DYNAMIC HUMANISM

BALANCING
COMPLEMENTARY HUMAN PERSPECTIVES
AND MENTAL FACULTIES

Material and Spiritual
Intellect and Intuition

An Essay

2nd Edition
2025

Thomas A. Burns, PhD.

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DEDICATION

TO

INGER

Who has enormously enriched my life adventure for 62 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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Preface to the Second Edition
2025

The first edition of Dynamic Humanism was copyrighted in 2007. It represented my thinking on the extensive role that the human mental function of intuition plays in society and especially in the expressive behaviors of art-ritual. It is my view that the entire domain of spirituality – meditation, insight, creativity, paranormal phenomena, and animism/religion – cannot be properly understood without recognizing the human orientation that visual thinking/intuition/synthesis engenders. And this perspective – emphasizing the connectedness of all things – provides substantial support for the entire array of social/communal values – cooperation. This overall view continues to inform my worldview conception at the cognitive, emotional and cultural levels.

At the same time that I focus on human intuition, I honor entirely the opposing human mental function of the intellect which relies on the foundational assumption of separation of all material things. Analysis is the key contribution the intellect provides, and it is essential in successfully conducting everyday activities, planning, and science. Together with language, intellect is the source of analytical thought and supports survival skills through an overall competitive orientation. Critical thinking skills associated with the intellect are essential to human survival and continued progress in understanding the nature of reality from the material perspective.

Balance is the key in the input of these two essential human mental functions at the individual, social and ecological levels. This need for balance is the source of the “Dynamic” in Dynamic Humanism. I focus on the intuitive based function because it is paramount in understanding the source and primary function of art-ritual behavior, which is my academic and research starting point. I also emphasize the importance of the spiritual perspective because it is my view that modern complex society is out of balance – being excessively committed to religious fundamentalism on the one hand and to the intellect based competitive material perspective on the other hand. There is a Middle Way, and for most of human history, humans conducted themselves within it successfully.

Since 2007, and especially in the last ten years, four areas of consideration have emerged to influence and advance my understanding of reality together with the significance of the spiritual perspective. I will introduce these issues in the following remarks. The broader range of topics which are influenced by

this “new” awareness are presented in selected essay in topical subsections as a concluding attachment at the end of the 1st edition document.

Energy and Reality

Modern physics and cosmology provide support for the spiritual perspective. The total connectedness of the spiritual perspective is matched by the total unification characteristic of the immaterial energy phenomenon – energy being everywhere, all the time, and primary in the evolution of the universe. In addition, the separation assumption of the material perspective has been refuted by the realization from science itself that ubiquitous gases are material and totally connect all of the material world into one material entity. There is no vacuum or “void.” Putting the total connectedness of both energy and the material domains together, it is quite simply the case that all of reality is unified. Additionally, all material phenomena – including humans – are founded upon and integrated at every scale by energy. The result: the oneness of reality at the core of the animistic and meditative spiritual traditions is confirmed by science itself. All “things” being fundamentally connected as one at the universal scale of reality means that shared identity is the rule, and such sharing supports communal social and ecological values of cooperation and respect.

Change

Modern physics also supports the contention that the only constant is change. Energy is the source of motion/change at every scale in reality from atoms to galaxies, and our universe is itself changing as it expands. Universal and expanding energy is the source of our universe being in a perpetual state of vibