon – a community torn by differences in cultural, historical and ecological visions. Facing real world challenges for a few years allowed my thoughts to clarify and convinced me that there was a central thread to my own development and career, which I could share at least with those personally close to me. If nothing else, this document can offer a glimpse of

the expansive rambles that go on in the head of one mostly 20th century American father, husband, friend, and social scientist. I have added Parts One and Three and updated Part Two with various revisions to my current age of 69 [2011].

I am sharing these ideas – particularly with my children – in the hope that my guesses about how reality and life can best be understood may make their search more efficient and productive. My concern is that they not spend undue time covering old ground, but rather that they have an opportunity to carry on, refine their own ideas, and apply the perspective they derive to meaningful effect.

Although initially trained in English Literature [BA, 1963; MA, 1965], I have spent my professional life as a social scientist reading, writing, teaching, researching, and thinking about American culture, especially the traditional arts and religion. I am fortunate that my discipline of Folklore is extraordinarily eclectic, exposing me to the theories and perspectives of most of the humanities and social sciences. I emerged from my own Ph.D. training in 1971 as a committed secular humanist, rationalist, intellectual, relativist, and positivist. I was privileged during the first six years of my 20-year academic career to teach 15 different courses at the graduate level across most of the range of theory in social science. This teaching and the reading associated with it reinforced a commitment to taking a broad point of view in trying to understand human expressive behavior. My research, especially four years producing a detailed developmental life history of a spiritual healer and ten years studying a Black Pentecostal church community in the inner city, forced me to stretch my conception of reality and human capability. The phenomena I encountered on a regular basis over this last 15 year period of teaching, reading, and conducting research required me to consider a radically different perspective, at least as compared to the one I emerged with as a newly “hatched” Ph.D. It seems change is possible, even for a hard-nosed positivist.

Fortunately, both the spiritual healer I worked with and the pastor and assistant pastor of the inner city Black church I studied were not literal believers, even where they utilized the literal belief of their clients/congregants to achieve the results they sought. In this regard, the pastors of the church community, for example, regarded the Bible as a means to free church members to the power and utility of the holy spirit that they regarded as dwelling within each person. So empowered, these members could rise above the limitations and disappointments of their lives, take charge of their destinies, and live their lives more fully, completely and successfully. While most of these church members depended on literal belief in Jesus and the Bible to achieve this goal, the pastors recognized that the belief of their congregants was not an end in itself but a means to evoke and activate capabilities that these members were not fully aware they possessed. Faith was the means to break through and activate these human capabilities, and the church community was there to provide each member with support for developing and applying these new found capacities to improve themselves and their lives.

My challenge in interpreting both this church community and the spiritual healer with whom I worked was ultimately not to reduce them to fit existing theories. Indeed, I came to regard these standard theories, singly or in combination, as inadequate to account for what was occurring. I found myself obliged to try to find a way to retain my commitment to humanism and to the intellect while recognizing non-rational human capabilities [not just emotion] as real and as exposing and engaging reality in a different way and to different effect. Reading in shamanism, theoretical physics, cosmology, visual thinking, hemispheric brain specialization,

personality theory, developmental psychology, human evolution, cultural development, symbolic anthropology, creativity, parapsychology, mysticism in the great religions, animism in aboriginal religions, the religious experience, and meditation combined over time to form the foundation for positing the Intuitive as a basic human faculty and an equal to human Intellect. Corresponding to this prominent place for Intuition, the Spiritual [not religious] perspective emerged as fundamental in understanding the way humans conceive reality, engage life experiences, and seek meaning in life. Again, the Spiritual Perspective emerged as the equal of the Material Perspective. Moreover, I came to the awareness that it is possible [even desirable] to understand intellectually the necessity of including the Intuitive and the Emotive in an empirical model of human capability and the reality it exposes. This synthesis of the intuitive and intellectual and the spiritual and material is the basis for most of the thoughts I offer in this essay.

Two Cautions

Most readers will benefit greatly by exposing themselves to a small section of this essay at a time and allowing for absorption and reflection. It takes time to engage the discussion and to enter the debate that this essay is intended to raise. In this regard, speed-readers are excused, unless they plan to return for full consumption.

It is important that the limitations of our lexicon – especially as regards reference to the non-rational or non-intellectual faculties of the human mind – do not get in the way of understanding what it is that I am trying to communicate in this essay. The term “intuition” may raise connotations for some that are not useful in this respect. Simply put, I could find no other term as suitable. It is not the term that is important. Select a better one if you think you have one and substitute it to refer to the zone of the non-reflexive, non-impulsive, non-rational, non-emotive, and non-descriptive [literal recall] capabilities of humans. If you find it difficult to locate these capabilities, consider the importance of kinetic imagery [figurative thought, imagination, creative imagery] for most people in seeking solutions to their needs or problems. Consider the centrality of the associative [analogical] mental process in memory, dream, play, art, and social conversation. Consider the underlying process that leads to what we call “inspiration.” Consider how important these processes are in human creativity, ingenuity, insight, and innovation. These are not mental processes that are governed by logic or reason, though they may be combined or interlaced with the logical [intellectual] process. These are the kinds of valuable mental capabilities that I am including under the term “intuition.” Unfortunately, in our culture we tend to overestimate the extent to which we use the intellectual process and to underestimate the extent to which we utilize intuitive processes. I hope this clarifies what I intend when I refer to “intuition” or “the intuitive.”

Documentation

As a social scientist, I tend to operate in a reverse manner as compared to many other scholars. In facing a research challenge, I limit my reading to overview works, looking only for a general conceptual framework. In this way, I am assured a relatively independent exploration, not unduly constrained by the conclusions of those who have preceded me. Once I have developed my own thoughts in detail, I examine the relevant literature, which sometimes confirms what I have produced – though usually in an interestingly different way. I honor all who have gone before me and contributed before or after the fact to the quality of my own thoughts. Since this is a personal offering – an essay in the true sense of the word, I have made no effort to document these myriad preceding and paralleling “footsteps.” Those interested will find a very select list of overview works that provide access to the wealth of relevant literature in the “Reference” section of the www.Dynamic-Humanism.com website.

PART ONE

THE BASIC KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORK

In this opening section, I attempt to outline the basic knowledge framework that I think informed humans – at least at the present time in western culture – should know and respect before asking any “Why” questions concerning the nature of human capabilities, the significance of human existence, or the nature of the world/universe. Trying to answer fundamental “why” questions always has a context and the answers reflect the state of knowledge in that context. Without launching this inquiry by recognizing this basic knowledge platform, we would be operating in a vacuum, and we would have to independently exceed the collective mind of humankind through the ages in order to make a start. As history reveals, developing an accurate understanding of the world is a very challenging task of discovery, and there are virtually an infinite number of ways to get off track. So, we must begin by stating very briefly the basics of what we know presently in essential areas of knowledge, basics which influence how we answer Big Picture questions.

Unfortunately, when it comes to awareness of what is known about the development of culture, the biology and development of the human species, and the Universe and the laws that govern it, most of even educated humanity is extraordinarily under informed. I am not talking about understanding the mathematical or evidential intricacies of this knowledge. I am talking about the basic facts and principles that are revealed in this knowledge set, which is constantly being adjusted and updated. Even less is recognized by most of educated humanity concerning the major implications of this knowledge for considering questions of the significance of human existence and the goals appropriate for an individual human life.

It is a great shame – even a tragedy – that modern western culture is so poor at instilling the basics of what is known about the Universe and humanity in its citizenry and exciting that citizenry with the important advances that are continually being made. In behalf of the scientific pursuit itself, science and the media have all but vacated their responsibility to educate the general public and to keep that public up to date with respect to these basics. Ironically, the advance of science itself is significantly retarded by the fact that so much of its surrounding population does not understand and consequently does not support at an appropriate level many of science’s explorations. Indeed, some of this population is so ignorant that it feels comfortable with challenging some of these basics and even the value of the scientific process itself. It is intolerable to have a significant and sometimes influential part of the general population operating in such “darkness” while science itself is making ever increasing and extraordinary strides. In spite of the greatness of its scientists, the American population as a whole is in this regard not just behind in science; it borders on basic social, natural, and physical science illiteracy.

In considering what are the basics, we must first recognize that all of this essential knowledge arises in the context of the long historical presence of all of the established “great” religions. Having arisen before formal scientific investigation emerged, these religions reflect a worldview that is pre-scientific. These religions focus on supernatural cause as essential and primary. In the beginning, nascent scientific investigation with its naturalistic perspective developed beside this framing religious point of view, and it had to be careful to avoid conflict [evoking the edict of heresy]. It is this long tradition of science avoiding conflict with religion

that may still be at the root of why science remains reluctant, even in modern times, to assert its role in promoting an accurate view of the world for humankind.

I will focus on the development of human culture [especially in western civilization] and within this development the progression of knowledge about 1) humans as a cultural and biological species, 2) the natural world, and 3) the physical universe. Adopting this focus does not mean that other ancient civilizations in Asia, the Middle East, or Meso-America may not have developed comparable states of awareness or contributed substantially to the development of these ideas in Western culture. Ultimately, most accurate knowledge about the world is so important to individual and cultural survival that it is shared across all barriers rather quickly.

CULTURE – SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Aboriginal Culture

For all but the last 5,000 years, most human societies existed as clans and tribes, operating as nomadic hunter-gatherers. In this aboriginal period, a practical knowledge of the earthly annual cycles and wild plants and animals arose along with basic technology [fire, stone tools, pottery, basketry, simpler wood and stone construction, etc.] to assist survival. The entire natural world – including humans – was understood as being informed by natural principles as well as an animistic infusion of a spiritual or sacred principle. In this regard, all aspects of nature from stones, to trees, to ravens were regarded as “alive,” open to communication and influence, and deserving of respect. Animistic belief was fused with a fairly pragmatic naturalistic knowledge of the world to develop an array of actions to assure the health of both society and the individual. The roles of men and women were differentiated mainly in terms of their responsibilities for nurture, child rearing, and local gardening versus hunting, governing, and territorial defense. Groups recognized the talents of individuals in the different aspects of living, and some power, wealth and influence accrued to these individuals, but equality, respect and caring for the needs of all members of the local group, was the norm. Human relations across local bands could be cooperative, unpredictable, or aggressively hostile depending mostly on how readily survival needs were being met within the territories of the different clans, bands or tribes.

Civilization and Nation States

The development of the first societies that were based on intensive agriculture and animal husbandry between 5 to 10,000 years ago allowed for the settlement of people and their concentration in much greater numbers. With settlement and greater population density, roles became more highly differentiated and power tended to be vested in certain classes or hereditary lines with religion developing to support this “established” power structure. With biological needs satisfied for the many, specialization of roles allowed for the development of specialized knowledge. In the face of competition among different complex societies, survival made it necessary to focus on the technology of food production and storage, defence/warfare, and a greatly expanded economic and trading system. Science arose in the context of this technologically grounded competition. Worldwide, the religious and political elites in complex civilizations controlled this knowledge and the process that supported up to relatively modern times. Ultimately, continued pursuit of this specialized knowledge in European civilization broke free of these restraints. The need for technological development to meet the competition among nation states required an economy based as much on the production of goods and services as the production of food. Economies diversified, and unlike the agricultural realm, the goods and services domain was not dependent upon land

ownership and so it could develop relatively free of domination by the elites. In this context, a middle class arose and achieved a degree of independence. It is from this middle class, together with a subset of sympathetic elite supporters, that challenges were eventually waged to undermine the authority of the religious and political elites and to assert the power of the “common man.” In this way, the relative social equality that was a hallmark of aboriginal culture was reclaimed in the complex western cultural context and was linked with a scientific and technological basis for pursuing further advancement. The expectation for discovery of new knowledge and its application to human needs became the basis for incorporating the idea of progress as fundamental to western cultural development.

A representative democratic political structure emerged in the 18th century, while a capitalistic economy developed to become more regulated in the American context in the 20th century. This combination of political and economic institutions has been adopted broadly in different forms in Europe and many other countries of the world since its 18th century beginnings. The built-in tension between these paired political and economic institutions is a source of both great creativity and significant conflict, which requires constant management. Social and political equality in democracy, which was largely eliminated in previous dictatorial systems of theocracy and kingship, faces the opposing force of money from wealthy corporations and individuals, which supports candidates in elections and provides access and influence in political decision-making. Modern democratic – capitalistic countries tend to vacillate between conservative leadership [with individualism and capitalism in the lead] and liberal leadership [with socialism and democracy in the lead]. Balancing these two tendencies in a dynamic manner that properly respects both is one of the major challenges of the modern world, especially now that communistic systems seem to be waning worldwide.

In this political and economic context, religion together with its worldview, which is focused on fulfillment through future lives beyond physical death, has tended to be set to the side [as reflected in the principle of the separation of church and state]. Secular society emerged, but science has not taken the lead socially in this process. In this vacuum, religious fundamentalism has persisted, and it cycles into prominence periodically to reassert its otherworldly point of view. Today [2011] at the same time the world is ever more integrated economically and in terms of communication, the contest remains over whether complex societies worldwide will return to be led by a traditional, supernatural, religious worldview or commit comprehensively to a secular, naturalistic, and scientific worldview. Or perhaps some new alternative will arise to more adequately address this divide. In fact, I propose an alternative – Dynamic Humanism – in this essay.

LAW AND JUSTICE

Aboriginal and tribal societies address the rules of human relations and the results of transgressions through the informal ethical instruction of juveniles by parents, extended family and respected members of the local community. Headmen and elders who hear the contests and assign consequences usually handle violations by individual adults or among families or clans. Respected elders are often linked to the spirits of ancestors, and their judgments reflect the continuity of community expectations for behavior. The most severe penalty is usually banishment, which can be extreme indeed. In essence, simple societies know their members intimately in multiple roles and over time. These societies dispense justice locally, abiding by an assumed principle of fairness among members who are mostly equal in standing. In this setting, justice that is not fair threatens the integrity and survival of the group. While ritual means of settling inter-tribal disputes exist in some settings and can

lead to satisfactory resolutions, it is in the non-local domain of human relations that aboriginal and tribal systems of justice tend to be weak. Rules are local among familiars, but extra-local human relations can be immediately highly competitive and aggressive – to the point where the lives of “outsiders” can be taken as proof of self-worth or even for sport. Those individuals and groups who are not known or known by association tend to be “fair game” and are at considerable risk for loss of property or life in most aboriginal settings.

Law and justice in complex societies are characterized by laws being formulated and codified to define the rules of human relations across stratified classes and among individuals and groups that may be entirely unknown to one another at the personal level. As the principle of equality has reemerged in complex societies, a single set of laws have come to apply over all subgroups, and finally across the races and sexes. Common law – derived from precedent, and statutory law – derived from formal legislative bodies, usually mix with separate and formal courts and judges created to deal with challenges and contests of different sorts [civil, criminal, international courts] and at different levels of society [municipal, county, state, national, international]. Law enforcement is given over to separate, specially trained groups of people who investigate, arrest and file charges against offenders who are often strangers to one another.

The system of law and justice in complex cultures provides for a much broader net of security in a human domain of both local and personal as well as distant and impersonal human relations. In this context, the law and its application tend to be more specific and abstract and not as capable of taking into account the fuller picture of the history and character of different contestants or offenders, as in aboriginal societies. What it loses in the breadth of its purview, the formal law, law enforcement, and the justice system in complex cultures makes up for in providing for broad, principled, and consistent application across much greater social expanses.

Where the letter and spirit of the “law” tend to be fused in simpler societies, it is the challenge for law and justice in complex societies to retain the spirit of the law and not to allow legalistic lawyerdom to abuse the system through the pursuit of loopholes that provide privilege or escape for the few. As an example of a legal system in a modern complex cultural context, the American legal system with its focus on the letter of the law is especially susceptible to this abuse problem. It is also fertile ground for the negative consequences money can have in influencing the making and application of the law as well as the quality of representation individuals and groups receive in judicial proceedings.

Only in the last 200 plus years have complex societies achieved relative legal and judicial equality together with social and political equality. Modern Representative Democracy, Socialism, and Communism all assert the principle of equal rights for the common person in the complex cultural setting, a principle that was pervasive in aboriginal culture and that was the cultural condition of humankind for the vast scope of humankind’s history. In the end, theocracy, kingship and other forms of highly stratified society may well turn out to be early and transitional approaches to sustaining control in the complex social condition until other social institutions evolved to provide this control [formal and universal law and justice]. Once these institutions were in place, relative equality for the common person could be reclaimed, achieved, and become precedent in modern civilizations [initially through “revolutionary” events]. In this modern context, American representative democracy has the ability to restrain the movement toward excessive economic inequality among its citizens, which can

drive complex society back in the direction of kingship [oligarchy and society controlled by the privileged wealthy]. It also can curtail the unproductive influence of special interest money in politics and the legal and judicial system. If Americans do not elect this path and they continue to trend toward oligarchy, they will put at risk the hard won equality of the common person that they have enjoyed and that they have modeled and promoted to the complex cultures of the world.

If very long term survival and development of human culture is to be assured, the only choice is to pursue ever-greater international integration of complex societies – politically, economically and socially. In this context, it will be a considerable challenge to manage the development of the legal system to accompany this expansion. Given the recent trends in the Islamic cultures worldwide toward theocracy and in American culture toward oligarchy, it is not at all clear that representative democracy in combination with a sufficiently regulated capitalism will in fact lead the way to international integration and that it will have the foresight to create a legal and judicial system that supports equality and that retains the spirit of the law at the core of the letter of the law.

CLIMATIC, GEOLOGICAL AND COSMIC CONDITIONS

In terms of the human species, the development of civilization and nation states is a VERY recent development and has occurred in a time of extraordinarily stable and quiet climatic, geological, and cosmic conditions. This overall quietude is not the norm, and it is not at all clear whether this complex cultural development among human populations could be sustained through significant challenges from these sources: 1) climate change: significant warming or cooling [glaciation] over either short or long periods disrupting food production and severely limiting useable land, 2) massive solar coronal ejection attacking earth's magnetosphere and crippling for up to a decade our worldwide electrical infrastructure upon which we depend for survival, 3) large asteroid impact with the predicted worldwide conflagration – the cause of the mass extinctions at the end of the age of dinosaurs; 4) super volcano eruption with the darkening of the world and resulting comprehensive glaciation; 5) carbon dioxide accumulation as a result of global warming to the point where the waters of the oceans reach temperatures where anaerobic bacteria flourish and release massive quantities of highly poisonous hydrogen sulfide gas into the water and air; etc. Any of these events – which have occurred in the past and threatened or caused species extinction – or possible combinations of these events could drive the human species either to extinction or back to clan and tribal conditions of the aboriginal period. Humans need to realize that in spite of their very recent success in populating and dominating one small planet - Earth, they are to date a very briefly surviving niche species, which is extraordinarily vulnerable to extinction or very significant reduction by earthly standards, much less the survival standards of the Universe. Humility is entirely appropriate under these circumstances! Unfortunately, most modern day humans are entirely unaware of the fragility and potential vulnerability both of the human species itself and of the civilized condition under which most humans now live.

Let's look at how vulnerable the human species is just in terms of its survival on Earth. First, modern humans are a very recent species arrival – about 150,000 years old, or present for only about .004% of the time life has been present on Earth [3.5 billion years]. Time-wise, humans have not even begun to be tested for their species staying power. Second, humans are a complex species that has highly specific survival needs and is not able to adjust quickly at the genetic level. Humans have very little tolerance for significant change, which has occurred frequently in earth's history. Third, humans are a land-bound species on a planet

that has been and can once again be almost entirely covered by water. Fourth, humans occupy the extreme outer layer of the shallow crust of the earth where they are subject to a variety of potential extraterrestrial events, which can threaten their survival [asteroids, comets, solar radiation bursts, etc.]. Other very successful species have in fact been rendered extinct by such events [the end of the Age of Giant Reptiles 65 million years ago, which provided the opportunity for mammals to evolve]. Fifth, humans require an oxygen-rich [aerobic] environment, which is not fundamental or essential to planet Earth and which has been periodically greatly reduced in the planet's air and water during the earth's history.

A good argument can be made that all outer crust, aerobic life forms on earth are secondary to anaerobic and anoxic [very low oxygen] life forms, which live in the much more stable environment of the deep ocean thermal vents, and which depend upon the core energy of the planet – living on methane and hydrogen sulfide and their oxidized by-products. It is very likely that in the mass extinction event at the end of the Permian Era on Earth – 255 million years ago, all but the anaerobic and anoxic and simpler aerobic life forms in the deep oceans were eliminated. At that point, evolution of more complex aerobic life started again from scratch. It follows that humans, as a complex aerobic species, are probably not even of the primary life type on earth! Clearly, from a long-term biological survival standpoint, humans do not occupy a favorable position, even on earth.

Assuming that humanity can survive the shorter-term geological and cosmic sources of its demise, it still faces eventual extinction in the longest term [eons] as earth plays out its own planetary scenario. In the far distant future, earth's core will deplete its energy source, solidify, and the earth will cool and lose its magnetosphere and atmosphere. At that point, the entire surface of the earth will become like that of Mars – inhospitable to life as we know it. Unless humans can design a way to survive and “flourish” in a Mars like environment, in the longest term [eons], there is no other option but for humankind to locate and colonize hospitable alternative planets in alternative solar systems, if it expects to survive. Ultimately, if humanity is to have a very long-term material future, it must travel the cosmos. Unfortunately, the history of survival for most complex species on earth suggests that humans are unlikely to be around to see the demise of surface life on the planet.

HUMAN EVOLUTION, GENETICS, AND SPECIES VULNERABILITY

Mendel and Darwin/Wallace are the key sources for the theory of biological evolution in the 19th century and its application to the human species. In this theory, the process of species competition and natural selection account for the variation and differentiation of species. Gene and epigenetic mutation is the mechanism for change with changes that favored survival being selected for and changes that disadvantaged survival being selected against. Since Darwin's time, comprehensive examination of the fossil record for virtually every species has substantiated the theory of evolution. Gaps in the initial record of fossil sequences have been largely filled in with later revelations. Discovery that the fetal process of human development [ontogeny] replicates most of the stages in the evolution of the species from simple cell structures to amphibian to reptilian to primate forms [phylogeny] strongly suggested that individual humans largely repeat a process in their own development that occurred more broadly across the various species phyla. The final confirmation of the theory of evolution occurred when the nature of the genetic code was described in the 1960s, when the structure of DNA was determined by Watson and Crick, and when the mapping of the human genome was completed by two teams of American scientists at the turn of the 21st century. In this human genomic record, we find the same basic genetic code defining

humans as defines all other species of life on earth. The portions of the code that remain active and the way its elements are combined and arranged in DNA strings differ across the species. But the fundamental elements of the code are identical. Moreover, much of the genetic evidence for the prior stages of humans and their relationship to virtually all other species on earth is retained in a dormant or inactive state in the human genomic “library,” which every human carries in his or her genetic baggage. The closer a species is to us as humans, the more of the active record that is shared. Finally, only the minutest details of the human genetic code differentiate human races and individuals.

As the enormous complexity of the human genome is mastered in the years to come, humans can begin to move into the next phase – human engineering. As we learn how to turn genes on and off and epi-genes up and down, and when we are able to introduce new genes and repair damaged genes, we move to a position of being able to control the further development of our species – no longer dependent upon chance mutation and the process of natural selection. We can select for ourselves! This is heady territory and like any other significant technological breakthrough, it carries with it vast potential for both good and evil. Humans are moving rapidly to a position of being able to create and recreate themselves, and for those subscribing to a fundamentalist religious point of view, these are abilities assigned only to God or the gods and not the territory that humankind has the right to enter. For those with a more naturalistic and secular view, human engineering with all its ramifications is just the next logical step in the development and fulfillment of the potential of the human species. As with all other openings that science has afforded humankind, from the latter perspective we can assume that with careful attention, humans will manage this challenge so as to take advantage of its potential and avoid its possible abuses.

Whatever the future may bring through the door that Darwin was largely responsible for opening, the central importance of the theory of evolution is to place humans squarely in and of nature and in a time frame that vastly exceeds any reasonable interpretation of the scriptures of the major religions. There is no evidence for humans being separate from the rest of nature and somehow “favored” by God. Humans are just another species among the many and subject to all the same laws and forces for and against change. Humans are ordinary and part of an overall evolutionary process that began billions of years ago. Moreover, that process was part of a larger geological process of the development of Earth long before any life arose, as recorded in the 4.5 billion year geological record of the planet. Humans as a species are but a small part of the process of this development, and a very late arrival in the sequence. Natural processes are sufficient to account for the arrival of humans on the earthly scene. It is not necessary to posit any supernatural source for the origin of humankind. This conclusion directly contradicts, of course, the origin statements for humanity in the texts of most religions. As such, evolutionary theory challenges the credibility of these religious origin claims. When the record of human evolution is put together with much else in the collective discoveries of science, the overall literal truth-value of these religious texts is called into serious question.

Literalist and fundamentalist religious believers persist in their belief that their religious texts are divinely inspired and that these texts contain the “only” truth, even though this “only” truth differs radically across these various religious texts themselves. In spite of the overwhelming scientific evidence to support evolution and all of the implications that follow from it, currently [2011] we are in the throes of a worldwide resurgence of fundamentalist religious belief with its push in America to promote in education what is called “creationist” doctrine in order to

suggest that literal Biblical accounts of creation should be considered the equal of evolutionary theory. Even conservative religious believers among evolutionary scientists, of which there are a few, reject this proposal as untenable.

From an evolutionary standpoint, the most successful species are those that survive for the longest time over the greatest expanse of the universe, not those that flourish for a brief time in very limited locations and then go extinct. In essence, the latter are failed species experiments. As vulnerable as the human species appears to be, humans would seem to qualify as a good candidate to become a failed species, UNLESS! Humans appear to be unique – at least on Earth, and it is their uniqueness that may offer humanity a survival mechanism that is afforded no other species. Humans have developed the capacity through their level of consciousness and mental abilities to independently improve their chances for survival. More than any other species, humans have the ability to shape/control their environment and even to alter directly their genetic structure. Both of these capabilities can substantially benefit species survival. But these are very recent developments within the modern human species [mainly arising over the last 400 years], and it is not at all clear that the species is mature enough to take the necessary advantage of them to better assure its long-term future before it is overtaken by the conditions of its vulnerability. This is the BIG question now before Humankind, and to date the species has not begun to address it. Instead, while it has continued to make spectacular progress in its scientific understanding of both itself and the world around it, humankind has been bogged down at the social and political levels by the obsolete baggage it continues to carry from its past.

HUMAN POPULATION

Here are some significant facts: It took about 140,000 years for the modern human population in the world to reach one half billion people in 1600 A.D [99.97% of the time of modern human life on earth]. In the next 300 years [to 1900] the human population tripled to 1.6 billion [.024% of the time of modern human life on earth]. In the next 105 years [to 2005] human population quadrupled again to 6.5 billion people [.008% of the time of modern human life on earth]. Clearly, there has been a geometric explosion of the human population in the last 400 years to the present. Even allowing for an anticipated leveling off effect in growth, by 2050 worldwide human population is expected to reach between 7.8 and 12 billion with a median projected growth to 9.1 billion people. Without a doubt, the human species has recently been exuberantly successful, especially in the last 100 years, with the period since WWII being unprecedented.

The challenge posed by this human population success story is whether it is sustainable considering the associated risks. By the assessments of some experts, the carrying capacity of the earth without depleting its resources is 1 billion people, or one-tenth the projected population by 2050. Even if this carrying capacity figure is too conservative [not allowing for significant technological advances which can greatly increase productivity and efficiency], it seems clear that humans will be living in a deficit relation to resource use [as they definitely are presently] for a very long time in order to sustain such high levels of population. Compounding this problem is the fact that the economies of most of the developed countries of the world rely on continuing growth in population and consumption in order to offset the negative effects of their escalating debt accumulation [massive borrowing]. Such economies require the use of ever more resources to support ever more people who demand ever-higher standards of living. Most national economies of the leading nations of the world therefore have a vested interest in overlooking or minimizing the potential negative effects of excessive

population growth. But the risks are substantial and many and they have the ability to threaten the species as a whole, or so severely impact the human species that its civilizations collapse and it is reduced to tribal conditions. In what follows I will mention just three of these major risks.

Pan-epidemic disease is the first of these risks. As worldwide human density increases and communication and contact become pervasive, the opportunity escalates geometrically for emergent and lethal viral based diseases, for which humans have no immunity and no treatment, to spread very rapidly across vast areas of the globe. The result can be a loss of between 40% and 60% of the human population. This kind of population bust due to disease is characteristic of many rodent species when their densities reach critical levels, and humans may be inadvertently setting themselves up for the same fate. The recent scares from SARS, HIV Aids, and the H5-N1 avian flu virus illustrate the possibility, if not the likelihood, of this eventuality, if we continue on our current path and do not respect this threat.

There are two major risks associated with the effects of increased competition for ever scarcer natural resources as population pressure increases. The first is environmental. We may so deplete or “pollute” our environment [especially the air and water] that we cause the ecology of the planet to undergo major changes which do not favor our survival – at least in our current or projected numbers [ocean current collapse, major cooling resulting in massive glaciation, major warming resulting in vast areas made toxic to oxygen based life forms by hydrogen sulfide gas, etc.]. The second threat from increased competition for limited resources is the advent of nuclear warfare among nations desperate to access or protect these scarce resources. We have avoided large scale nuclear war to the present, but as nuclear technology spreads to more and more nations [some of which have underlying fatalistic and apocalyptic worldviews], the possibility increases that under the pressure of resource competition, one or the other of these nations will employ nuclear weapons. If this use sets off a chain reaction of major nuclear weapons detonations, the result can be that the world is engulfed in radioactive fallout and/or subjected to intolerable climate change. By most calculations it would take only 20 to 40 major aerial nuclear detonations [depending on intensity] over a short period of time to trigger either of these consequences.

Our very reproductive and life expectancy success as a species holds within it the possible demise of civilization and even our species as a whole. Far too little attention is paid to the risks inherent in the extraordinary flourishing of our species and to the role our deficit based, growth dependent economies [not to mention some of our religious ideologies] play in encouraging our inattention. Without overstating these risks to the point of promoting passivity, we can confront the challenges posed by human over-population and make the needed adjustments before we suffer the consequences of our neglect. Our history so far is not encouraging in our being able to face up to this matter as it has exploded into our present over that past 100 years.

CALCULATION, SCIENCE AND THE PHYSICAL

The development of human understanding of physical existence and the emergence of a naturalistic perspective and scientific process begins in a context where the human worldview fuses the material and spiritual and where the material world is understood as what is revealed by the human senses and the everyday human perspective. Humans have always observed the natural world around them, especially as those observations pertain to survival. Rudimentary calculation systems and skills arose in response to trading, defense

and building activities, but it takes the time and specialization offered by civilized conditions to allow for completion of calculation systems [the concept of zero], their graphic representation [writing] and the emergence of basic mathematics. It is also in the civilized context that there is the time to devote to non-survival based observations of the world and the heavens beyond. While several civilizations developed observational skills and calculation systems, it was the Babylonians who described the regular system of movement of the planets and the sun, which was seen as revolving around the earth. The Greeks took this information, added the development of mathematics and geometry [Pythagoras and Euclid], and created the basic tools for scientific investigation of the world beyond earth [astronomy]. Still an earth-centered concept of the universe persisted.

It was not until the 16th century in Europe that Copernicus and Galileo combined to propose and work out the basic nature of the solar system, with earth and the other planets revolving around the sun, and the stars lying beyond our solar system. This discovery had enormous implications for the assumption heretofore that humankind on earth was the center of the universe and the focus of the Gods. With every discovery since that time, humans have become a smaller and smaller and less and less important element in the ever grander and greater system of the cosmos. Keppler, Newton, Einstein, Bohr/Heisenberg, Bohm and Witten bring us 1) the mathematics of movement in the everyday world, which is expanded to include meteors, asteroids, and comets in our own solar system, 2) our own Milky Way Galaxy with its billions of stars, pulsars and black holes, 3) the vast number of galaxies and galaxy clusters beyond the Milky Way, 4) a universe of the very large and very small governed by laws that are “strange” in terms of our everyday world and that suggest the possibility of dimensions of existence that lie beyond our perception, 5) a postulation of a Big Bang based Universe founded on a small set of vibrating energy strings, pervaded by dark matter and dark energy, and accelerating through infinite expansion, perhaps in a domain of as many as eleven dimensions and possibly with parallel universes, and finally 6) a reality of infinitely entangled energy packets where our material world is merely the secondary consequence of quantum de-coherence and where consciousness itself is creative.

From small and smaller, humankind in this vast, currently projected cosmic system has become miniscule to the point of becoming totally insignificant at the material level. Moreover, this vastness upholds the absolute statistical likelihood that intelligent life at least equal to our own exists on other planets in other star systems of our own and other galaxies. If current cosmological projections are even close to accurate, we have a great deal of company out there; it is just likely to be very distant – at least in physical terms. Interestingly, some of the cosmological theories now being explored suggest that special characteristics of gravity waves may provide a way to overcome this physical distance challenge, which otherwise seems to be limited by the speed of light.

In only the last 150 years, development of our understanding of the physical world beyond a mechanistic view has consisted of every one of the assumed constants of that observable, everyday world being challenged. What was constant and formed the basis for adequately and accurately describing events in the middle sphere of earthly human existence has proved to be limited and inadequate to describe events beyond human perception – the very small [atomic and subatomic] and the very large [cosmic – the level of galaxies and the universe].

Moreover, the further afield from human everyday existence we go, understanding of the greater whole becomes more and more “strange” – at least in relation to common human

expectations. If we think about it, being confronted with this “strangeness” should come as no surprise. Humans have evolved to operate successfully in a very limited earthly context, and when we seek to understand the domains beyond human experience and engagement, our basic assumptions – even our scientifically based ones – may no longer apply or prove valid. Indeed, we should even expect this kind of challenge. What is extraordinary is not the strangeness of what we discover, but the fact that we can successfully probe for understanding in these non-human domains of existence, and that as we penetrate to the edges of both the infinitely small and the infinitely large we can pursue a unified theory of “everything.” Humans are the first species on earth to become sufficiently self-aware and sufficiently rigorous in method of investigation to describe the basic lawfulness of their own limited domain and to seek to understand scientifically the nature of what lies in the vast reaches beyond. From a perspective of species on earth, this is an astonishing achievement.

Psi [extrasensory perception and psychokinesis] may represent some of the avenues for “seepage” across the boundaries of the standard human sensory/perceptual limitations of objective awareness. If humans can master the material world, release the need to attend to its biological challenges, and control their own genetic development, they may be able to develop their intuitive faculties to allow what is now “seepage” to become a major avenue for information/communication passage and even for achieving effect in the material world. One day the sophisticated use of collective intuitive mind may even replace the bulldozer and logical thought as the primary means to know, act and produce results in both the objective [intellectual/material] and subjective [intuitive/spiritual] realms. Indeed, it seems entirely possible that human consciousness is not circumscribed by speed of light limitations.

ENERGY

Major advances have been made in the last 200 years in the human understanding and use of energy sources. These developments have resulted in huge increases in the use of energy per capita, especially in the developed part of the world. While standards of living have escalated dramatically with this energy use increase, significant environmental and pollution problems have arisen which threaten the long term continued use of energy at this level unless less impacting [emissions and storage problems] energy sources and technologies can be developed. Fire based on vegetation sources, wind, water, and the passive use of solar energy were the four energy sources known to humankind until the last 300 years. These sources, in the way and extent to which they were used, were either benign [solar, wind, water] or balanced in the effects of emissions [wood, peat, dung, etc] and so had virtually no negative effect on the environment. In the recent period, explosive population growth has been paired with rapid technological development and massive mining of new energy sources: first coal, then petroleum. With the invention of the internal combustion engine and the turbine to convert mechanical energy to electricity, these energy sources have provided the basis for the incredible technological, industrial and commercial expansion over the last 200 years.

Since these petrochemical energy sources represent stored energy in concentrated forms, their utilization in large amounts has added greatly to the carbon dioxide and methane in the earth’s atmosphere – inviting global warming with potentially disastrous consequences. Nuclear energy in the form of fission based reactors emerged in the 1950’s to provide electricity, and while it avoids the air pollution problems of coal and petroleum, its use poses radiation challenges to safety and its wastes pose very significant long term storage security and cost issues. Currently there are three sources of energy whose final byproducts are

environmentally benign: hydrogen [hydrogen fuel cell] together with solar [photovoltaics], and nuclear fusion. Provided that the remaining problems associated with the manufacture and production of the components for these energy systems can be resolved, these three energy sources may allow for a continued escalation of human energy use long term without the threat of negative impacts. Even with stringent conservation enforcement, unless humanity can rapidly develop and implement non-polluting sources of energy for current and future use at worldwide scales, it is doubtful that humankind can sustain even its current state of development, much less its potential for future development.

HEALTH AND MEDICINE

The discovery of the various systems of the human body and the sources in nature of healing assistance has been gradual, but has accelerated in the last 500 years, and especially in the last 200 years. The obvious physical systems of the body were understood first [skeletal, muscular] followed by the less and less physically obvious [circulatory, neurological, endocrine, lymphatic]. Logically, the entirely immaterial systems of the body may be on the verge of discovery [aura – the electromagnetic field; mind in relationship to brain; energy flow systems – Chi, meridian duct]. Currently the underlying biochemistry of the individual systems is mostly understood and the complex interrelationships among the systems are partially mapped. The outlines of the processes of physiological and psychological development and subsequent decline are in place. The causes [bacterial, viral, hormonal, genetic, environmental] of the various types of disease and their relationship to the immune system, nutrition, physical condition and stress are partially understood. Pharmacologically based vaccines, treatments, and cures for many diseases have been developed and some diseases have been eliminated. Chemical, radiation and surgical treatments to fight or cure many diseases have been developed. Diagnostic tools have been invented that give us the ability to “see” internal detail and to study the systems of the body in operation. Together with genetic information that is just beginning to be developed in detail, the possibility is emerging that humanity may in the next generation or two be able to control the aging process itself and render most current bacterial and viral diseases obsolete.

As impressive as the advances have been in the area of human physical health and medicine in the last 200 years, humans remain fundamentally vulnerable to degradation from causes that are a function of environmental exposure, impaired social relations, lack of psychological integrity, and poor physical condition – stress, allergies, obesity, etc. The ultimate challenge in sustaining human health may prove to be more environmental and social than physiological and genetic. The negative health consequences of low self-esteem and chronic anxiety, insecurity, and inactivity may prove much more difficult to overcome than the challenges posed by bacteria and viruses.

EDUCATION

In aboriginal culture, education of children occurs as a function of young people participating and assisting adults to ever-greater degrees in the wide variety of the clan or tribe’s daily activities. Children learn by doing, take on real responsibility relatively early, see rather rapidly the positive results of their new skills, and complete their “training” shortly after they reach physical maturity. This was the education model with which modern humans evolved. Only in the last 150 years within the context of civilization has education for the masses moved from this experiential model to the separate, abstract, formal classroom model – based on specially trained teachers, and oriented to learning from textbooks, media and now the internet. This new model remains an experiment, and the results are rather mixed.

The advantages of this classroom education model are several: 1) the average level of education for the general population can be significantly increased, 2) the separate school environment with teachers trained in specific knowledge areas makes a much greater variety of subjects available to students in greater depth – resulting in a broader and better education for all, 3) the greater range of subjects covered allows students to discover what interests them and what avenues they want to pursue, 4) there is greater instructional efficiency in the separate and concentrated school context, 5) the ever expanding domain of specialized skills and knowledge, which are required for success in our rapidly advancing and technologically oriented modern culture, can not be delivered adequately or efficiently by the old model.

The disadvantages of the new classroom model are also notable: 1) in line with the evolutionary education model, many students are “built” mentally to learn more readily by seeing and doing rather than through a focus on the verbal medium of words – spoken ceaselessly in classrooms and written endlessly in books and on blackboards, 2) the separate and abstract nature of the learning environment, where grades substitute for the direct and practical observation of the value of what students learn, leaves many students without a sense of why they are being asked to learn the skills and knowledge that they are being taught, 3) adolescence is greatly expanded beyond physical maturity, often with little attendant increase in responsibility, independence, or sense of value for the student as a person. In addition, public schools, which are separated from the adult domain, have over time inadvertently encouraged an independent adolescent world with its own culture to develop, a culture often defined in opposition to adult values and authority. Left largely on their own, not integrated into the adult world, unclear about the value of what they are being asked to do, and uncertain about where they are going and what their value is, it should come as no surprise that many students are attracted by an alternative culture, which is defined by some combination of protest, rebellion, drugs, gangs, criminal behavior, self-mutilation, and even suicide. Add for many children a surrounding economically depressed or dependent subculture and you get the general adolescent malaise, which characterizes much of the inner city education environment.

The public education classroom model faces multiple challenges if it is to succeed, and it must succeed if humanity is to fulfill its potential. There is no option to return to the aboriginal model. What needs to be done? We must 1) end obsolete, long summer vacations, 2) provide alternative curriculum paths for students with different learning styles, 3) develop an intuitive skills and application track throughout the curriculum, 4) reintegrate adolescents and adults by bringing varied adults and seniors into the schools to participate directly in the instruction process and by connecting all adolescents with adults in real world experiences on an ongoing basis outside of school, 5) teach students early in the process how to learn – the discovery process itself, so they can independently pursue their own interests and motivate themselves, 6) instill basic math and reading skills and knowledge much more rapidly, even automatically, 7) use engaging media and computer based resources to free teachers and make learning more student guided, 8) encourage and test for the creative use of what is learned, not for simple recall, 9) encourage team learning and solution discovery, 10) attract the brightest and best communicators to the teaching profession, and make their teaching loads reasonable, 11) limit school size to encourage community, 12) demand tolerance for all differences, and 13) make a substantial economic investment to implement improvements.

DYNAMIC HUMANISM THE CHALLENGE AT THE SOCIAL LEVEL

“ONE GIANT LEAP FOR MANKIND”

In the benign geological and climatic period of the last 5,000 years, the human species has flourished in cultural development and numbers to the point where it now faces its own success becoming the basis for its demise – like the boom and bust cycling of most rodent populations. But unlike rats, humans with their capability for reflection and anticipation have the option of escaping such cycling and finding meaning/joy in the responsible discovery and mastery of their expanding world.

Humans are at a crossroads. They have enormous potential for a gloriously expansive future in which they may literally populate the universe over the next eons. And at the same time, they have held on to elements of an outmoded world view that, if retained in their currently active form, can confine humankind to the dismal rodent abyss where humans can boom and bust until they eventually go extinct while confined to the planet Earth. The new accommodation that is required in order for humankind to fully open the door to its exciting future is the need to resolve the conflict between secular humanism and religiosity. Fortunately, an accommodation between these two points of view can be rather easily made. Unfortunately, given the baggage we have accumulated and the value we tend to place on it, it is an accommodation that will probably prove extremely difficult for humans to achieve. But we have to begin by recognizing the goal toward which we aspire.

Secular humanism places supreme value on material/physical existence and celebrates reason and science as the vehicles to guide social humankind to a productive future. It concedes the emotions, which nevertheless make it uncomfortable, and it scoffs at the notion of reality at any spiritual/immaterial level [except in theoretical physics]. Religiosity [characteristic of all the great religions and the centerpiece of all fundamentalism] places supreme value on spiritual existence and demeans the value of physical existence. The soul or spirit rather than the body is celebrated, and some combination of intuition and emotion [prayer or meditation and/or intense, prolonged rhythmic expression] are identified as the vehicles to guide humankind to a meaningful future – in this physical world and most importantly in a life to come. In the crossfire between secular humanism and religious fundamentalism, secular humanism has made the fundamental mistake of discarding intuition and spirituality together with religious dogma, while religiosity has made the basic mistake of reducing the value of intuitive awareness to literal dogma while denigrating the importance of human intellect and physical life.

Dynamic Humanism is the name I give to the accommodation between the perspectives of secular humanism and religious fundamentalism. Dynamic Humanism avoids the extremes, limitations and problems associated with both secular humanism and all forms of religiosity. Dynamic Humanism respects the reality and importance of both the material and the immaterial realms of reality as well as the human capabilities and tools that are associated with both. It sees no necessary conflict between the two perspectives but rather regards these ways of knowing the world as complementary with both views [along with their associated capabilities] being essential to both a full understanding of reality and full participation in it. Dynamic Humanism discards all of the dogmatic trappings of religiosity and instead celebrates the unification experience [and the effective techniques – rituals – that

lead to this experience] that is at the core of all religions. Dynamic Humanism recognizes the key role the human intuitive capability plays in life and understanding at the same time that it respects the very significant and productive role that reason and intellect play. If it is not clear at this point what I mean by Intuition, look back at the “Caution” section of the “Introduction” on page three.

In Dynamic Humanism, reason and intuition [with emotion flavoring and providing the sense of value to both] are equally essential to human life and understanding. Reason and intuition are both capabilities that can be developed. When both faculties are developed fully and applied to life and understanding in an integrated and balanced manner, Dynamic Humanism contends that they yield the most complete awareness and opportunity for participation in life. Reason provides focus, logical articulation, and anticipation while intuition provides purpose, relation, and timeless integration or inclusion. Both capabilities are able to provide useful knowledge of the world, but they do this from polar – if complementary – perspectives: intellect by systematic and analytic examination within the world of discrete material things bound by time and space, intuition by locating awareness within the realm of infinite connections across time and space. For Dynamic Humanism, the most mature lives, societies, and cultures are the most developed and balanced in both of these capabilities and perspectives.

From the viewpoint of Dynamic Humanism, for Humankind to realize its full potential, it must commit to a balanced blend of intellect and intuition with emotion providing the sense of value to both. It must incorporate the perspective of Dynamic Humanism [or the same perspective under some other name – it is not the name that is important!] as essential and universal to the worldview of all of its cultures. Humankind must locate its excitement and joy in its own process of ongoing discovery of its reality [universe or multi-verse], not in either an exclusively material or acquisitive existence, or in a dogmatically defined spiritual existence available only to select “believers.”

If humankind cannot escape the struggle between excessive rationalism and materialism [secular reductionism] and excessive religiosity [literal religious belief and fundamentalism], it will not complete the set of worldview and socio-economic-political conditions that are necessary if it is to have an opportunity to mature into its spectacular potential future.

At a crossroads in its opportunities, humankind must recognize the critical need to make this last essential accommodation, commit to making it, and implement it. This is the single greatest challenge before humanity at the present time. All other challenges pale beside it, and virtually all other current problems will correct themselves if this central challenge is successfully addressed. Fall short in this core challenge, and we remain grounded, sharing the destiny of rodents. Succeed, and we can become the stuff of stars and angels.

This is the “One Giant Leap” humankind must make.

THE FUNDAMENTAL UNDERLYING PROBLEM

The only Constant is Change: change in state, change in time, change in location, change in perspective. Nothing stays the same or remains. Whether a soap bubble or a galaxy, eventually everything dissolves, disintegrates, disappears or evolves, grows, emerges.

Everything is in motion or a state of vibration or flow all the time – at least at the atomic level. Stability and Permanence are the illusions of limited perception and perspective.

Constant Change is the root of the sense of Impermanence for humans. And fundamental Impermanence creates basic background Uncertainty about the meaning/significance of existence, particularly when existence is understood in physical/material terms.

Modern humans are self-aware, self-conscious – able to recognize and reflect on the fundamental Uncertainty created by the condition of Impermanence, unlike other species that live mostly in the present with weak memory of the past and almost no ability to anticipate.

APPROACHES TO THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM OF UNCERTAINTY

Intuitive Awareness and Its Relation to Religiosity

One approach to dealing with uncertainty about the meaning of human existence is to rely on human intuitive capabilities, which can access a spiritual level of awareness. From this perspective, all individual material aspects of existence share in an identity – are part of a unified whole or “being.” This unity or shared identity is experienced as a principle of sacredness that permeates and relates or connects all things across time and space. Human intuitive capability can be developed and refined and provides one avenue to “know” the world more broadly than just in the everyday material sense. Animistic and shamanistic beliefs of many aboriginal peoples and the mystical sects of formal religions tend to provide the purest avenues to intuitive awareness per se. Dance, chant, meditation/ prayer, vision quest, and ingestion of certain mind-altering drugs are the vehicles humans have discovered to assist in accessing intuitive awareness. Sophisticated systems for developing and exploring the world using a relatively pure form of intuitive awareness exist in only a few non-western, complex cultures. Most complex cultures/societies cannot tolerate the liberating effect of the expanded sense of self that follows from the pure pursuit of intuitive awareness. So, they confine and restrict access to intuitive awareness first in symbolic expressions and then in full-blown forms of religiosity [formal religion]. In the process, understanding and use of intuitive awareness is vastly reduced and its potential obscured and even lost.

The first step in containing the expansive or liberating potential of intuitive awareness is symbolic [metaphoric or artistic] expression. In this approach, awareness concerning the meaning of existence as informed by intuitive awareness is represented or expressed in symbolic forms. These forms stand for what intuitive awareness reveals, but are not to be confused with the revelation itself. They are “as if” constructs: spirits, gods, mythical beings, their representation in graphic and plastic imagery, and narrative accounts of their interactions. What is discovered by a sophisticated few in the pursuit of intuitive awareness is expressed in a metaphorical world of concrete beings, which makes this knowledge accessible to the vast majority of intuitively unsophisticated humans. Through these metaphorical figures and their activities – as expressed in the various arts [visual, verbal and performing], answers are suggested to fundamental questions about the origination of the world, of plant and animal life, of humans, and of society and culture in a way that affirms the value of the individual and the group. When organized and collected into a coherent body of symbolic expression, mythologies and their accompanying ritual systems emerge. Most such mythologies also assert a continuation for individual life after death [sometimes physically but more often in a spiritual aspect of the self] – usually in a spirit world of discrete ancestors, or

a system of recycling of life – reincarnation. Most often these belief systems offer a special place for the members of the specific society of believers and usually exclude all others.

So long as these symbolic expressions and organized mythologies and rituals are understood as metaphor, they can serve as useful vehicles for humans to access intuitive awareness for themselves. But since the liberating effect of unbridled access to the intuitive can be a social control challenge in complex societies, most such societies make the rather rapid step from metaphor to literal belief and then to the full blown dogma of institutionalized religion.

When the “as if” or metaphorical aspect of mythologies and their surrounding ritual systems is withdrawn, the symbol systems come to be taken literally as expressing concrete reality and as defining the absolute truth on the meaning of existence. In this context, these mythologies become the dogmas of formal religions, which then develop their own hierarchy of ritual personnel [priests] who reserve for themselves special access to the supernatural figures – usually concrete gods to worship. Over time, these literal belief systems have generalized to apply more broadly across societies and have become what are known as the great religions of the world – Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc.

So, what began as the symbolic and artistic expression of humankind’s liberating intuitive awareness becomes over time full-blown religiosity, limited and very often controlled by the socially powerful few. All that is left of access to intuitive awareness for average devotees is the break-through religious experience [born again], which is totally circumscribed by dogmatic interpretation as provided by the surrounding system of literal beliefs. Devotees are “liberated” to a prison of concrete beliefs. These beliefs remove the intuitive from them and transform it into a god/spirit, which is separate from themselves and which they are to worship, a god/spirit that controls them rather than a capability to honor and explore within themselves. In this way institutionalized religion succeeds in turning the expansive potential of human intuitive awareness on its head, limiting rather than liberating humankind from the narrow secular, material view of life and the world.

Intellectual Awareness and Its Relation to Secular Humanism

An entirely different approach to the problem of uncertainty in the meaning of human existence arises much later [last 400 plus years and especially the last 150 years]. This occurs once the concrete world is more adequately mastered through the development of a sophisticated technology – supported by a refined reasoning process and the scientific method of investigation. This secular humanistic approach points to the many different literal religious belief systems – each of which claims equally to reveal the absolute truth – and asks them to provide objective proof for their claims. The leaders of most religions quickly realize that they cannot adequately address this challenge and claim faith rather than fact as the basis for their beliefs – excusing themselves from the need to “prove” their belief systems either individually or comparatively. As the arsenal of objectively determined facts about the world/universe expands with intellectual pursuit – assisted by ever more discerning technology, it challenges more and more the view of the world contained in the major religions, which have reified their mythologies into static dogmas. The more progressive divisions of these religions respond by partially releasing literal belief and moving back in the “as if” direction of metaphoric, symbolic or artistic expression. Ironically, most of these “progressives” still try to retain their claim to absolute truth. The more conservative or fundamentalist divisions and sects of these religions respond to the challenges of science by becoming even more dogmatic, insisting on the literal and absolute truth of their beliefs and

actively rejecting science as the vehicle of the devil [evil] where it conflicts with their beliefs. These more dogmatic [fundamentalist] religions often themselves become the basis for conflicts worldwide or contribute greatly to these conflicts. Given the potential access these fundamentalists have to the destructive use of advanced technology in behalf of their causes, humans move into the ironic position of being able to destroy themselves as a species in the name of their different religious faiths.

In part in response to the extremes of the religious fundamentalists, the secular humanists [rationalists/scientists] are inclined to deny any reality base for any of these religious belief systems, and they tend to reject or demean human intuitive awareness together with these religions. Instead, these intellectual humanists reify reason [intellect] and objective or concrete reality and locate meaning in life in the satisfaction and excitement that results from expanding discovery in the material world. For social and natural humanists, the meaning of existence lies in the quality of the relationships that are created with other humans and/or the entities of the natural world. For the more pragmatic secular humanists, the accumulation of power and wealth in the material world is what provides meaning. With their focus exclusively on material, social and natural reality, secular humanists of all kinds have no way to overcome the essential uncertainty represented by physical death. They must posit all meaning in existence for the individual in what occurs over his or her brief, physical life span.

Dynamic Humanism

A new approach in the search for meaning in human existence has been in the process of emerging over the last few generations. I refer to this approach as Dynamic Humanism, and it draws together the essence of religiosity and secular humanism while eliminating the extremes of both. It gives full credence to intuitive awareness [which underlies the impetus to religiosity] and to the arts as appropriate expressive forms to metaphorically communicate this awareness in the material world, while it rejects all of the literal, concrete and dogmatic trappings of all mythologies, religions, and religious systems. At the same time, Dynamic Humanism recognizes the importance of intellect, reason and the scientific method without reducing reality exclusively to the concrete, physical domain. From the point of view of Dynamic Humanism, understanding existence is best pursued by developing both rational and intuitive human capabilities in a balanced and integrated manner. Only when the essence of both approaches is included in a dynamic framework does the full extent of the challenge of meaning in existence come into focus. To the present, most individual complex cultures/civilizations have developed to a significant degree one or the other of the intellectual or intuitive awareness paths [intuitive awareness in ascetic Buddhist culture; intellectual awareness in scientific Western culture]. Unfortunately, no culture as a whole has shown the way to develop both perspectives and capabilities deeply and in an integrated manner without either lapsing into religiosity or denying reality for the subjective.

Human perspective and capability is self-reflective and fundamentally dynamic. It is composed of dual and seemingly oppositional points of view – the rational and the intuitive. This dialectic within self-awareness – together with the emotional charge that is associated with each – characterizes what it means to be human. It affects everything we see, create and do; it is so fundamental that most of the time we overlook its presence – to our detriment. Of course, we are really talking about a continuum of awareness and capability that ranges between the more purely rational/intellectual at one end and the more purely intuitive at the other end. The world or reality or existence looks very different from these two extremes, and the meaning of existence differs depending on where on the continuum between these two

poles of perception and conception our perspective is located when we search for the answer. Much of our confusion or consternation over the issue of meaning in existence arises as a result of our failure to recognize that different individuals are often addressing the issue from different points on this perspective continuum. In addition, unless we are very careful, our individual answers often confuse these perspectives within our own awareness. In short, there are a lot of ways to miss the mark, and we suffer greatly as a result of the many institutionalized or codified forms of our misconceptions. We are like children with two new toys: we are fascinated with both, have only initial mastery of both, and we often forget which one [or what combination of the two] we are utilizing at any one time. Yet it is clear that if we can truly master these two “toys” [with emotion added] individually and in combination, there is enormous potential in what we can achieve as a species. The question is whether we will “get it” and really begin down the road toward species maturity [self-realization] before we lose our specie’s window of opportunity and drift off into self-destructive oblivion. At our present time in history, the decision is up for grabs; it could go either way.

Of course intuitive awareness is itself a source of self-confirmation. It reveals an ever-greater world in which we participate, belong, and ultimately share an identity. At the same time that we can lose our individual selves in this larger identity, we can also become this larger identity and be totally filled by it [ecstasy]. Meaning from this perspective resides in the knowledge that for all of our apparent individuality and physical separateness – our isolation, we are also the whole of which we are a part – so essentially connected to the vast whole that our separate identity melts, fuses and becomes this infinite and radiant identity “mist.”

From the point of view of Dynamic Humanism, meaning in existence does not reside in this larger “spiritual” identity any more than it is to be located in our physical identity and biological reality. Meaning is to be found in the dynamic negotiation between knowing ourselves as infinitely small and limited physical beings bound by space and time and knowing ourselves as infinite, immaterial, vibrant presence – everything all together at once across time and space. Whatever discoveries may emerge through an evolved science 1) that prove matter is an illusion and reality is entirely constituted by different forms of energy bundled or entangled in different ways, 2) that the subjective/immaterial/implicate is the primary superset in reality and the objective/material/explicate is one – perhaps minor – expression [a subset] of this primary order, or 3) that consciousness as a field phenomena within the implicate or subjective order is in the First Cause position in reality, it is nevertheless the case that pragmatically humans – as biological creatures, must survive in a physical environment defined by limited material boundaries. We cannot survive biologically as subjective, immaterial beings only. Our environment is physical and competitive, and we cannot avoid the fact that we are predators. Existentially we cannot escape our material existence, whether it is primary or secondary. What we can do is not make the mistake of living solely defined by our material/biological requirements. Through our intuitive capabilities, we can experience our complementary subjective identity and bring that awareness creatively back into our material lives and live more fully with greater sensitivity and “grace.” It is as if as physical beings we are offered a built-in opportunity for perpetual inspiration to and from our more expansive selves. Our challenge is to take advantage of this opportunity and live inspired lives, live creatively within the fully developed dynamic that is human awareness.

The option is before us to balance our capabilities, develop all of our selves, deny no part of our selves, avoid illusion, and become scientific seers, prophetic engineers, graceful predators, respectful enforcers, muscle-bound visionaries.

THE ROLE OF ART IN DYNAMIC HUMANISM

As viewed by humans, all material and behavioral phenomena have a visual, auditory, or kinetic aesthetic aspect, and most often some combination these. So, attractive or stimulating shape, sound, and motion are an inherent dimension of all perceptions in life and living, and their occurrence can be evaluated for the level of affect, awareness, and meaning they evoke. Moreover, we can expect this evaluation to be different depending on the individual's or group's physical and mental state and cultural framework informing perception and conception. The great bulk of human behavior in its visual, auditory or kinetic aspects is not either instrumental or artistic but both, existing on a continuum where its aesthetic aspect is more or less emphasized and more or less appreciated. A horse's walk can be primarily functional, but it can also be attractive, even beautiful to the observer. A desk can be highly functional while being more or less attractive in form and decoration. A serious discussion can be punctuated by one individual's use of puns, which can be seen as attractive in providing comic relief or as disturbing in interjecting unwarranted distraction – depending on the point of view of the person or group responsible for the aesthetic evaluation. There is no aesthetic evaluation without human perspective engaging the “object” of consideration.

What we refer to as Art per se are phenomena that are understood as existing at the end of the instrumental – aesthetic continuum where aesthetic intention and evaluation become most prominent and the importance of instrumental function is greatly diminished. These are “allowed” time outs from the pursuit of instrumental function, and there are many different genres of these artistic occasions. These events are evaluated almost exclusively on social, aesthetic and spiritual grounds rather than on technical, functional and material grounds. In what follows, I will suggest what I see as the underlying impetus to artistic expression at any point on the instrumental – aesthetic continuum as well as on the continuum within art itself between entertainment and what I will refer to as ART – writ large.

In most non-complex cultures, art and religion are fused – true ART [not secular art or entertainment] being the graphic, plastic, performing, and verbal expression in metaphorical terms of intuitive awareness of the nature of reality and humankind's place in it. As complex society emerges, symbolic expression [art] is usually overtaken by the literal dogma of religiosity in what becomes institutionalized religion. What began as metaphor becomes vested as literal reality – to be believed in and worshiped as referencing absolute truth on the nature and meaning of existence. In this context, art has become fixed as truth, external to the individual and no longer directly or fluidly connected to individual intuitive awareness. Art has been captured by literal belief. When this happens, art must separate from religion to protect the integrity of symbolic expression as the direct metaphorical outlet for intuitive awareness. The problem is that in the situation of religiosity, such liberated art is heretical to religion and is usually banned [destroyed] on pain of death. Art either conforms to dogma or is suppressed and forced underground.

As complex society develops further and secular humanism emerges, free artistic expression reappears, but often with minimal understanding of its connection to the intuitive or the spiritual. For a time there may be a loose appreciation of an undefined “spiritual” basis in art, but for the most part art is seen as emanating from the psychology of the individual or the sociology or culture of the group as filtered through the emotions of the artist. In this secular world of art, the intuitive source is often hidden in an undefined and mysterious zone referred to as “creativity.” Conceptually unhinged from the pragmatic, which is claimed as essential

in secular life, art, like religion itself, is peripheralized and associated with non-serious, leisure, entertainment, and playtime activities. Some art becomes truly secular in this context, losing virtually all underlying intuitive or spiritual reference. It may become mostly emotional, psychological and sociological in its reference and commercial in its motives. It can even masquerade under a mostly intellectual banner. At its worst, art devolves into vacuous entertainment – titillating, graphic, sensational, and/or sentimental with only the most superficial and often gratuitous social message. In this situation, artists themselves may struggle to rediscover the roots of their art in intuitive awareness.

In Dynamic Humanism art is fully reintegrated into life. Art's intuitive base of reference is fully recognized and the artist is encouraged to develop his or her intuitive capabilities so as to express in whatever metaphorical mode he or she chooses the deepest awareness possible. At the same time, art is understood as requiring technical capability that is intellectually based and as having levels of reference and meaning that can be emotive, psychological and sociological, even intellectual. Art can be all or any of these things, but to be great art, or ART, its expression must emanate from the intuitive and its source must be spiritual. The key function of ART is to symbolically express intuitive awareness in the world of the concrete at the most mature level of which the artist is capable. And it is committed to maintaining its fluid relationship to intuitive understanding and to rejecting the forces of both commercialization and intellectualization – represented by secular forces, and literalization and dogmatic incorporation – represented by the forces of religiosity.

Beyond its essential reference in intuitive awareness, art in Dynamic Humanism is seen as expressing dynamic meaning or understanding itself with the artist bringing to the audience his or her metaphorical vision of what it means to participate in the human awareness dynamic, to deal with the dynamic tension between the material and spiritual worlds, between the intellectual and intuitive points of view. Metaphor itself – the basis of all art – is the communicative tool in this dynamic, the expression in the concrete world of an awareness in the realm of the immaterial or spiritual. Artistic metaphor is the expressive bridge between the intuitive and the intellectual, the material and immaterial, the explicate and implicate, the physical and the spiritual. Metaphor is a key dynamic element in communicating to others the consequence of the search for meaning in Dynamic Humanism.

In art, metaphor exists at two levels: form and content. Metaphor at the level of form is the “as if” condition that applies to image, story, drama, etc. standing for real life. This is the metaphor upon which the “willing suspension of disbelief” rests. We accept the representative form as if what it contains is real. The drama on stage or the characters and action described in narrative or graphically represented are accepted as if real – for the moment. On the other hand, content metaphor in art exists within the frame of formal metaphor, in a sense metaphor within metaphor. When the lion represents the king in a fable, a butterfly stands for the soul in a batik print, the Bible declares Peter the rock upon which the church is built, or a character transforms from a human to a serpent in a modern special effects film, metaphor at the level of content occurs. In each case, one thing is declared to be another thing, highlighting the shared features of the two and insisting on the connection between two otherwise disparate entities [in the physical or material world]. Metaphor insists on a shared identity across discrete categories of the material world, and in so doing, it suggests the unification awareness of intuitive and spiritual understanding. A simple and base metaphor is to declare, “Louis is a dog.” The grandest of metaphors is to announce, “Louis is God,” or “Louis is the Universe, and the Universe is Louis,” or to declare

that the part is the whole and that the whole is the part. This is to state the essential understanding of intuitive awareness, the unified identify [oneness] of all things. Every metaphor carries us in the direction of this unification awareness, and art is the primary domain of metaphorical expression – in both form and content. This is why art plays such a key role in Dynamic Humanism – it is a primary communicative tool in the intuitive – intellectual dynamic [or the secular and spiritual, material and the immaterial dynamic].

Written language has been developed as a sophisticated tool to pass information and serve the intellect and science. But written language, as a linear expression, struggles to carry the holistic message of the intuitive. Currently art, through metaphor, is our most effective vehicle to communicate intuitive awareness in the material domain. We can hope that one day we will develop a vehicle appropriate to the direct communication of the intuitive. It seems most likely that this vehicle will operate through the feature of connection and shared identity that is inherent to the intuitive, and that no intermediate means of expression [vehicle] will be necessary. Awareness will be shared directly between and among minds. The presence of telepathy and clairvoyance among psychic phenomena suggests this possibility, should we put as much effort into developing these capabilities as we have in developing the written language of science and the intellect. Even with such a well-developed intuitive channel, art will remain vital in bringing intuitive awareness to expression metaphorically in the explicate, material world.

Art can, of course, be more or less interactive, asking more or less involvement by the audience in realizing the metaphoric message. Some artists only pose a question in metaphoric terms and leave it to the audience to generate the answer [abstract art]. Other artists pose the question and offer the outline of an answer leaving the audience to fill in the details of the message [impressionistic art]. Still other artists deliver question and answer in detail leaving it to the audience to receive their fully formed metaphorical message and respond [representational art]. Dynamic Humanism allows for all of these options recognizing that different artistic offerings are appropriate in different situations and for different audiences. Art can only be judged by whether it readily communicates its intent to its target audience through the creative use of metaphor in the expressive form the artist chooses, whether it illuminates more or less critical issues in awareness, and whether it stimulates appropriate and productive reflection, understanding, and feeling regarding this issue.

Art is an integral part of the human process of searching for meaning in existence; it is not a static product to be collected for its economic value or admired for its difficulty [technical virtuosity], its superficial features, its location in art history, or its technique. If an artistic offering does not contribute in some meaningful way to the fundamental search for meaning in life, it is not ART. It may excite various feelings and emotions [entertainment], or comment on socio-psychological issues [art], but only if it participates in the search at the intuitive-spiritual level is it ART. In this regard, all art must be entertaining [engaging], but little entertainment is art. Entertainment is to art what celebrity is to fame. The same is true for the distinction between art and ART. Art that has remained vital through time most likely is ART which reflects intuitive awareness. Art that transcends time and cultures is the greatest ART, touching on the deepest human spiritual issues in the most profound way to the widest audience. ART, writ LARGE, emanates primarily from intuitive awareness, is technically executed superbly in the formal metaphor chosen, addresses essential socio-spiritual issues in an elegant and simple manner, and through appropriate content metaphors offers or provokes keen insight matched with fitting emotions on these issues.

PART TWO

THE MATERIAL – SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE CONTINUUM CHART

We have to start by saying that the Material – Spiritual Perspective Continuum is strictly a heuristic tool, a way to gather together and display a lot of information so we can see how it is related. In addition, the chart is a conceptualization and does not pretend to capture reality or to represent a theory or individual or cultural worldview. And we need to realize that other terms besides “material” and “spiritual” could easily be substituted to represent the dynamic I am trying to discuss. If you prefer Objective – Subjective, or Explicate – Implicate, or Physical – Mystical, or some other similar pairing, substitute that to reveal the reference range I am considering. What is important is to pursue the idea and not to get hung up in the limitations of language.

The Material – Spiritual Perspective Continuum is intended to display the range of individual and cultural worldviews and the conception of reality that derives from them. For my purposes, it is Western, and especially American, culture with which I am concerned, but the continuum can be diagnostic for any culture, with different cultures being located at different average locations on the continuum as well as at different locations on the continuum with respect to individual associated institutions and variables. Most complex cultures contain within them different subcultures, which can differ broadly in their location on the continuum and with regard to the particular institutions and variables they stress in their own self-definition. Counter cultural movements/groups/subcultures are self-aware of the ways they differ from mainstream/dominant culture, and they intentionally offer a dynamic dialogue about worldview within such cultures. Other subcultures are less “confrontational,” choosing to separate themselves from the mainstream to differing degrees and simply live life on their own terms. So, complex cultures, like American culture, are not homogeneous as to how they are located on the Material – Spiritual Continuum. Indeed, every individual will show some differences in his or her personal worldview as compared to other individuals, even in the same subgroup of the same subculture. And this individual worldview is itself dynamic, changing over time, at a minimum as a function of sex and age and usually as a function of experience.

In spite of the extent of variation, it is nevertheless the case that complex cultures do display mainstream or dominant general tendencies that can be revealed using the continuum. It is at this level that I am using the continuum to discuss the dominant tendencies of Western/American culture and to identify the choices each of us may make as we conduct our lives beneath this umbrella. As individuals, in many ways we are encouraged to dwell mostly in the mainstream, but if we are aware of the options, we may choose the worldview position of an alternative subculture or group, or we may operate independently and develop our own worldview. What is important is not what worldview position we adopt, but that we get there as a result of careful consideration and not just as a consequence of where we are pointed by our parents, our clan, our tribe, our ethnic/religious/class group, our nation, or our guru. An unexamined worldview, which is adopted from others without reflection, is weak at best and at worst dangerous to both ourselves and the destiny of humankind.

The Chart is a tool to summarize the full array of worldview options open to us as cultural beings. In two pages, the chart is a quick visual reference for the key options within the array

of institutional variables. Moving horizontally across the page, we can see the range of choices within the variables of any one cultural institution. The different options correspond to what perspective we adopt, what position we take on the material – spiritual perspective continuum. Moving vertically we can see whether the choices selected in different institutions reflect a consistent perspective on the continuum or a varying, even oppositional, perspective. Most cultures and individuals are not consistent; indeed, they usually contain within them dynamic tension between perspectives in different institutions, and sometimes even within institutions themselves. This dynamic tension “stirs the pot” and tends to keep the culture or individual flexible, creative and adaptive. Cultures and individuals differ in how and where they display this internal dynamic perspective tension.

The Chart and the Continuum are linear and oppositional in nature. This is the only way I have come up with to discuss this complex conceptual challenge – reflecting the limitations of language and intellect. The Chart and Continuum are heuristic – to reflect and promote contemplation. They do not directly reflect reality, or “the way IT is.” It is particularly important to keep in mind that although it seems almost impossible, the extremes of the continuum are more complementary than truly oppositional in nature and have a way of wrapping to meet one another. This eventuality is best represented in two facts: in eastern mystical systems, the intellect [at the material end of the continuum], if pursued to its extreme, is recognized as one path to spiritual enlightenment/ecstasy [at the spiritual end of the continuum]. Secondly, extreme spirituality/enlightenment contains simultaneously the ecstasy and the void – the total fulfillment of the self as everything [spiritual] and the total loss of self as an individual [material]. This seeming paradox is symbolically represented in the universal yin/yang symbol of the circle/sphere containing a black and a white “side,” where the white side includes the black within it and where the black side includes the white within it. This is a symbolic way of recognizing that opposites not only attract, they contain one another within themselves – in short they are actually complements of one another. So, a linear continuum like the Material – Spiritual Continuum is only a way to display what I think is a key opposition in the way we conceive culture and reality. It is not reality itself. It is useful to the extent it helps us in employing the intellect as our tool to think about what defines cultures and individuals – their worldviews and ways of understanding reality.

The Institutional categories in the Chart are numbered, while the variables within these categories are identified with a letter. These numbers and corresponding letters are located in parentheses at relevant points in the Text of the following section of the document. Hopefully, these references make it relatively easy to move between Text and Chart in order to keep track of where readers are and what issue/variable is being discussed. The Chart serves as both an introduction and a summary of what constitutes the main section of this essay.

MATERIAL - SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE CONTINUUM

A. MATERIAL PERSPECTIVE ----- MIXED/OVERLAPPING PERSPECTIVES -----> SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

1) Associated Mental Processes and Faculties

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|
| a. | Logic–Calculation–Contemplation/Plan–Everyday Activities–Daydream–Art/Invent–Dream–PSI/ESP–Meditation–Fusion/Ecstasy | | | | |
| b. | Reason -- Thought -- Contemplation -- Imagination -- Intuition -- Insight | | | | |
| c. | Think/Analyze -- Contemplate -- Imagine -- Synthesize/Pray/Meditate Be | | | | |
| d. | Conscious -- Subconscious -- Unconscious | | | | |
| e. | Intellect -- Intuition | | | | |
| f. | Verbal/Language -- Visual/Image -- Visualization/Kinetic Imagery | | | | |

2) Concept of the Physical World

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|
| a. | Constant and Fixed -- Flexible/Fluid -- Infinite and Interchangeable | | | | |
| b. | Matter/Particle -- Energy/Field/Wave | | | | |
| c. | Concrete/Separate Things -- Relations -- Simultaneous Nothing/Everything | | | | |
| d. | Cause and Effect/Free Will -- Network/System Change -- Fate/Determinism -- Infinite Vibration | | | | |

3) Concept of Space

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|
| a. | Constant and Fixed -- Flexible/Variable -- Infinite without Separation | | | | |
| b. | Definite Here and There/Measured Distance -- Everywhere At Once | | | | |

4) Concept of Time

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|
| a. | Linear Time/Past, Present, Future -- Circular/Repeatable Time -- Reversible Time -- Timeless/Eternal Now | | | | |
| b. | Rapid – Fixed -- Natural – Flexible -- Reversible – Variable -- Flow – Indeterminate | | | | |
| c. | Anticipate/Plan/Progress -- Participate/Engage/Change -- Endless, Infinite Change | | | | |
| d. | Workweek/Everyday -- Weekend -- Vacation-Party-Festival-Arts -- Ritual -- Ascetic Time-Out | | | | |

5) General Associations

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|--|--|--|--|
| a. | Part/Entity/Thing -- Relations -- Whole/All | | | | |
| b. | Do/Act -- Participate -- Be | | | | |
| c. | Divide/Separate/Analyze -- Connect/Relate/Synthesize -- Unite | | | | |
| d. | Take/Consume -- Share/Nurture -- Give/Love | | | | |
| e. | Focused/Fixed/Constant -- Flexible/Change -- Diffuse/Flow | | | | |

6) Associated View of the Natural World

Defeat -- Overcome -- Control -- Battle -- Utilize -- Conserve -- Respect -- Protect -- Honor -- Sanctify

7) Associated Social Perspective and Attitude

- a. Individual -- Family/Clan/Tribe -- Community -- Nation -- Multi-nation -- Gaia/Worldwide
b. Me/Self – Other/Stranger/Foreigner Us -- We -- Everyone/Universal We
c. Egocentric/Biological Imperative -- Socio-centric/Social Imperative -- Human-centric -- Universal Imperative
d. Competition/Struggle/Overcome/Win -- Cooperation/Coordination -- Altruism/Brotherly Love -- Universal Love
e. Pragmatics -- Ethics -- Morality

8) Associated Gender Role Male -- Female

9) Associated Economic System

- Free Enterprise -- Regulated Capitalism -- Socialism -- Communism

10) Associated Measures of Success

- Personal Power, Fame, & Wealth -- Community Benefit, Health & Welfare -- Creative Expression -- Spiritual Fulfillment

11) Associated Political System

- Kingship, Dictatorship, Theocracy -- Representative Democracy -- Democracy -- Consensus/Communalism

12) Associated American Political Party and Ideology

- a. Libertarian -- Republican -- Democrat -- Socialist -- Communist
b. Conservative -- Liberal

13) Associated Philosophy

- Positivism/Pragmatism -- Realism -- Existentialism -- Dynamic Humanism -- Idealism -- Mysticism

14) Associated Value in Mainstream Western Culture

- Essential -- Important -- Serious -- Enjoyable -- Entertaining -- Frivolous -- Fanciful -- Foolish

15) Associated Belief System

- a. Objective/Secular/Profane -- Subjective -- Sacred
b. Science -- Religion/Religiosity -- Spirituality
c. Fact/Data -- Information -- Knowledge -- Wisdom -- Awareness

16) Associated Religious View

- Nihilism/Atheism -- Secular Humanism -- Agnosticism -- Religious Mainstream -- Fundamentalism -- Animism/New Age -- Mysticism

17) Associated Mode of Art

- Photo/Literal Image-Word -- Representation -- Figurative/Impression -- Metaphor -- Symbol -- Abstraction

REALITY, PERSPECTIVE AND HUMAN CAPABILITY

ACHIEVING BALANCED INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT IN AN IMBALANCED CULTURE

Introduction

This core section of Part Two is addressed to the individual who is seeking or pursuing answers to the BIG questions in life – questions about the nature of reality and the meaning of human existence. Those individuals who are relatively young in this search are my intended audience. In this regard, age is often irrelevant in determining the “youth” of the seeker. Some individuals are quite advanced at 16 years of age, and others have hardly begun this quest when they die at 90. Whatever one’s age, my interest is to stimulate and facilitate each person’s quest and to make it as efficient and productive as possible. We all have to make our own way, but there is no reason to waste time and effort if others can offer some useful “tips.”

So far as most of us are concerned, Reality includes humans, the lives we lead, and the natural world around us. The mystery is not so much that we live, but that we are aware of living and that we are able to both reflect on our awareness and the awareness statements of others [levels of meta-consciousness]. Either a blessing or a curse, our consciousness of our lives and selves and the world that surrounds us puts us in a position to ask metaphysical questions and so, not just to live life in the world but also to ponder the nature and meaning of both. It is entirely possible, even probable, that there are levels of reality we are not privy to as humans [even if we were maximally developed and using the most sophisticated technology] that would raise questions much more dazzling and comprehensive in scope than we can ever imagine. Given the enormous limitations that define what we are as humans, we do what we can, and we try to develop techniques [some mental and others mostly of a technological nature] to expand our scope of awareness and dazzle ourselves.

Caution

We all want to Know, “What’s ‘IT’ all about? Reality, Life?”

Absolute FACT: No human knows the answer, and the very first recommendation before all others is that if anyone portrays him or herself as if they know THE answer or that they possess some book or card or crystal that can bring you the answer, **RUN**. This person is a fool, a con-artist, or a promoter of dogma. And there are a lot of these people out there! The first lesson is: when it comes to suggesting answers to the “Big Questions,” remain humble; certainty will always lie far beyond where any of us humans are or can ever reach. The fact is, we just have good and less good proposals. Our proposals masquerade as intellectually stated scientific and philosophical theories and as metaphorically and symbolically created arts and religions. Paradoxically, our worst proposals are the most narrow in both the scope of what they consider and the view they take of it, while they are the most comforting because they make human beings so significant, such central players in reality. Though tantalizing, these very poor guesses are both irresponsible to the whole and dangerous to ourselves and our relationship to the reality that is both “in here” and “out there.” When it comes to the questions we are considering here, there are no simple answers except for the simple-minded. Try to avoid the “comfort” trap in the many forms it takes from charismatic cults, to captivating theoretical paradigms, to health and new age fads, to addictive-escapist drugs.

Another caution is that there is nothing new in what is said in this statement [or likely any other]. How it is said may be somewhat different, but in substance, it has all been said and

written before, many times. Ego, jargon, and ignorance of the vast literature on this subject combine to make current statements seem original. All you need to do is look into the areas of ontology [the study of the real] and epistemology [the study of the true] within philosophy to discover how much has been written on the subject for a very long time. Of course the extent of thought and oral discussion of the subject in all cultures vastly exceeds what has been written and preserved over the last short period of human history. Collectively this oral discussion [especially in monastic settings] has been much more penetrating and intelligible than anything that has been written, which unfortunately tends to be abstruse in the extreme and couched in either metaphor or some of the worst jargon imaginable. Housing statement in abstruse jargon is one way a discipline can kill itself, and Philosophy is near extinction for this reason alone. But the discussion is there, in the literature and available to all who are interested! My suggestion for anyone who wants to approach this literature and not be immediately overwhelmed is that a person begin with a good intellectual history and overview of philosophy in general before he or she delves into ontology or epistemology per se.

In fact, seekers are likely to find more intelligible offerings in the related areas of consciousness studies, transpersonal psychology, and the physics of the very large [cosmology] and the very small [“micrology” – atomic and nuclear physics and quantum mechanics]. There are several excellent presentations for non-physicists of the nature of reality as seen from different perspectives within physics. [See the References section at www.dynamic-humanism.com]

Recommendations for Approaching This Section of the Essay

Depending on where people are in their own growth in awareness, what I have to say here may not be immediately understandable to them. If readers are relatively young in their search and have not spent some time considering the fundamental nature of the world around them and how they fit into it, this statement is likely to seem esoteric and abstract. If it is too much for individuals at the time they discover it, my advice is to put it away and come back later. When they do decide to work with it, individuals can locate the sections they can relate to and work out from there. It is probably best to strive to digest the meat of it, and then put the statement away for a time. If people keep checking in every so often to see what they can glean, they will probably be surprised at the progress they will make. I hope people will stick with it until they know that they understand fully what I am saying in the overall essay. At that point, they are ready to exceed it and create their own statement. All the while they will be living and putting their own proposals into practice where they will be tested.

Redundancy

I do not expect anyone to read this essay or this core section all at one time. Indeed, I would recommend against it! For most – and especially for younger readers, the document is simply too dense, and allowing for a good deal of reflection on the ideas presented in each section is likely to be a great benefit to full understanding. Since the document is likely to be read piecemeal over time, I have repeated foundation ideas across the larger sections so these sections can operate somewhat independently. For those who are new to these ideas, restatement in slightly different terms and in somewhat different contexts can be a significant benefit as it may well take multiple and varied exposure for these ideas to come across with clarity and substance. I hope those readers whose development is more advanced, who are more familiar with the ideas expressed here, and who can proceed more rapidly through the document, can keep in mind the motive for the redundancy that they will encounter.

Language - The Tool

Unfortunately, language is the only tool currently available to formulate and communicate one's thoughts on the subject of reality and humankind's location in it. Written language accommodates contemplation better than the oral form, so it is this version that is more appropriate for this essay. But while language is a fine tool and well suited to discovery in the material world where analysis, science, and intellect reign {1) f}, it is a very clumsy tool for discussing the nature of the infinitely connected and wholistic spiritual world and its perspective. So, readers need to begin by recognizing that I am employing a communication tool that favors and emanates from the material perspective. Some of the difficulty and limitations in this statement reflect this problem. May the reader be the first to develop the systematic and reliable communication tool for the intuitive faculty of humankind, which will reveal more directly the spiritual perspective on reality. Until this new tool arrives, we are stuck suffering the effects of having to use a mechanism or instrument of one part [material reality] to discuss the other part [spiritual reality] and the whole [the continuum of material and spiritual reality and whatever may exceed it].

Individuals should keep in mind that writing down their thoughts is a double-edged sword. It can be a great help in significantly clarifying and systematizing their thoughts, but the writing process forces thought into a linear format, and complex, wholistic matters are not easily or simply rendered in this medium. However, writing is what we have available. My recommendation is to use it - a lot. Committing to a daily personal thinking and intuiting journal, which also records all the sensing and feeling that accompany these processes, is a super tool!

The Challenges of Scale and Limiting Points of View

Perception/Conception - Anthropocentrism

Reality is one thing. The human perception of reality is quite another. As humans we are limited by the sensory and conceptual tools we are given. The reality we know does not include the penetrating sight of the raptor, the smell of the canine, the hearing of the bat, or the vibration sensitivity of the whale, that uses receptors for which we do not even have a parallel. What can be done with what is sensed [conceptualization] is also a matter of great distinction among species, and it is in this department that we think of ourselves as being quite "advanced". We modern humans are so smart it only took us 199,600 of our perhaps 200,000 years of existence to figure out the earth was not the center of the universe! And the ideas that space is curved, that the force of gravity is variable, and that matter may not even exist exceed the grasp of nearly all of us. As impressed as we are with ourselves and the progress in knowledge that we have made in recent years, in fact we are extremely limited creatures when it comes to both sensing and conceptualizing the reality around us. Given our severe limitations, we cannot avoid the conclusion that, even with all of our technological aids, we discern and understand a very tiny part of what is real and "out there." Trying to peer through a muddy glass partly and darkly is where in fact we are, and we must never forget this. We have to accept with proper humility the peep hole on reality through which we can construct our current "guesses" about the universe. The absolutely worst form of hubris is to assume that what we perceive and conceive matches "what is out there." Anthropocentrism, the tendency to see things and characterize them in human terms, is the first hurdle we face when it comes to understanding human existence. It is a huge hurdle and one that we tend to overlook as we mostly engage in debates from within its confines.

It is a great irony that as severely limited as we are as humans, we make such minimal use of what we have. As members of modern western culture with a concern for big picture questions, the irony is that much greater since we so minimally recognize and develop the very human faculties that offer the greatest potential for revealing cosmological or big picture awareness – our Intuitive capabilities.

Geocentrism and the Importance of Scale

As a species, humans are very late arrivals on the reality scene on a very small planet in a small solar system in a medium size galaxy in a moderate size galaxy cluster in a universe of many clusters in what may well be a system of multiple or parallel universes. And these are merely the major cosmological scales we have penetrated or have a scientific reason to propose so far, mostly based on interpreting the hints our technology has provided us. If readers have not been exposed to a good presentation of what is presently known about the components and composition of the physical universe, then they simply must start here. It is not possible to contemplate with respect the place of humans in reality until we know the vast expanses of the known material universe. Examining a good current atlas of the universe should absolutely humble individuals when they realize the infinitesimally tiny place they occupy for but a blip in all of time on their planet that is so small that it is not even observable from outside our solar system. If individuals absorb the full implications of what it means to use binoculars and look up into the dense canopy of visible stars on a clear, dark night, they will realize that as vast as it seems, they see but a minute part of what is “out there.”

Within this vast domain – over eons of time, human recorded history on earth is but a flyspeck in human history, and modern western culture with its last two hundred years of “progress” is the very tip of the tail of recorded human history. Given these circumstances, we have to ask ourselves what is the likelihood that as late earth bound arrivals we human beings are of any importance whatever in the grand scheme of things. If we are honest, we have to admit the likelihood is infinitesimally small. Geocentrism, the tendency to see the cosmos in terms of an earth centered point of view, is a very significant hurdle people must recognize and overcome.

A combined anthropocentric and geocentric perspective defines the pre-scientific view of reality and the universe. All of the great religions arose in this pre-scientific period, and all are derived from within this limiting perspective. When we think at the big picture scale of what is currently known about the expanse of the universe, such postulations of human and earthly centrality are beyond absurdity, however psychologically and sociologically comforting they may be. Gods or no Gods, we must ask ourselves, how likely is it that the utterly vast cosmos out there is focused on humans on planet earth, much less on humans with some particular religious doctrine - “the elect.”

To assist readers in thinking about this, suppose that the universe were limited to the size of our Milky Way galaxy, which takes 100,000 years traveling at 186,000 miles per second to cross and contains as many as 100 billion solar systems [10 to the power of 11]. At this scale, you would have to claim that the “Almighty” is personally concerned with every atom in every grain of sand on earth, if you are to imagine that the Almighty is even aware of the human species as a whole on earth, much less aware of or concerned with keeping a behavior record for each individual human on a 24/7 basis – so He/She can judge each of us separately at our death and assign us a “destination.” It is an absolute tragedy for civilized

humankind that, in spite of our current scientific awareness of the vast extent of the known physical universe and of the utterly insignificant position and role earth and humankind play in it, the vast majority of humans continue to have their worldview and much of their behavior defined by religious beliefs which depend on an extraordinarily constrained anthropocentric and geocentric set of assumptions.

It is not comforting to keep Scale in mind as we contemplate what is real and what the significance of our being is in this vast scheme of things [at least not from the usual material perspective]. But if we lose a proper appreciation of scale, we fall into "tiny pit" thinking, and we will buzz like a fly trapped in a trashcan and mistake rotten orange peels for all of reality. If we examine history carefully, we will discover that most of the nonsensical behavior of humankind can be traced to the effects of "tiny pit" thinking in one form or another. When we lose the proper sense of scale, we tend to vastly exaggerate the significance of who we are, how we act, and what we believe to the point where we exterminate one another or trash our planet in the name of cultural progress or economic advantage or the fulfillment of some prophecy.

If we always keep scale in mind, we have a much better chance of remaining appropriately humble and of avoiding much of the worst nonsense humankind has – and continues – to generate, much of it framed in geocentric and anthropocentric terms. While at this point there is no good reason for it, we still carry a lot of very influential cultural baggage of this sort from a prior age of extraordinary ignorance with its superbly arrogant perspective. If individuals manage to do but one thing in life, they can make a concerted effort to always remain grounded in an accurate sense of scale. While this is not easy to do, if they can manage to achieve this, they will find that a respectful understanding of most everything else – both cultural and personal – will fall rather easily into place.

Ethnocentrism - Race/Culture/Ethnicity/Nationhood

Mankind has evolved in very recent geological times into a few races and hundreds of cultures, nations, and ethnic groups. Superficial physiological features are most of the bases for distinguishing races. We know these features are superficial since at the biological level there are no significant differences in the genomes of the races, and members of the races readily cross for reproductive purposes. Language, dialect, custom, political structure, and religious differences are the primary bases for distinguishing cultures, nations, and ethnic groups. Much is made of these distinctions to the point where humans justify killing one another over them [and the symbols associated with them - flags]. From a truly big picture perspective [Scale], these distinctions are so minute they are totally without importance or meaning, though they can be significant in defining the quality of the lives of many people for what are in essence very short periods of time. Racism, Nationalism, and Ethnocentrism - the view that the reality as conceived by one nation or culture or ethnic group is better than another - is another major hurdle individuals must exceed as they seek to discover the "real." The more limited the scale of our contemplation, the more likely we are to be confined or captured by these narrow points of view. In general, bigotry only flourishes in the most limited and uninformed conceptions of reality. Bigotry cannot survive "big picture" exposure.

Western Cultural Centricism

Based on its socio-economic system [representative democracy and regulated capitalism], its investment in science and technology, and its concept of progress, modern western culture [based in European and Anglo-American cultures] has risen to dominate more and more of

the world over the last 200 years or so. Because of its "success" as the dominant culture at the present time, the perspective of western culture has ascended to prominence as well. In fact, since we rarely consider the impact of the scales beyond this western cultural perspective [ethnocentrism, geocentrism, and anthropocentrism], this perspective is probably the most influential factor in defining the nature of reality for most Europeans, their colonial descendants and their Third World aspirants. Escaping the confines of western cultural centrism is the last and probably the most important and difficult challenge we must face in our struggle to locate what is real and to set a course for the kind of life we want to live in terms of our discoveries. Most of the rest of what I have to say in this essay addresses the challenges western cultural centrism poses to our full development.

THE BASIC DICHOTOMIES OF PERSPECTIVE AND HUMAN MENTAL FACULTIES THE MATERIAL - SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE CONTINUUM

Humans experience reality as being both "out there" and "in here." These two radically different experiences correspond to the two fundamentally different, yet complementary, perspectives that define how humans understand themselves and the world around them: the Material Perspective and the Spiritual Perspective – **A** [the objective and the subjective {15} a]. Of course, like all dichotomies - which derive from the material perspective and language as its communicative tool, a continuum in fact exists between the one perspective and the other. It is not a black [material] or white [spiritual] situation. Shades of gray is where IT is AT. Mostly the two perspectives co-exist or overlap with one being more or less dominant as we move along the perspective continuum in one direction [material] or the other [spiritual] – **A**, depending on the demands of the particular task being undertaken. Corresponding to these two perspectives are the faculties of the human mind {1} e} – the intellect [keyed to the material], and the intuitive [keyed to the spiritual]. Like the two perspectives, these two corresponding faculties of mind are most often both active in addressing most tasks in life with one or the other emphasized depending on what the individual task requires. It is through these faculties [together with the emotions which charge them both] and the development of these faculties that we experience the two perspectives and know reality.

The short statement above is the foundation for everything that follows. In a sense, it is the primary "thesis" of the essay. While this statement will be explored in detail in the rest of what is presented, readers may want to dwell on it a bit at this point – to get as firm a grasp as possible at the outset.

THE DOMINANT MATERIAL PERSPECTIVE

One dichotomy is at the root of all materially based, cultural constructions of reality [all intellectually based theories, worldviews, and philosophies]. Notice that the present statement is included. This dichotomy is the part vs. the whole {5} a} [which contains within it part vs. part]. To varying degrees cultures emphasize either the dichotomous parts or the relations among them, but all have the material perspective as basic because this is the primary perspective of biological survival {1} c}. Without the essential dichotomy of self - other {1} b} as a starting point for distinctions, there is no identifiable food, no basis for "takings." Without externalized takings {5} d} there is no energy source to sustain material existence. The infant at its mother's breast is discovering the self - other dichotomy and its

first taking [as well as its first significant relationship]. The rest of material understanding is just a vast expansion of this beginning.

All human cultures define the world around them in terms of material distinctions and most distinctions are based on dichotomies which are themselves arrayed in hierarchies of more and less inclusiveness [eastern - western hemisphere, North - South America, Canada - United States, east - west or north - south United States, Northeast - Southwest United States, Oregon - Washington states, etc.]. Language proceeds from names, which create separate niches for the things we bother to distinguish. Trichotomies are usually just dichotomies with a center point on the continuum between the dichotomous extremes {5} f} [past - present - future, North - Central - South America, etc.]. Cultural systems based on fours are usually dual dichotomies [north - south, east - west]. Think of all the dichotomies that are basic to our perception of our analytically based reality: fathers-mothers, sisters-brothers, husbands-wives, rich-poor, love-hate, life-death, sleep-wake, right-left, smart-dumb, day-night, white-black, heaven-hell, loose-tight, high-low, hot-cold, buy-sell, create-destroy, fast-slow, beautiful-ugly, bright-dim, light-dark, borrow-lend, laugh-cry, young-old, skin-bones, up-down, good-bad, enter-exit, weak-strong, etc. The list covers virtually everything we bother to distinguish and name.

The Analytical Faculty of Mind {1)}

Analysis is the intellectual [{1} e}, rational {1} b}, scientific {15} b}] human, mental process of discovering parts and their relations to wholes. Discovering distinctions and naming the distinguished parts is at the root of this process, and as materially defined humans we assume that the parts so discovered constitute the reality that is "out there." The "laws" of relationship {5} c} we discover between these parts we take to be equally revealing of this reality, and we assume that we can discover the system of reality in this pursuit if we are systematic and careful in the discovery process [the scientific method].

The pursuit of part - whole dichotomies as a result of using the analytical faculty of mind up and down the scales is endless and infinite [from neutrinos to universes, from individuals to fictional intergalactic political unions]. In every facet of culture or society this is true [religion, politics, economy, education, etc.].

The "Matter" View In Physics {2}, 3), 4)}

In physics, it turns out that there are two ways of looking at any phenomenon: as matter or as energy {2} b} [particle vs. wave or field {2} b}]. These two views seem mutually exclusive, yet we know that each is "true" [and therefore complementary] since we can produce practical and predictable results based on the assumptions of both views. Modern physics is struggling to find a unified theory capable of resolving the apparent contradiction between these two views, and thereby proving the connection in this underlying complementarity, but to the present time, all efforts have proven inadequate to account for all phenomena. If a unified theory is derived, it will certainly constitute a milestone in physics. But in the scheme of infinite part - whole relations, we can automatically predict that the realization of a whole at the scale of the universe will immediately reveal the next scale and the greater whole of which our universe is a part [we are already postulating a reality of multiple universes with entirely different physical laws existing in some kind of dynamic interrelationship]. So, it is very unlikely that any unified theory at any scale will in fact resolve the part - whole challenge, whatever it may do to resolve the dichotomies of matter vs. energy in classical vs. quantum mechanics.

Light is an example of one phenomenon that we have come to realize must be seen as both particle [matter] and wave [energy] to be understood fully. In some instances light acts as if it is a particle and its actions can be largely accounted for in Newtonian terms; in other circumstances light acts as if it is a wave without mass and its actions are best accounted for in terms of a pure energy or field perspective. Neither the matter nor the energy perspective alone is sufficient. What seem to be mutually exclusive perspectives are both necessary and equally "true." The reader will find that being challenged to discover the underlying complementarity in what seem to be mutually exclusive perspectives is central throughout this essay.

Within physics, one view, the Newtonian mechanical theory, describes the world in terms of separate material entities and their regular, "lawful" relations. Matter and the laws of its behavior are the focus of this view, and all of the assumptions which underlie this theory correspond to the more general material perspective on reality. This theory of "mechanics" has proved itself so useful that technology based upon it has become an essential element in the industrialization of the western world and its commitment to the notion of "progress" – 3) c. In man's everyday world this theory and the capabilities that have followed from it have been so successful that together they seem to suggest that man can eventually reach the point of mastering the physical world, controlling it, and determining its destiny, along with his own {6}). It is only at the edges or extremes of mechanical phenomena that the underlying material assumptions of this theory become shaky to the point of dissolution. Micro particles and macro cosmological systems exhibit behaviors that are not easily captured by mechanics, suggesting that while the theory works well in the middle of the continuum of "thingness," something else is at work at least at the extremes of the very small and very large. Electromagnetism also remains a mystery in mechanical theory, and it is at least ironic that as technology has advanced, it has come to depend more and more on electronics and the behavior of very small phenomena [the computer age].

The world as seen from the view of energy {2), 3), 4)} is considered later and interestingly corresponds very closely to the spiritual perspective.

Values Imposed and Differential Action Justified {14)}

To the dichotomies at different scales, which are fundamental to the material perspective, culture greatly complicates the situation by teaching us to attach values, or indications of relative importance. Gold is more valuable than silver, Cadillacs are better than Chevrolets, one race or ethnic group is superior to another, pigs are dirty and disgusting, standard English is superior to dialects, etc. By imposing values on the distinctions we make, culture justifies differential actions on our part as both individuals and groups - to desire and pursue or to hate and avoid, to covet or to kill, etc. It is honorable to kill the enemy, brave to save the friend, good to obey one's parents, right to challenge the gang from the "other" block.

In general, Western Culture tends to place the highest value on the things and activities generated at the material end of the spectrum {14)}. As the continuum proceeds in the more intuitive direction and the social, artistic and finally the spiritual aspects emerge, Western, and especially American, Culture accords less and less value {14)}. Of course, this is only true for the dominant secular culture, not for the religious and spiritually oriented subcultures, which have grown in influence, if not in actual numbers, in recent years.

Secular Humanism, Pragmatics and Ethics {15), 7) e}

The secular world is the objective world of the concrete and material {15) a; 2) b, c}. The "rules" governing human relations [what is permitted and prohibited behavior toward ones fellow humans] in secular society are assigned or imposed by culture, which is regarded as a purely human construct. These rules are intended to provide the necessary social controls so society can function smoothly. The view that humans are solely responsible for defining and regulating the social controls for themselves is humanism {13}). Secular humanism {16) a} is humanism [a socially oriented philosophy, {13}] based on a material view of the world. Ethics refers to this humanistic set of rules or to the study of this humanistic process of definition, imposition, and regulation of the rules of social control {7) e}. There is meant to be nothing religious or spiritual in the derivation or justification of these social rules.

Individualism and Conservatism

In line with this "valued," dichotomous, separate material focus is the emphasis on the discrete individual - the self {7}) and "things" [possessions, wealth] {10}) as paramount in importance in judging individuals. What passes as the "conservative" viewpoint {12) b} is tied to individualism: the celebration of the rights, privileges, and freedom of the individual as fundamental {7) a}. Laissez faire capitalism/Free Enterprise {9}) expresses this conservative individualism taken to its extreme in the realm of economics just as current militia groups with their claims for sovereign status in Montana or Idaho do for small groups in the political realm {12}). Of our two major American political parties, clearly the Republicans {12) a}) are more conservative, and in recent years the conservative branch within the Republican Party itself has tended to set the party's agenda with the amorphous "Tea Party" yet further to the right.

Free Will and Intentional Action {2) d; 13); 4) b}

In the world defined by the material perspective, discrete individuals are free to do things to other discrete individuals and entities {2) d}. They can decide what, when and how to act with consequences to other human beings and entities in the world. Individuals may be related, but from the material perspective these relationships are never so extensive that the individual ceases to have free will to decide and to act and to have a resulting impact or effect {2) d}[initial cause]. Individuals are seen as controlling their own destinies.

Time – {4)}

Time is a defining feature of the material perspective. All things exist in a past, present, and future linear progression with the future extending before us {4) a}. We can locate discrete events in time and account for the linear progression of such events. We can also anticipate and plan {4) c} and by doing {4) b} so shape the form the future takes. This is where the linear notion of time {4) a} joins the assumptions of separateness {2) c} and free will {2) d} in the material perspective. Time is limited and we are to make "good use" of the time we have. Pace is the rate at which we consciously use the time we have. We can rush and do more in less time. We can move faster, and in the western material world we celebrate speed because we believe it represents greater efficiency in doing. Time is of the essence and the future is always on the horizon from the material perspective {4) b}.

Point of View, Point of View Shifts, and Judgments Within the Material Perspective

The material perspective with its emphasis on the separateness of things {2) c} stresses the value of the individual {7) a} and allows for competition {7) d} between these separate individuals as the means to determine relative fitness [the theory of evolution]. The assumption is that the more fit individual or species will succeed and the less fit will fail. The

ultimate failure results in the death of the individual or species, which occurs continually as individuals and species out compete {5} d) one another in the pursuit of limited resources.

How one regards the result of this competitive contest depends on one's point of view within the material perspective. From the point of view of the survivor, the "consumption" of the other is positive, constructive, and good. From the point of view of those identifying with the "consumed," the loss is negative [tragic], destructive, and bad. Diametrically opposed assessments of the same consequences reflect different points of view from within the material system of things [part/part, part/whole dichotomies]. It follows that in the material perspective on life, point of view is everything, and anything can be justified from some perspective [more narrow or more broad, at this scale or that]. This is a pragmatic philosophy {13}. What is good for one person may be bad for another person or for the family, what is good for one ethnic group may be bad for another ethnic group or for the larger nation entity, and what is good for one nation may be bad for another nation or for the world of nations, etc.

From within the material perspective, we cannot escape the effect of point of view shifts. As much as we may desire to postulate fundamental ethical principles as basic to behavior in the material realm, there is no basis for absolute right or wrong judgments from within this perspective. There is only change as a result of competitive relationships and winners and losers at all levels and scales of "thingness" that follow from these changes.

MATERIAL PERSPECTIVE DOMINANCE IN WESTERN CULTURE

As members of modern western culture, we are encouraged to understand who we are and what the world is like around us in terms of a position on the material - spiritual perspective continuum that strongly favors the material perspective {14}. Most of us are so fully grounded in the material and analytical [part/whole], value laden [good/bad], time oriented, and point of view shifting [right/wrong] conception of self, other, and the world that for the most part we accept that this is the nature of who we are and what the reality is that exists - out there. "Serious" culture {14}, including work {4} d), is almost exclusively thought of in these terms. Only when we release this requirement for seriousness, for engaging the "business" of life, do we sense in our "free," or "play," or "recreational," or "religious" time that there is a different way of being in and knowing ourselves, others, and the world around us {4} d). Apart from the need for physiological renewal, we ignore any possible importance or use for sleep with its periods of dreaming which consume fully one third of our lives. We recognize that we need these "time outs," but since this is "non-serious" time, we do not pay attention to or much value the different faculty of mind [imagination/intuition infused with emotion] which comes to the fore during these activities {1} a, b, c, d). This is a major part of the perspective bias of our modern western culture.

Religious fundamentalism {16} in western culture is a symptom of the dissatisfaction that arises when groups within the culture regard the material or secular perspective as becoming too powerful or exclusive. Such groups are usually Christian in nature, but they can be of all different sorts, including what are referred to as New Age and mystical sects and cults. Such fundamentalism attempts to reassert the importance of a spiritual perspective and a moral {7} e) [not just ethical] basis for human behavior. Unfortunately, a religious perspective involves a basic and potentially dangerous misconception and misrepresentation of the spiritual point of view. In a moment, we will come to the very important distinction between the spiritual and the religious viewpoints {15} c).

TRANSITIONING TO THE SPIRITUAL

As we move on the perspective continuum away from purely material [Intellectual/rational] position in the direction of the spiritual [intuitive] perspective, distinctions [things] continue to exist but relations {2) c} among these distinctions become more and more apparent and important. At the mid-point on the perspective continuum, relations become more dense and important and the social imperative becomes clear – together with the obligations that accompany the awareness of being connected [the social imperative {7) c}]. As the scale of consideration broadens to include more and more of reality as experienced from this spiritual perspective, finally the individual's separateness [thingness] dissolves and fuses with all else {7) c}. On the other hand, as we move along the continuum in the material direction and away from the spiritual perspective, discreteness becomes more and more emphatic, relations become less and less apparent and dense, and the scale narrows to include less and less of reality until the individual or entity stands entirely alone, seemingly connected to others and other things only by choice, not by obligation or essential condition {7) a – e}.

Whether we recognize it or not, most of us spend most of our lives engaged in tasks which require us to locate ourselves somewhere on the material – spiritual continuum in the middle where both perspectives, together with their associated intellectual – intuitive mental processes, are simultaneously engaged and active {A}. Even when we think we are so "serious" and analytical, we in fact have a substantial intuitive track operating. Given this basic condition, as the need arises we can slide along the continuum in the direction of either perspective and utilize to a greater or lesser degree the mental faculties which correspond to that location on the continuum - the logical/intellectual/rational/analytical/technical/verbal or the intuitive/imaginative/synthetic/visual {1) a – e}. And we do this with virtually no awareness that we are doing it or that we have this capability.

Compounding the fluidity and overlap of our intellectual and intuitive mental functions, we frequently shift scales up or down, and we are rarely aware that we are making these shifts. As a result, at different times we can debate the same issue with great commitment to opposing conclusions because we have adopted the opposing perspective [e.g. spiritual rather than material] or shifted our point of view to a lesser or broader scale [e.g. national to worldwide {7) a}]. And in spite of having made either or both of these moves, we may have only the slightest awareness that we have done so, or that there is any "contradiction" between the conclusions we have reached as a result. Indeed, resting most of the time in the middle of the continuum where both the material and spiritual perspectives and their associated mental faculties are active and contribute equally to "define" reality, in one respect there is no contradiction, just the natural result of our complementary capabilities and perspectives. While we cannot escape this confusing mixed-perspective circumstance - except by moving to the extremes of the continuum, we can be aware that we are in it and understand where our confusion and inconsistency comes from. Certainly, we are much better off knowing that we tend to be inconsistent and why, than being ignorantly inconsistent.

THE SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

Problems for the material perspective begin when we recognize that the "space" between the part and the whole [or the part and the part] is occupied by relations {2) c}, the web of which becomes more and more defined [complex, complicated, dense] as we move progressively in the direction of the whole end of the part/whole continuum {5) a}. At the whole end of the

continuum and at the moment when the whole is perceived, the density of relations becomes so concentrated that it solidifies in our material perception and is immediately transformed thereby into a part, which we now see as belonging to the next more inclusive level [or scale] in the system of part/whole dichotomies [quarks become protons, become nuclei, become atoms, become molecules, become compounds, become cells, become organisms, etc]. A whole is a part at the next broader scale of material perception, and a part is a whole at the next narrower scale of perception.

The problem is that with each shift in scale, the part or whole disappears perceptually to become its opposite with the perception of relations on the continuum either increasing or decreasing as we proceed in the direction of the whole or the part respectively. Because both wholes and parts disappear with shifts in scale, there is a sense in which they are both illusory - the product of our limited perceptual and conceptual ability as human beings. It follows from this extreme point that at the spiritual end of the continuum all dichotomies [distinctions, entities] themselves are artificial {2) c}. If distinctions are artificial, then all imposed value judgments and the actions that follow from them have no basis in reality and are without merit. The material world, which we conceptualize in terms of "things" - parts or wholes - to which we give names and values, including names and values for our "selves" as individuals, is illusory from this extreme spiritual perspective {2), 3), 4)}. All there really is "out there" is an infinite set or web of relations which exists through an infinite range of scales, and the distinction between "out there" and "in here" itself disappears.

Dissolution of Self and Emergence of All

From the extreme spiritual position on the material - spiritual perspective continuum {A}, relations are all there is. Individuality is an illusion and individualism is impossible. All exists at once as a constantly and infinitely changing flow or glow of relations {2), 3), 4)}. In the world of infinite relations where thingness is an illusion, death is also an illusion. Relations are always changing and what we call death is no more than one kind of change in relations, which we single out and give special significance from a material perspective [which imposes a time frame]. From the extreme spiritual perspective there is no life or death, no good or bad {7) e}, just change in the flow or vibration of infinite relations. If we can conceive of the universe as a web of relations of different densities existing at all scales from the very smallest to the very largest, then everywhere we "look" there are connections in the energy field sense {2) b}, not the separate material juncture sense. We have to understand how awkward it is to describe this subjective view of reality using language as the tool since language is grounded in nouns [things] and time [tense] and independent action [verbs].

The Energy View in Physics

Unlike matter, energy is a field phenomenon and exists at different levels of intensity everywhere all the time, infinitely connected at and through all scales. What appear as things are really just bundles or concentrations of energy, which seem "solid" at certain scales given the limitations of human perception and conception from the material perspective. From an energy perspective, there is no "empty" space between "things," only relations of greater or lesser intensity pervading all scales. The energy view of the world is all about connections and relations, their types, and strengths. The extremes within the material perspective of great mass and vacuum [the absence of mass] do not exist because we cannot really have either things or no things, just greater or fewer relations with different strengths, which as human beings we can perceive or not at any one time. Following a pure spiritual perspective and using the energy view in modern physics, humans peer into the infinite scheme of energy

and "discover" things, not because they are separately "there" but because the nature and limits of human perception suggest there are "solid" things where there are concentrations of energy sufficient to be perceived as such at that scale.

If readers are having trouble grasping the energy point of view, they can recall the presentations they have probably seen in media of progressive penetration of different phenomena through several scales, whether it be from a satellite picture of the earth down to a letter on a license plate, or from a picture of a human arm to a red blood cell right through the skin, tissue, and blood vessels. In each of these progressions, what appears from the starting position as "solid" (the earth from space, or the arm from two or three feet) breaks up into parts as the penetration proceeds, including the skin of the human arm. At each narrower scale [each scale of "closer" examination], what was seen as a solid fragments into parts, and in reverse, the parts seem to solidify into wholes as the scale progressively broadens. Now think of the parts at any scale as packets or concentrations of energy, which either combine through field relationships to become larger wholes or fragment through field relationships to become more minute energy packets. The field, which we do not see, is always present, while the energy packets, which are organized by these fields, are perceived or not depending on their concentrations and where your perception happens to be located or focused. Move in, move out and at any one position our perception discerns things, but as soon as we shift position [scale] the seemingly stable or concrete things either combine to become larger perceived things or divide to become smaller perceived things. So what is real, the constant interlinked fields we do not see or the packets we see but which keep dissolving or combining? To put it simply, from one legitimate perspective – the spiritual or energy perspective, the fields are real and the "things" illusory.

If the description of telescopic or microscopic progressions through scales does not make the point, try conceptualizing the energy perspective by considering the single largest volume that surrounds us - air. Perceptually, as critical as air is to us, we perceive it only through touch or sound as wind; visually it is nothing at all to us. The density of hydrogen and oxygen and nitrogen atoms and the energy field condition that exists among them is not sufficient for us to "perceive" anything there through our main sense of sight. Yet we know that science has proved that these "things" and this energy field are there. Only when atoms of hydrogen and oxygen combine in molecules and these molecules gather together in clusters do we see "air" as the specks in mist or the drops in rain. In one sense, water is a concentrated form of air [less the nitrogen] and at this level of energy concentration we are able to see it, though we can still see through it. Now imagine that we could see air as a solid, like water. Would the other things we can see around us in the water be less separate? What happens if you allow the density of air to become like Jell-O? What happens to the notion of separate things in this circumstance as the medium between "things" becomes denser yet? As the density increases, we will discover that separateness becomes more and more difficult to sustain because the "space" between fills in with energy of a density more and more equal to that of the "things" we otherwise perceive as separate. When air is imagined as having the density of wood, separation dissolves. All we have done is to imagine changing the density of energy concentration in one medium at one scale, and the assumption of thingness or discreteness becomes more and more problematic, the connections become more and more apparent, and the sense of a single shared identity emerges more and more.

As a field phenomenon, energy is everywhere all the time, infinitely interconnected, though existing in various densities and different vibrational types. Air and outer space are less

dense but no less connected than the nodules or specks in a rock. How do we find separateness, discreteness, parts, or independence in this reality of infinite and infinitely interconnected energy through infinitely connected fields? They are found only when we introduce the limitations of human perception and the material perspective, which rests upon these limitations. The significance of these perceptions and this material perspective to biological survival is the basis for the claim that these perceptions and this perspective reveal something "real." The success of mechanical theory in physics to explain the relationship of things on earth and in the universe seems to greatly support this human material perspective. It seems to be a powerful claim, but it places enormous significance on the existence of human beings with their perceptual limitations, something that is harder and harder to justify as the big picture gets bigger and bigger and mechanical theory is more and more constrained. It is this situation that leads some to claim that the energy or field or implicate or spiritual perspective on reality is the "true" one, while the material perspective is an artifact of our perceptual and conceptual limitations as humans.

In this regard, a very serious proposition has emerged recently in physics, which asserts that matter in fact does not exist, and that all of reality is defined solely by different kinds and degrees of energy. If this view proves accurate, the spiritual perspective would be reinforced and the contention would gain in credibility that the subjective – and consciousness as a field phenomena within it are primary. Material reality would become secondary, and through infinite entanglement as suggested by quantum theory [first in the unity of the Big Bang and then in more recent "contact"], instantaneous connectedness without the need to require any independent force could account for many anomalies, including paranormal phenomena [Psi].

Whether one or the other perspective "truly" reveals reality is a fundamental question, and for my purposes it is not essential to try to answer it. Instead I have taken the existential position that whatever the ultimate answer to this question may be, we still need to be prepared pragmatically to live in the world from both the material and spiritual perspectives. Indeed, as humans why else are we equipped with both perspectives and their corresponding mental faculties [intellect and intuition]. To deny the material seems as air-headed as crediting all of reality to a material view is hard-headed.

The assumptions that underlie the energy view of reality in physics correspond rather exactly to the spiritual perspective. The discovery in modern physics that matter and energy are interchangeable, transformations of one another in fact as well as point of view, and that the perspective of each is essential for a holistic awareness of reality and how it functions is critical in my existential approach to understanding reality {13}. For me, this transformative, dual view serves as a model for our understanding of who we are and how we must operate in the world. The interchangeability of all things that physics has discovered is at the root of reality is the dynamic principle that I am suggesting should apply to ourselves and our development as human beings. We are physical beings with intellectual mental abilities to cope to the extent we exist in the material world, and we are spiritual beings with intuitive capabilities to the extent we exist in the spiritual or implicate world, the world of pure energy. And as we engage most of the ordinary tasks of life, we operate as material and spiritual beings simultaneously, even though we are not aware of this fact and even though we tend both to overestimate greatly our rational involvement in the material and underestimate significantly our participation in the spiritual/implicate/subjective through the intuitive faculty.

Community/Liberalism

Relations are connections and the spiritual perspective emphasizes connections rather than the entities the connections connect {5) c}. Communities are bundles of connections recognized at different scales {7) a}. What is called the "liberal" view of life {12) b} is one informed by a sense of the fundamental nature and importance of connections that is emphatic in the spiritual experience and retained as significant in the middle area of the material - spiritual continuum, where we mostly live our lives. It is the obligations among individuals through their communal connections as members of communities that "liberals" stress rather than the exclusive rights of separate individuals, which conservatives emphasize {12) b}. Of course, relations are not just among humans but exist among all "things," and community with all it entails is a concept that applies as much to natural systems, which include man, as to social systems of humans. While a liberal viewpoint is strongly social in orientation and the conservative viewpoint is predominately individual, a fully liberal viewpoint appreciates and promotes the integrity of the ecological and cosmological community, not just the human community {6)}. It is for this reason that ecologists and "environmentalists" are much more often liberals than conservatives {12) b}.

In terms of our major American political parties, the philosophy of the Republican party stresses the material and individual perspective while the Democratic party emphasizes the social point of view, which is more akin to the spiritual and communal perspective {12) a}. In the full spectrum of political ideologies, Democrats and Republicans both occupy center positions with their differences being a matter of tendencies in either the material or spiritual direction. In America, it is necessary to search the realms of the minor parties to discover the extremes of political affiliation on the material – spiritual continuum, and even here it is difficult to locate true authoritarian or communalistic parties {11)}. Unfortunately, neither of our major American parties is aware of the basis in reality, human perspectives, or human faculties for its philosophy; so opportunities for enlightened debate are consequently greatly limited. Regrettably, the electorate is even more clueless and suffers greatly because of the ease with which it can be manipulated by emotion and all kinds of false arguments [spin] as employed by both parties.

Time {4)}

Relations in the spiritual world change in the sense that they vibrate all at once and infinitely {4) a, c}. Even the concept of flow [implying a "from here to there"] is an imposition from the material world of "explanation" {4) b} [the language problem again]. The concept of time requires a reference point, and from the extreme spiritual perspective there are no points as there are no things. With no temporal reference points, the linearity required by the concept of time is absent {4) a}. There can be no before or after, there only is an eternal, infinitely vibrating, present or now from the extreme spiritual viewpoint. It is only because of the human limitations in perception, which provide us with partial and piecemeal observation from here to there in the vast dynamic web of ALL, that humans get the impression of events coming before or after one another – from this perspective.

Less far along the material – spiritual continuum but in the direction of the spiritual extreme, time is loose, flexible, circular, or reversible {4) a, b, c}. This is the time zone of most intuitive based experiences from daydream, to dream, to art, to the psychic, to the religious {1) a; 15) b}. In this context, time is seemingly absent, compressed, or expanded, and often irregular. Events and things are not necessarily organized by linear time or by their location in a

“known” place in space {3) a} but by alternative and mixed criteria of relationship [e.g. events may be linked by color or an associated feeling].

Being Rather Than Doing {5) b}

The concept of free will rests on all the assumptions of the material perspective {2) d}. It requires separation/discreteness/individuality, the concept of linear time, and the notion of independent action [causality] {2), 3), 4)}. From the spiritual end of the perspective continuum, knowing and participating or being included or one within the infinite, vibrating relations - the all - replaces the notion of independent being and doing and "achieving" in a material world {10)}. "Doing" from the extreme spiritual location is an illusion, an impossibility. Even the concept of fate/determinism {2) d} is false at the spiritual extreme since the notion of fate requires the concept of time [that there is a future and that it is determined or fixed]. Fate is a concept that arises when spiritual awareness about being is taken back into the middle of the material - spiritual perspective continuum and poorly interpreted. Fate is one way of characterizing the decreasing sense of free will as you move along the continuum in the direction toward an intuitive based or spiritual perception of reality and discreteness fades and awareness of the density of relations increases.

Intuition and Pschic/PSI/ESP and Spiritual Experience

While the intellect and the analytic faculty of the human mind [mostly left brain, linear, verbal functions] are the basis for the material perspective on reality, the intuitive faculty of the human mind [mostly the right brain, wholistic, visual functions] is the avenue to spiritual or mystical awareness of the self and of the nature of reality {1) e}. Synthesis rather than analysis is the hallmark of the intuitive capability {1) c}. Reaching out to discover, explore and know connections, many of which deny the material limitations of discreteness, time, and space, is the disposition of the intuitive faculty of mind. Accordingly perceptions and experiences that are impossible and miraculous from the material perspective [extrasensory or psychic] are normative - even predictable - experiences [telepathy, clairvoyance, pre- or retro-cognition, and psychokinesis] from the spiritual perspective and the intuitive faculty of mind {1) a}. Methodologies exist to develop these intuitive abilities, though they have only begun to be examined in western culture. For many mystically oriented religions where intuitive human capabilities are most developed, the psychic skills are regarded as distractions on the way to the ultimate goal of spiritual fusion {1) a} [oneness, ecstasy, nirvana]. For most aboriginal religions where a spiritual [sacred] principle is held to pervade all of existence [animism] {1) a, 16) a}, recognized practitioners in the psychic arts are common [shamans, sorcerers], and many members of these societies develop at least modest psychic abilities.

Though psychic behavior in native cultures is little studied and mostly explained in terms of psychological and social variables, a couple of examples from native cultures will serve to make the point. In many West African cultures, women carry their infants on their backs in a kind of cloth sack. A female cultural anthropologist, who was studying one of these tribes, noticed that the babies very rarely soiled these sacks, and she asked the women how they managed to avoid this problem, knowing the repeated need for diaper changing in western culture. The women were surprised and asked in return, “You mean you do not know when your baby needs to relieve itself?” According to these women, they were so “turned into” their infants that they knew when to let the infant down and out of the sack as their “urge” was emerging. They had no sensory signal, they just knew. In parapsychology, the basis for this kind of knowing is telepathy, and from a spiritual perspective this is just a very practical

example of the use of this developed intuitive talent to address a common human need. Certainly, the fundamental bond between infant and mother is the kind of connection that we can understand such non-sensory abilities easily utilizing. For west African women, for a woman to lack this talent of knowing is to be a “foolish” woman, while for western women to possess this talent is a minor miracle. Western women just do not develop this intuitive talent, and they rely instead on a technical fix – the diaper.

The most common area of the use of psychic talent among native peoples is in hunting, where careful attention to the descriptions of hunting often reveal that the hunter is aware that his prey is nearing [or emerging] before he has any sensory cues, or where these cues are not sufficient to account for all he knows as this encounter is about to unfold. Because such events typically mix sensory and psychic cues [which is what we should in fact expect], it is not easy to make a clear case to the skeptic of these intuitive inputs, which usually get explained away in terms of subliminal sensory signals.

There are cases, however, that preclude this kind of reductionism. A typical example occurs across much of western aboriginal Australia, where the distances are vast and humans are often spread very thin – to the point where it is not uncommon for individuals to be separated from everyone else by many miles and with no direct means of communication. Such natives out on “walk about” will usually take with them a collection of small objects closely associated with their key family or community members. If they want to know, have some urge to know, or need to know what is happening “back home,” they locate a point of respite, select an object to hold, use it as a focus to invite a directed “reverie,” and wait for the information to come or emerge. It may come in anything from a feeling, to a voice speaking, to a vision – sometimes in motion, to a full-blown enactment [or what we would call a fully filled hallucination]. Using this technique, natives get the news they require and communicate any essential messages they need to deliver. Most importantly, they **act** on this information; returning home, for example, if they “discover” someone is sick and they are needed. Again, for natives with this talent, this non-sensory, intuitive based communication is just what they can do when the situation calls for it. There are no spirits or gods required, and no one regards such communications as miracles. For westerners, such a means of information access is impossible. Our solution to meet this need produces a much more precise result, but it requires us to erect towers every few miles across our landscapes and carry cell phones and battery rechargers. In both cases, as humans we are looking to establish connections; the means and the primary mental faculties that we develop, refine, and employ to accomplish this is all that is different.

One more example, this one from my own research. One evening I was traveling between major cities on the east coast on I-95 in the car of the pastor of the Black church I was studying. We were carrying on a conversation about various aspects of the church when I noticed a change in the character of both the pastor’s driving and our conversation. Continuing to negotiate multiple lane traffic at night, the pastor’s driving was more jerky and though he continued to converse with me, it was as if his attention was no longer focused on our discussion. In some sense it was as if he had set himself to “auto pilot.” He was still in the conversation and responding, but there was a bland, uninvolved quality, which was not at all typical. After maybe a minute of this [which is really a rather long time], I called the situation to his attention and asked if he would tell me what was happening. The pastor took a moment to collect himself and then fully attending to me, he told me he had done what he usually does at this point in his trip; he had “gone ahead” to see what was happening at the

church where he was to arrive in about a half hour. He said he likes to get the picture of how the service is going, what the mood of the congregation is and if anyone particular is there, so he can be better prepared. I asked him to tell me what he saw for this evening's upcoming service. He described the officiating by the assistant pastor and the songs being sung when he "looked in" and then he said he noticed three new people sitting in the left section, one older man to the front and two younger men together to the rear. He said the older man had a nervous disorder that was associated with his war experiences and had come to service about his difficulty walking. All he said about the two younger men was that he needed to tell the ushers about them; he did not want to elaborate on this last situation.

We arrived at the church and I joined the congregation as the pastor went to the church offices to get ready for his part of the service. I had been attending services for years at this point and recognized most of the members, even the occasional ones. I located a single lone older man in the front on the left side and two younger men together to the rear of the same section. The assistant pastor was officiating as was usual with a whole series of songs being sung. After the sermon and at the point in the service when the prayer or blessing line was invited to form, the older man came forward. At this same time the two younger men were quietly surrounded by male ushers and escorted out the back of the building. I made it a point to speak with the older man after the service, and he told me enough of his story to confirm his military background and his suspicion that his medical problems were related to his being exposed to agent orange in Viet Nam. He had come to the service after hearing the Church radio broadcast that morning announcing the service and inviting veterans in particular. He otherwise knew no one in the church and had spoken to no one about his situation. I learned that the two younger men were taken outside where police were waiting because the pastor suspected them of casing the church for a possible burglary. I was never able to get any additional information on what happened with these young men after the police took responsibility for them. I do know that the pastor had rather close ties to the area police, and these patrolmen looked after the welfare of the church and its members, especially as services often let out late at night. For the ten years that I attended services at this church, very few people were ever asked to leave the church, and there were only three occasions when anyone was escorted out of the church for reasons related to the one on this occasion. This was certainly an unusual circumstance and not one the pastor could anticipate or expect, and certainly one he would not invite.

Like the Australian aborigines, in this event the pastor sought to know what was happening from a remote location beyond his senses. As he put himself in a mental frame to make the connection he sought, the change in the nature of his driving and conversation corresponded to a shift of mental focus and activity. To the extent I was able to determine it, the specific information he described to me about the service at the church from his place in the car turned out to be quite accurate. Most interesting, the pastor indicated that he reaches for this kind of information as a matter of routine. For him, there is no miracle involved; what he does is just to use a mental skill he has developed. According to the pastor, this is one of several skills he learned during his early training in intuitive abilities under the direction of a teacher at his school of ministry. This school combined teaching Christian theology with eastern meditative and healing practices.

PRAGMATICS/EXISTENTIAL CHOICES: NEGOTIATING THE CONTINUUM BETWEEN MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES

From my existential, humanistic point of view, which I refer to as Dynamic Humanism {13}}, I think all capabilities of humankind [including mental faculties] should be as completely engaged and developed as possible. Encouraging fully realized human beings and societies based on such beings is the humanistic goal, and intuitive capabilities are as important a part of the picture as analytical abilities. For those who decide to pursue self-actualization on this basis, it is essential to avoid the trap of reifying the means [vehicles - whether they be formal education or ritual] which assist in evoking these abilities and promoting their development. Otherwise we end up warring over whose means are better, right, or "true." There are only more and less efficient means [vehicles] to optimal development, not right or true means. Means can be evaluated relative to one another by their efficiency and the care they take to avoid disrespecting or setting up the conditions for abusing others or the natural world.

Unfortunately most westerners are so unaware of and underdeveloped in their intuitive faculty that they have little choice other than to deny the reality of the world known and engaged toward the spiritual end of the continuum. Intuition has been forced to the periphery where it is developed idiosyncratically in the creative arts and psychic experience, and dogmatically through religion. Education after elementary school focuses more and more exclusively on language, analysis and intellect, even in the humanities where the intuitive faculty should be understood as fundamental. Separation of church and state, which is warranted by the excesses of institutionalized religion, has evolved to become separation of humans from spirituality [developed intuition]. The spiritual experience – the coming to dwell in the ecstasy and security of oneness or self fused with all else – is at the core of all religions in their symbolic rituals and myths, but it has been reduced by most formal, institutionalized religions to literal, concrete beliefs. In this way the extreme spiritual experience has been reduced to the concreteness of the material world. In literal Christianity, for example, we are said to be saved by believing in a man, Jesus, as our savior and as the literal son of God, rather than discovering the Christ principle [intuitive capability] in ourselves, which – when developed along the lines demonstrated by Christ – frees us from the limits of a materially dominated conception of ourselves and the world. Dogmatic science can easily "refute" and reject such literal claims but in the process the importance of the spiritual is, unfortunately, most often falsely denied and discarded.

Ironically it is the great theoreticians and inventors in science itself who privately know the value of intuition, the momentary looking away from the problem to let the answer "arrive." Intellectual thought well and usefully prepares the way, but the big picture answers tend to come when the mind is freed of intellectual constraints and can roam among the infinite connections for the connection that "works," - the Ah....Ha moment.

Creative insight, "dwelling" in art, psychic capabilities, and achieving ecstasy through ritual have the same intuitive faculty as their source. They are the more obvious ways the spiritual dimension of the perspective continuum bears fruit for humans. When these experiences, inputs and faculties are underdeveloped, disregarded, or denied legitimacy outright, humans and the societies they form are the less for it. From my viewpoint, understanding the value of the spiritual perspective and the intuitive faculty of mind and re-incorporating the spiritual [not the religious] into the western cultural concept of self, society and reality is one of the most important challenges presently facing western humankind. Re-incorporation of the intuitive

does not mean a take-over by the spiritual perspective. Equity between the material and spiritual perspectives and balanced development of the intellectual and intuitive faculties of mind is the appropriate goal.

Western culture can more deeply incorporate the intuitive-spiritual dimension into its make up without having to buy into any form of man made religious construction or dogma, or the comparable belief systems surrounding New Age crystals, tarot cards, horoscopes, "supplements," and drugs. Unfortunately it seems our culture is not aware or mature enough yet to make this move – as a whole. Individuals within western culture, however, have the choice of pursuing this avenue of understanding and of being in the world. They can show the way and model what such developed humans are like in presence and behavior.

Getting from Here to There

It is my contention, at least existentially, that reality is revealed by both the material and spiritual perspectives and the analytical and intuitive faculties of mind that underlie them. Neither the extreme material nor the extreme spiritual perspective alone is sufficient. The material perspective taken to its extreme makes of life nothing more than a competitive exercise in ego aggrandizement – physically and socially. The spiritual perspective taken to its extreme ignores the competitive nature of existence and denies free will and the value of action in "behalf" of anything. Fortunately, perceiving self and reality is not an either/or proposition since a continuum exists between the extremes of the two perspectives. On this continuum each of the perspectives is weakest at the pole of the other perspective, and the vast area in between is shared by the presence and activity of both perspectives with the center representing the two perspectives with equal prominence [input and activity].

Different challenges and activities in life are suited to different combinations of the two perspectives - in different proportions, sometimes with one perspective being emphasized much more than the other. From the point of view I am taking in this statement, the goal is to develop both faculties of mind equally and to be able to use them in their different combinations as best suits the task. Humanistically, my view is that the most creative position a human being can be in is to be able to best manage the dynamic of the perspectives and the mental faculties that correspond to them to most effectively meet the need. To achieve this creative position, it follows that as individuals we strive to balance the development of our analytical and intuitive faculties [factoring in the emotions which provide the basis for motivation and response]. Our societies and cultures can create institutions and experiences which foster these abilities and perspectives equally.

From the position I am taking here, cultures or societies that are significantly more developed in one direction or the other are incomplete and less capable of assisting their citizens in fully engaging life. The current excesses and weaknesses of western culture are largely the result of an underdeveloped intuitive - spiritual perspective [with all it entails] and too great an emphasis on an analytical - material perspective. In short, a lack of balance.

Recognizing that we live in a culture that lacks a balanced view of the relative importance of the material and spiritual perspectives, what can we do?

Whether it is kindergarten or graduate school or middle age shifting or old age settling, the best recommendation I can offer is for individuals to seek a truly liberal education and experiences which promote and apply the balanced development of their analytical and

intuitive faculties - always in touch with their emotions as they do so. In the process, we need to watch out for the headwork trap. Theory is a launching pad, and a good launching pad is important, but application in every day life is where theory comes alive, and it is here that the most substantial growth and development occur. So, it is best to balance the headwork of understanding with practical application whatever faculties individuals are engaging for development.

What Individuals Are Up Against As They Seek Balanced Development

Unfortunately, most of what passes for a liberal education beyond elementary school never addresses the fundamental issues raised in this essay. Even philosophy majors in college may well miss the essence of these ontological [the real] and epistemological [the true] matters, focusing instead on illuminating the nuances of particular theorists or the differences among philosophical schools rather than using the theories of others as an avenue to construct one's own system of "best" propositions.

At one time, higher education was conceived as fostering the individual's growth in mind, body, and spirit. Over time, the components of body and spirit have been so removed from the center of attention that they have nearly dropped out of the picture, and the concept of mind has been mostly reduced to the functions of the material brain and the promotion of the analytical faculty - the intellect. The development of the body is attended to indirectly through "extra" curricular activities - sports. The development of the spirit [the intuitive] is denied direct access in public institutions because it is confused with religious expression, and so spiritual development is touched on only indirectly through "secular" arts as "enrichment electives." Such a situation in education denies that the human being is an integrated system, a whole, and ends up fostering one part of one part of the person. Such a partial view of the human being and his or her development is one of the main reasons for the general malaise, which characterizes the current condition of students and the climate in most educational settings. In this partial and sterile environment, it is no wonder that adolescent students are frustrated and bored and inclined to acting out [culminating in violence against others or themselves - suicide].

In this generally weak and imbalanced academic environment, the humanities are part of the problem rather than contributing to the solution. As the area of academic exploration where the intuitive faculties of man form the creative foundation for the products being studied, unfortunately the humanities have mostly lost their way. Art is a creative process whose products are the result of discovering the "hidden" connections and relations [patterns] among things through analogical "thought" [thought based on analogy] and transformative "thought" [kinetic visioning and acting] both of which work primarily through the imagination as the opening mode in the intuitive faculty. While the intellect and analysis can carve a path which may lead to the creative process and which can contribute periodically to assessing the results [which can lead to creative refinements], the process of artistic creation or appreciation per se has little to do with the intellect or the analytical faculty of the human mind. It is one of the great tragedies of modern academia that the humanities are trying to emulate and merge with the rationally, intellectually, and analytically based social sciences [which in turn model themselves on standard analytical procedures in the experimental physical sciences]. They have even fooled themselves into believing they can capture the creative process with analytically based mechanical models [based on linguistic paradigms where semantics is lost and syntax is elevated to supreme status]. Schools of art, separated off to the side in universities and undervalued, are the last vestige of spiritual man in most

formal, higher education settings, at least at the present time. When the creation of art [art schools] and the study of art [humanistic disciplines in schools of arts and sciences] are so removed from one another that they are largely unable to communicate, we can be sure something major is amiss.

So, in an effort to become liberally educated, where we would most expect to find intuitive man celebrated [the humanities], we find instead mostly interpretation based on intellect and analysis. All together, individuals find in academia far too many opportunities to explore and develop their analytical/material side and too few opportunities to explore and develop their intuitive/spiritual side. It is necessary to dig and probe to locate the latter exposure in pursuit of balanced development. Individuals can expect to do a lot of digging and need to recognize that much of the time they will be working against the grain of their culture with few to appreciate their goal or to applaud the path they are taking. The situation can be discouraging and frustrating. But it is not worth wasting time and effort fighting the limitations of the cultural surroundings. The only real option is to just get on with it.

Personal Predispositions

By nature, that is by the way the infinite variety of character and personality traits have come together through genetics and experience to delimit the way individuals are, they may be set up with a predisposition to favor either analytical or intuitive processing. Everyone possesses both abilities, and for many the two faculties are more or less equally and readily accessible. But for some, regardless of culture or experience, one faculty is much more readily available for use and easier to develop and rely upon than the other. For those that are strongly analytically oriented, they fit the existing emphasis of the culture and they will be applauded as talented and worthwhile. But they probably will not be encouraged to develop themselves intuitively; so their challenge is to pursue this development without being motivated to do so by their culture. For those that are the strongly intuitive types, their road will be more difficult, and they and the activities they enjoy and are good at are likely to be seen as peripheral, strange or non-productive. They will be encouraged to develop themselves analytically, and they will do best if they accept this challenge while respecting the importance and value of their intuitive abilities and spiritual inclinations.

In current American culture, the worst-case scenario is to be strongly predisposed to the intuitive and unaware of why a person's life experience [especially formal education] is such a struggle and why self esteem is so difficult to come by. Ignorance on this issue is the source for much frustration to the point in some cases where suicide is a strong consideration. Individuals who know how they are predisposed and how their inclinations relate to those of their culture, will be in a much better position to engage their challenges constructively without confusion or the need to react defensively and with appropriate respect for themselves.

Relationships - Ethics and Morality

Most of life is spent in the zone where the material and spiritual perspectives both apply and are engaged - in short in the central/overlapping reaches of the perspective continuum {A}. In this zone of experience and operation both discreteness and relations are apparent, real, and important. Relations are in the entire middle range between the total isolation of self at the material extreme and the total loss of individual identity in the fusion experience at the spiritual extreme {2) c, 5) a}. In the middle range, entities are perceived as having both separateness [materiality] and relations to other entities [spirituality] - being connected to and

sharing in a larger identity to some degree. In this zone, the imperatives of both perspectives apply: to act in behalf of self and to behave respecting the existence of fundamental connections to others. In the middle zone of experience, there is a constant pull in these two directions. The pull in the direction of connectedness and the sense of obligation to other entities, which flows from it, is the basis for moral behavior. The pull in the direction of discreteness and the view from the vantage point of what is best for ego alone is the basis for competitive biological survival behavior {7) c}. To the degree the individual is encouraged to develop in an analytical, material perspective, the ego centered [individualistic] view is the one that is most likely to be favored for response. To the degree the individual is developed in intuitive capabilities and the spiritual perspective, the moral [socially sensitive] view is likely to be more pervasive. And different challenges in life evoke these different positions to different degrees in individuals with different developmental proclivities. Experiences of extreme fright tend to evoke survival reactions from the material position of what exclusively benefits ego [fight or flight]. Experiences which promote the sense of unification among entities [parties, art and entertainment, sex, family, or public celebrations] tend to evoke behaviors [and feelings to match] which emphasize the strength of relations [connections] and the importance of community.

Individuals who pursue the goal of achieving balanced development of their analytical and intuitive faculties and a balanced appreciation of the material and spiritual perspectives are in the best position to respond most creatively and appropriately to the range of situations they will encounter in life. What is important is that they recognize the source of the two different pulls on themselves. In this context, these individuals will be aware that **moral** behavior has its source in the relation oriented spiritual direction on the perspective continuum, while **ethical** dictates are efforts from within the material, rational perspective to justify the requirement to respect other parties in human relationships {7) e}.

Comparing the ethical and moral views, clearly the moral perspective [not to be confused with moral dogma promoted by religions] is much stronger than the ethical view. Ethical dictates are weak at best in a culture or individual with strong material perspective domination. As hypothetical "oughts," ethical postulations are neither as compelling nor as broad ranging as the moral view, which is ultimately grounded in the extreme spiritual experience of identity fusion {1) a}. When the self as a distinctive part dissolves into the pool of infinite relations, self merges with all "others," and identity becomes a fundamentally shared phenomenon. Experiencing self **as** other fuses the two and obligates respect. There is no other choice, because in the context of fusion, to disrespect the other is to disrespect one's self. This obligation, which emerges in the experience of fusion [or on the path to it], is the moral base for respectful relations to which all religions refer, however obtusely. There is simply no way for analytically, intellectually based, ethical discussions of social "oughts" or duties to compete with the power of the morally based experience of absolute social obligation engendered in the spiritual experience of unification {2), 3), 4), 10), 16)}. In its deepest sense, love is what is realized in this experience of fusion or unification {5) d}. Social "respect" is the form this intense fusion awareness takes when it carries over into the realm of middle range existence where both material and spiritual perspectives apply. Personally, I strongly recommend morally based awareness and social commitment following from it without the encumbrance of religious dogma.

The broader the range of a person's respectful relations, the more of the whole of infinite relations he/she participates in at all scales and knows on an every day basis. At the same

time, if a person loses him/herself in relations [altruism] {7} d}, he/she runs the risk of being preyed upon by more competitive "others" [those whose perspective is defined by a more analytical, material perspective]. Balance and the ability to shift in position as need be is an ideal worth pursuing.

Guidance/Training

Each individual's search is his/her own. It should be given over to no one, however revered, honored, celebrated, or charismatic. All are just fellow travelers. But the path for individuals can be greatly facilitated if they locate those who can legitimately contribute to their journey. In the area of accredited, formal education, which mostly serves the intellect and the material perspective, the legitimate institutions are easy to recognize. Individuals will have to search within these qualified institutions for broad-minded teachers who will respect the whole of themselves, but these individuals will probably not have to worry about the basic legitimacy of the group or institution. Colleges, Universities, and Institutes of the Arts can assist in the zone of graphic, plastic, musical, and dramatic performance where spiritually inspired awareness can be expressed through artistic forms or genres of expression in the material world. Fortunately, in spite of being set off to the side, such art colleges are also generally accredited and dependable. In an otherwise materially dominated culture, these facilities offer spiritual respite and an opportunity to explore and develop the intuitive abilities of individuals. Conversely, these special colleges are unfortunately not highly valued in our culture and tend to draw to them students that have not succeeded in and who have been wounded by the standard [intellectually oriented] education environment. As such, an art student's intellectual development is likely to be somewhat slighted in this context. Religious schools may be accredited and are attempts to bring intellect and intuition together in an educational setting, but unfortunately they very often accomplish this by reducing intuition and spirituality to a particular religious dogma. The hidden agenda of these schools is to suggest that their religious dogma is the "true" one and that it is not in conflict with science – if science is "properly" understood. This is a patently false agenda, and in general I would avoid such schools, whether they are Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or committed to any other faith. Schools of theology suffer some of these same problems, though there is a wide range of them serving everything from evangelical fundamentalism to more philosophical and comparative theology. The latter can be valuable, but individuals need to beware the "hook" of dogma.

Unfortunately, those who seek training in intuitive capabilities and the spiritual perspective per se usually must enter the arena of non-accredited, unregulated groups outside of mainstream institutions. Yet it may be necessary to seek guidance in this realm. The best advice is to be very careful and investigate all options thoroughly before making a commitment. Individuals can benefit greatly from good spiritual/intuitive guidance, but the reliance that comes with committing to a guide is a slippery slope which con-artists and zealots use to capture many seekers, especially seekers motivated by great need – those with significant health, wealth, or relationship problems. Individuals need to know who they are dealing with, their long-term record as leaders and groups. It is best to research the guide and the group before committing. It can be very instructive to know where the money comes from to support the leader and his/her group. Beware of any spiritual leader who requires a significant financial commitment or demands separation from family or community to join the group or to advance in one's quest. Legitimate guides have only the best interests of their "followers" at heart, not their own sexual fulfillment or social or economic aggrandizement. Those who promote themselves, or who surround themselves with a

"special" flock who do it for them, or who demand power and authority over, not just respect from, their "followers" are "leaders" to avoid, however attractive they may seem on the surface. "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him," is a statement worth understanding and applying metaphorically.

It is best to look for guides who celebrate the accomplishments and awareness of their students, not of themselves. Especially important is to look for leaders whose students graduate and are encouraged to move on, away from the group and the place of training. Observe the "students." Are they making "progress" and advanced in awareness and deeds in the manner that is desirable? Critically important is that there is always the option to depart from the leader and group at any time and freedom to communicate and move freely within and outside the group. Look for those who emphasize the goal, not the path or the particular means to the goal. Watch out for programs that focus on the "special" power of the vehicles to intuitive awareness – bones, sticks, crystals, cards, boards, relics, etc. Get multiple evaluations from trustworthy and knowledgeable persons of different persuasions. Explore whether the mode of teaching or training is appropriate to ones self and one's predispositions. Look for flexibility in approach to match the needs of different individuals. Are there alternative paths that emphasizes intellect, or movement, or meditation, or some combination? Are the programs rigid requiring particular ways to dress, sit, eat, sleep, etc.? There are many paths and many good spiritual guides within these paths. Individuals who use their head and heart fully will most efficiently locate the guidance source that is competent, legitimate, and right for them.

A Separate Spirit Realm

I have argued in the preceding sections that reality is discovered and defined equally by the analytical and intuitive faculties of the human mind and the material and spiritual perspectives that follow from them. From an extreme spiritual perspective where all "things" exist as one, the notion of a "separate" spiritual realm with discrete spirits acting independently is itself impossible, a misconception resulting from the imposition of assumptions from the material perspective to "explain" the spiritual. At the same time, clearly from points less extreme on the perspective continuum but in the direction of the spiritual pole, experiences occur where entities are encountered that defy the material "limits" of entity, time and space. Entities, including persons from the past and the future, appear and may impart information of an accurate and useful nature to the person whose mind is located so as to connect with these entities. Though common to the spiritual perspective, such experiences are miraculous to the material perspective, which can only explain them by attributing separate place and independent agency to these entities. Religions and cults arise when these attributions are literalized and systematized, held as "sacred," and promoted as the unique spiritual truth by social groups.

What alternative do we have to this religious interpretation, which is paradoxically rendered from a material perspective and which requires independent agents [gods] and independent places [heaven and hell] to be accepted on faith? Re-creation is the alternative. If the human mind through the intuitive faculty locates itself in the position where all things are related and connected and not separated by time or space [the spiritual, intuitive or energy perspective], anything and everything is available because all things are part of the individual and the individual shares identity with all things through all time and all space. A dead uncle is available as well as the past history of a fossil fish. Does this necessarily mean the dead uncle or the fossil fish are "still alive and existing in a separate spirit world and able and

interested in influencing us?" Not if we understand what our full range of mental capabilities is and accept responsibility for the results of using these mental faculties.

In the realm of infinite connections, if we have the skill, we can locate, contact and utilize anything we want. It is just a skill, something we can learn through training just as we learn other skills and acquire proficiency in them with practice. The results of using these skills seem extraordinary only because our culture is so minimally familiar with either the skills or the results, and so inclined to regard them in religious terms - which separate them from us. In this way, our culture prejudices us against seeing these results in terms of basic human capability. But from a spiritual perspective, as understood in a great many cultures, we can discover and "enliven" and utilize anything to achieve all kinds of consequences if we properly locate our mind/consciousness. In this sense, we can re-create anything that is "part of us," which is potentially everything. But this does not mean these re-creations necessarily exist separately and with independent motive [agency] apart from our mental activity. As has already been said, to attribute such separateness and independence of agency to spiritual being is to impose the characteristics of the material world on the spiritual world, which is a fundamental contradiction. It is the basic mistake that is made when man seeks to characterize the nature of spiritual experience and awareness in material terms. It is the essential fallacy that allows all religions to arise.

I do not deny that spirits "exist" from the point of view of man's perception and experience as he moves in the direction of the spiritual end of the perspective continuum. But as an admitted humanist and respecting the contradiction cited above, I think if we are to err, it is existentially much wiser to err on the side of overstating the capability of man [his re-creative ability] rather than diminishing man by vastly overstating the significance and influence of a separate world of spirits [ancestors, Gods], which is by definition beyond any empirical control or test. It is my view that once the "God" box is opened, there is nothing that cannot be put into it or attributed to it, and I do not see how the pursuit of knowing the limits of human capability benefits by opening this box prematurely. For westerners, it is just too easy to attribute to a separate spirit realm whatever does not fit into the world as seen from the limited material perspective. I suggest we open the "God" box when we truly know the limits of full human capability. For the foreseeable future, we are far from establishing these limits.

If we understand how the intuitive, re-creative process – operating from a position in the direction of the spiritual perspective, can "make available" entities from the past or future and through this connection achieve useful consequences/information, we understand how as a humanist we can allow a "reality" for spirit entities while withholding judgment on a separate reality with separately "motivated" spirits. From this point of view, the spirits or guides that are "contacted" are alter selves exactly because they are part of, fused with, and available to the self when the self is located appropriately on the material – spiritual continuum.

The Self and The Body

The concept of the self, itself, begins with the material perspective, which posits separateness for every individual. From an analytical view, the parts of the self can be identified [body, mind and spirit - or some other division]. Of course, from a spiritual perspective, the separation of the self from the whole or into any set of parts is impossible and entirely artificial. Recognizing the truth value in this integral, spiritual view, we can nevertheless allow ourselves the privilege of identifying discrete parts of the self for the purpose of discussion.

Not surprisingly, many western cultural views on the concept of the self strongly reflect the material perspective bias that exists in western culture in general. In this view, the self is the physical body with the mind and consciousness reduced to the brain and the spirit/soul discarded as non-existent. Behaviorism is a perfect example of such a psychological view with physically given genes providing the foundation for biological development and external experience providing the basis for all else that contributes to development of the individual and the self. This view has been stretched to include the emotional self and the way it is generated as a result of external experience in the life course. Freud disturbed this view to introduce the importance of the unconscious mind, but he retained the notion of external sources in experience for its derivation. Jung was one of the first in modern times to challenge this combined physical and external view of the self by interjecting intuition and the collective cultural "memory" as essential parts of the self, parts that are not accountable on the basis of genes and external experience alone. Jungian psychology is ultimately a major source for the emergence of parapsychology, but both remain on the periphery of the dominant physically and externally based view [the material perspective] of the self in western culture and the discipline of psychology.

From a strictly material perspective, the body is the self. The glorification of the physical body should come as no surprise in a culture like western culture where the material perspective is dominant. In this context, focusing on external appearance as the way the body is assessed and valued reduces the body to its surface, and again this reduction is logical given the perspective bias of western culture. Dress, physical fitness for the sake of appearance, and cosmetic surgery to improve external appearance are certainly "big" in western culture. "Appearance is the man"; "Love at first sight"; "Dress for success"; "What you see is what you get." These are just a few of the phrases which suggest the importance we westerners place on external appearance.

Interestingly, in spite of our focus on the surface of the physical self, we still recognize that the intangible "Personality" of an individual is significant. Just what Personality is other than a loose set of behavioral traits, inclinations, attitudes and predispositions, we are not very certain, but we do allow that if stunning physical appearance is not backed up with an "attractive" personality, spectacular appearance does not sustain interest for very long. So, what do we mean by an "attractive" personality? Admitting that this is somewhat different for different individuals, I suggest that "attractive" is exactly what it suggests, meaning having the ability to readily connect with others, to relate easily and positively. Charisma is an extreme form of this attractive ability to connect across a broad spectrum of types of individuals.

If an attractive personality is one that readily connects, communication is the means for successfully connecting. And in spite of the emphasis we place on language for conscious information passing, it is the case that communication is more the function of the mostly unconsciously controlled intuitive faculty than it is of the analytical faculty of mind. The physical self is the envelope and the vehicle for communicating, but it is the intangible personality that controls the vehicle with the intuitive faculty of mind playing a greater role in the process as the analytical faculty. Bodies touch, personalities connect.

The body as the envelope of the mind and the personality is an important part of the self. But it is the whole of this envelope that is significant, not just the external surface upon which western culture lavishes so much attention. So, western culture is doubly off the mark in its

concept of the self: by focusing so much on the physical body to the neglect of the mind, consciousness and spirit and then by making so much of the body's exterior, its surface appearance, to the neglect of its internal functions. Given this skewed western cultural focus, most people exercise and diet less for the positive effects to internal bodily functions and the integrity of their state of mind than for the sake of maintaining outward appearance. Because most westerners have no truly wholistic view of either the self or the body, they can on the one hand put themselves on a rigorous exercise program while on the other hand they gratify their immediate sensations with "junk" food. Westerners may know their bodies are biologically adapted through evolution to be mostly on the move in search of an omnivorous diet, and yet they offer the greatest rewards to the most sedentary jobs and place the greatest value on diets high in simple carbohydrates and fat. Even with our focus on the body as the self, we cannot do right by the physical body because our conception of the body is so partial and confused. Being a materially and technologically focused culture, instead of addressing the root of the problem, predictably we treat the symptoms of poor physical health with external measures: drugs and surgery.

What can we do for ourselves in the midst of the above confused and limited cultural context [all of which is magnified by the computer age and our fascination with celebrity and virtual experience]? There is no partial answer that will work. If we do not design our lives around reintegration of the full self, there is only constant conflict and contradiction, and limited self-realization, including the state of our bodies. We cannot find any diet and exercise program that will be able to sustain for the long term if we have not put the rest of the complete self-package together. Our actual state of health involves the health of both our whole self [body, mind, personality, and spirit] and the extent to which we are creatively integrated into the social and natural world, which is part of our expansive self and of which we are a particular material [or energetic] manifestation.

If we are successful in pursuing a balanced development of our minds analytically and intuitively, we will create the context for knowing what our bodies need, and in this emerging and non-conflicted context we will naturally incline towards developing our bodies for healthy physical existence. Likewise, if we treat our whole bodies well [not just its surface] and follow where it leads us, we will discover the balanced mental and consciousness development we will want to pursue. We can enter the whole at any point, but the fastest way in and to the development and maintenance of a healthy self is to recognize the goal: the realization of the complete self as integrated into the rest of the world – taking what is truly needed and giving what is required through full participation. If we know the goal, we will be able to handle the limitations of our surrounding culture and avoid conflict in the development of the parts of Our selves. And we can encourage our culture to become more integrated, wholistic and healthy.

FINALE – PART TWO

Only as individuals can we find the creative balance between our analytical and intuitive faculties and discover the complete concept of self that is worthy of pursuit, all within a wholistic conception of reality where the complete self makes sense and fits. If we know how we fit, we can efficiently pursue the creative center – balance. Not having a clue in this regard or being lopsided in our development is the basis for confusion, frustration, and choices which are naive, egotistical, disrespectful, or oriented to escape [drugs, suicide, etc.].

In a developmental framework, it is my view that if we can encourage young adults to emerge from college and into full adulthood understanding what I have tried to say in this essay and having shaped a good portion of their choices in life in terms of the wholistic concept of self and the balanced human faculties and perspectives that this essay recommends, we and they will have done well indeed. And all of us will be in a position to engage our mature lives to the most fruitful consequences, whatever the particular path may be that we select as a focus. If we can encourage those around us to strive for this position in their lives by helping to guide their path, we will have done much, even if we have not developed ourselves as far as we know to be desirable at any one point in our lives. Whenever the understanding and application happens for us or those around us, we will have been part of the productive process if we have engaged in the effort. To whatever degree we can be part of promoting balanced development in ourselves and others, we will influence the world around us to a constructive end.

If we know the goal and the role our culture is playing in promoting or hindering our pursuit of the goal, we have the best chance for success and happiness. Assisting all of us in grasping the big picture is what this essay is really about. I hope the ideas I am presenting here can be productive in promoting this result – individually and socially.

Search – Actively – Respectfully
And Let “IT” Happen.

PART THREE

THE CONTINUUM OF EMOTIONS

DEFINITION

All definitions are arbitrary and artificial since they are designed to carve out and distinguish some part within the whole, which as an infinite unity defies all attempts at division. As such, definitions can be analytically or heuristically useful, but they should never be proposed or regarded as capturing reality “as it is.” With this important caveat, I will offer what I hope is a useful distinction between feeling and emotion as a way to begin the discussion of how emotions are related to the Material – Spiritual Perspective Continuum.

As I am approaching the subject, emotion is the positive or negative charge that is associated with mental awareness of an action, thought, or statement. Sensations differ from emotions in that sensations are the result of direct perception [smell, taste, touch, hear, see] rather than the mental conceptions that these sensations may evoke. Feelings [pain, pleasure] are the direct result of the mental registry of physical sensation [conscious or unconscious], without the need for additional mental conceptualization. Emotions can be associated with sensations or feelings when sensations or feelings are further processed by human mental abilities [intellectual and/or intuitive capabilities]. In short, emotions generally are associated with a greater degree of mental processing than sensations or feelings, though in the vernacular the terms “feelings” and “emotions” tend to be used interchangeably. In a sense, emotions are feelings given contextualization, or greater attention by further mental processing. So, pain and stress are negative feelings [or responses to stimulation] with minimal mental processing. Pain or stress can evoke emotions of fear or anger

depending on how pain or stress are conceptualized or understood, but pain and stress alone are not emotions. Likewise, pleasure is a positive feeling [or response to stimulation] and it can evolve to the emotions of joy or love depending on how the feeling of pleasure is contextualized or understood, but pleasure itself is not an emotion.

THE BIO-CHEMICAL BASIS OF EMOTION

The time may come when we will know the full physiological/bio-chemical basis for sensations, feelings, and emotions. At that point we may be able to characterize the particular hormones and receptors whose activity is associated with these phenomena. What we know already strongly suggests that the distinction between mind and body that we tend to make is of limited reality and that what is actually occurring is a complex system or network of continuous communication [stimulation and inhibition] to and from and interconnected across all levels throughout the body and mind as one. Even allowing for this understanding, it seems likely that what I am calling emotions will be characterized by more complex communication input and output from the conceptual centers of the brain than will be the case for what I am referring to as sensation and feeling.

THE ROLE OF CONTEXT AND INTENSITY IN THE CULTURAL DISCRIMINATION OF EMOTIONS

We distinguish and assign names to emotions according to their intensity and the contexts to which they apply. The number of such distinctions varies across cultures with languages making finer or coarser discriminations. Contextualization can take several forms, usually in association with physical or social surroundings or situations. Contextualization can be very rapid. For example, pain can move to startle, fright, fear, or terror depending on the intensity of the pain and the level of perceived threat in the surrounding situation. If the pain and situation are intense and threatening enough, the likely active response will be rapid withdrawal or flight. A different emotional evolution starting from pain can occur if the situation has a reduced threat level. In this case, depending on the intensity of the pain, it may move to frustration, resentment, anger, or rage. If the pain is intense enough in this context, the likely active response will be fight or attack. The main underlying difference in these two emotional and response sequences, which come from the same initial feeling, is the level of perceived threat or danger associated with the pain situation. The greater the sense of threat, the more likely is the flight rather than the fight response. And the greater the intensity of the pain, the more intense the emotion is likely to be, whether in the direction leading to fight or flight. So, while at the cultural level through language we distinguish a great many emotions by name, there are most likely only a few truly different emotions at the bio-chemical level. They just differ by intensity and the responses they evoke.

Because emotions are conceptualized and contextualized responses, emotions can be evoked secondarily by their associated learned contexts, quite apart from having to emanate from a primary feeling. A certain situation [a dark basement] or a specific smell [the odor of hydrogen sulfide – rotten eggs] can be so strongly tied in memory to a fearful experience or set of fearful experiences that fear can be evoked directly by these associated contextual variables. Application of memory to perception is part of the conceptual process which can by-pass direct sensation or feeling and evoke emotion directly.

MULTIPLE AND MIXED EMOTIONS

A particular memory usually involves a complex of concepts [words and images] and often has more than one charge that is associated with it. When these charges are different

in value [+ and -], the memory can evoke multiple or mixed emotions. The context of the concept can reduce the multiple emotions to one value or the other [a lion is attractive for its strength and power when viewed in a scene at a safe distance, but it may be feared when viewed as a threat close up in a scene]. Or a concept can produce mixed emotions [the father is loved as a provider but feared as a punisher]. Some emotions are mixed in themselves, like jealousy and envy. These emotions refer to something or someone desired or attractive that is possessed by someone else or blocked from possession by someone/something else and so combines desire with dislike, or more intensely, love with hate. Again, the emotion itself is the level of intensity of the positive or negative charge itself, while the word describing the emotion [love, fear, elation, despair] designates intensity and a particular context, condition or situation. So, a very negative charge applied to the way one person regards another in a particular social situation is hatred. Add a strong sense of threat as coming from the hated party and hatred is transformed into dread. Change the conditions and you may well change the cultural designation of the particular emotion differentiated, even though at the bio-chemical level the underlying emotion may be identical.

BIOLOGICALLY AND SOCIALLY BASED EMOTIONS

Among the larger list of emotions that we do distinguish at the level of culture, a few seem more or less universal and are probably associated with biological survival [e.g. anger, fear, desire, excitement, passion, joy]. Other emotions are associated with more or less universal conditions in social relations and their management [depression, envy, grief, regret, embarrassment, lust, pride]. It seems likely that the emotions associated with biological survival are primary while the socially connected emotions are later and secondary. Of course, primary and secondary distinctions in evolution does not mean later, secondary emotions are less important. Indeed, as culture becomes ever more significant in defining human behavior, emotions that are distinguished at a later time in evolution may ascend to prominence [e.g. depression].

INTRODUCTION TO THE DIAGRAM OF THE EMOTIONS CONTINUUM

In the following diagram the culturally distinguished emotions of western culture are arrayed on a positive to negative horizontal axis by intensity with neutral being in the center and the greatest positive charge to the right and the greatest negative charge to the left. Culturally designated emotions of equal intensity are arranged in what amount to more or less vertical columns along the continuum. Many terms we use to describe emotions are very similar and connotation can be subtle and differ among individuals. As a result, we could probably debate endlessly the particular placement of a term in a specific emotional array. It is much more important to recognize the negative to positive trend in the designations along the continuum for each type of emotion than to agree on the exact placement or association of each term with a specific emotional type. We must always keep in mind that it is culture and society, not biology that is responsible for the great variety of terms we use to describe emotions.

The reader will find that the terms describing emotions in the chart mix nouns, verbs and adjectives. I wish this were not the case and that all references could be of one type, but unfortunately our lexicon often does not offer each distinguishing term in all forms, especially when we get to the point of rather fine distinctions. So, allow for this source of some frustration and try to focus on the trend that each word sequence reveals.

CONTINUUM OF EMOTIONS

Associated Charge

Negative

--

Neutral

--

Positive

Associated General Attitude

Pessimism

--

Optimism

Associated General Emotional State

Unhappiness -- Distraught -- Distress -- Disappointment -- Comfort/Acceptance -- Satisfaction -- Happiness

Emotional Arrays

Dread [Escape] -- Anxiety/Worry/Apprehension -- Concern -- Anticipation -- Excitement/Enthusiasm -- Ecstasy

Terror [Flight] -- Fear -- Fright - Shock - Scare -- Startle -- Surprise -- Enjoy -- Attraction/Infatuation -- Devotion

Hate/Abhor/Loathe [Attack] - Contempt - Resent -- Dislike -- Pity -- Empathy -- Like/Desire/Affection -- Passion -- Love

Rage [Fight] -- Ire/Anger -- Indignation/Displeasure/Frustration -- Ease -- Attraction -- Joy -- Euphoria

Despair/Depression -- Sadness -- Contentment -- Gladness/Fulfillment -- Hope -- Elation

Grief -- Loneliness -- Dissolution/Loss -- Companionship -- Camaraderie/Brotherhood -- Unity

Remorse -- Sorrow -- Guilt/Shame -- Regret -- Embarrassment -- Accomplishment/Success/Win -- Pride

Envy/Covet/Jealousy/Crave/Lust [Desire/Attraction – blocked or inappropriate or taken to extreme where it becomes negative]

RELATIONSHIP OF THE EMOTIONAL CONTINUUM TO THE MATERIAL – SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE CONTINUUM

What is most interesting in the above chart of emotions is to explore the manner in which this negative to positive array of western cultural emotions corresponds to the primary characteristics of the Material – Spiritual Perspective Continuum, which we have considered in some depth in Part Two of this essay. For this discussion, the reader may want to bring the Material – Spiritual Perspective Continuum Chart [pp. 28-29] together with the above Emotional Continuum Chart.

When we explore a possible overlap of these two continua, it is noteworthy that the extremely negative emotions from the emotional continuum are associated with the material end of the material – spiritual perspective continuum. By contrast, the most positive emotions are associated with the spiritual end of this perspective continuum. There is some basis for this correlation, though there is the need for qualification, which we will consider shortly. The material end of the perspective continuum has as its primary characteristic that reality is seen in terms of entities that are understood as separate, independently motivated, and in a competitive relationship to one another. Intellect, and any technological or strategic advantage it can provide, is a means for one entity to out compete/survive others and thereby have the opportunity to perpetuate its genes. This world of extreme separation and competition is often a lonely world that is fundamentally dangerous and potentially threatening. It is understandable that such a world can easily contain the emotions that are associated with flight and attack and the results of loss that often accompany competitive actions: distress, anger, fear, rage, hate, grief, fright, despair, etc.

Depression or Despair is the emotional condition associated with the discovery of oneself as totally separated – as being entirely alone or isolated – lost. By contrast, the most positive emotions of Elation and Ecstasy are associated with the sense of oneself as totally fulfilled, the experience of self as infinitely connected to all else, as undifferentiated. Fear and Dread almost always occur in experiences of separation when reality is viewed and engaged toward the material end of the perspective continuum. On the other hand, Joy and Love almost always occur in experiences of intense connection when reality is viewed and engaged toward the spiritual end of the perspective continuum. Most importantly, it is nearly impossible to charge the experience of intense connection at the spiritual end of the perspective continuum with the negative emotions of separation. The exception here would seem to be the experience of the Void, or the total loss of self, which confounds experience at the spiritual end of the continuum. This apparent exception disappears when we realize that what is really happening in the experience of the Void is that the material perspective is intruding into the spiritual experience of Ecstasy and by re-introducing the relevance of the separate self into the picture, transforms joy into fear/terror.

It is at this point that we run into a very significant challenge in looking at the overlap of the emotional and perspective continuums. We cannot offer the corollary to the above statement. It is not the case that it is nearly impossible to charge the experiences at the material end of the perspective continuum with the positive emotions associated with connection. In fact experience at the material end of the reality continuum can be associated with either negative or positive emotional responses and to about the same degree. So, while negative emotions are virtually exclusive to the experience of reality toward the material end of the reality perspective continuum, many positive emotions can arise as readily at the material end of the perspective continuum as at the spiritual end of this continuum. What

explanation can we offer for this very significant difference, this anomaly in the overlap of the emotional and material – spiritual perspective continua?

We have already indicated that emotions are context sensitive. When we are considering experience understood from the material end of the perspective continuum, point of view arises as a significant factor in understanding the positive and negative options for emotional response. At the material end of the continuum, the same basic stimulus – a man crossing the street at a traffic light with several other people moving in the direction of the observer – can produce opposite emotions [terror and flight, or excitement and attraction] depending on the point of view of the observer. If the observer views the man as a lover moving in her direction, the event evokes emotions of excitement and attraction and the inclination to move toward the man. If the observer views the man as a recognized violent mugger, the event evokes fear or terror and the inclination to flee from the man. If we alter the context slightly and the man is a lover, and he is jay walking by himself and is about to be struck by a vehicle that he did not see, the observer is likely to experience emotions of surprise, fear and dread, rather than excitement and attraction. Context and point of view define emotional response toward the material end of the perspective continuum where entities are understood as separate and independently motivated.

As our perspective shifts in the spiritual direction, separation and independent motivation weaken and finally dissolve, entities connect and then merge into one, and existing within the eternal flow replaces time, space and causality. In the condition of unification at the far end of the spiritual perspective continuum, the basis for negative emotion disappears – entities are not separate or independently motivated, or subject to definition by point of view or contextual variables. Moreover, as we move toward the social center and away from the spiritual extreme perspective position, connection remains significant and the positive emotions continue to dominate until we reach the center itself where positive and negative emotional options are equal. Another way to state this situation is: the greater the dominance of the intellectual/analytical faculty of mind, the greater is the option for the more intense, negative emotions to arise. With the emergence of a greater and greater sense of separation, point of view enters the picture to define our attitude toward events, and it is possible for the same event – the death of a cat – to be regarded as a tragedy with grief as the emotional response [for the owner who adores the cat as a pet] or as a cause for celebration with joy as the emotional response [for the neighbor whose wild song birds are decimated by the cat as a despised predator].

The pursuit of intellect, reason and science, which is associated in the overlay with the material perspective, can lead to successful results and a kind of high or ecstasy of accomplishment or fulfillment. These are very positive emotions arising in experience defined by the material perspective. Clearly the pursuit of intellect and analysis are not necessarily linked to negative emotions. Moreover, the discovery high for the scientist can be compounded by the social benefits of the scientific results, which may bring celebration and elevation of the scientist by the surrounding human community – a kind of double positive emotional effect.

Competitive behavior arising from the material perspective displays the same extreme emotional response options. Highly competitive – even warring – behavior can lead to emotions of joy for the winner, and even connectedness, if the surrounding community identifies with the winner and pronounces its acclaim. It all depends on point of view, which

is available to define our emotional response at the material end of the perspective continuum. What may be viewed very negatively from one perspective at one scale [the death in battle of a fellow tribesman and leader] may be regarded extremely positively when seen from the perspective of the opposing tribe [conquering the foe and promoting the benefit of one's own tribe] or at a different scale [elimination of a tribal leader who was the source of intertribal conflict at the regional level]. The emotional effects of takings behaviors, which are associated with the material perspective and inherent to predatory species like humans, can be converted from association with negative to positive emotions depending on shifts in point of view and or scale. At the level of the loser and his point of view, the emotions associated with the results of competitive/aggressive behavior are generally negative [grief, resentment, hatred]. On the other hand, the winner is elated from his viewpoint. It can be very difficult to determine objectively which point of view with its associated emotions is "correct" or "justified." While debates can rage in this battle of viewpoints, it is worth remembering that from a spiritual perspective, neither individual point of view is justified since there can be no winners and losers to begin with. From this perspective, winners and losers are fundamentally connected and share an identity; what happens to one happens to both.

So, it is generally true that as the sense of discreteness or separation increases, the likelihood for and intensity of a negative emotional response increases. And it is equally accurate to say that as the sense of connection and relations increase, emotions become more and more exclusively positive. But it is also the case that context and point of view enter the scene as we move in the direction of separation [at the material end of the perspective continuum] and that these influential variables create the option for either positive or negative emotions of equal intensity to arise.

CONCLUSION: EMOTIONS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF DYNAMIC HUMANISM

From the point of view of Dynamic Humanism, it becomes our challenge to recognize the critical importance of context and point of view in defining our emotional responses when we are operating in zones of the perspective continuum where the intellectual/analytical mode has significant input. And in this situation, it is our responsibility to be sure that our emotional responses are truly appropriate when we check them against alternative points of view [or shifts in scale]. Unchecked emotional responses can lead us individually or socially in unproductive, even entirely false, directions. Dynamic Humanism promotes the need for balance – both between the development of our mental faculties that are associated with the material [intellectual] and spiritual [intuitive] perspectives and within the material perspective itself when it comes to determining appropriate and justifiable emotional responses.

EPILOGUE, "And Now for the Rest of the Story"

Since finishing Dynamic Humanism, I have completed reports on the research that was formative in bringing me to the conclusions that I reach in this overview work. 2010 is the watershed year in seeing these reports come to fruition in three works: A Little Bit of Heaven Here (2010), the study of the intuitive basis of the deliverance faith of an urban Black church community; The I Within Me (2010), an assessment of the life history and intuitive development of a psychic healer; and Right On: Selected Short Writings of Thomas A. Burns (2010), a collection primarily of essays written since 2000 on various topics of American cultural interest, most of which reflect the dynamic humanism point of view. All four of these works produced since 2007 are available for free electronic download from my website: www.dynamic-humanism.com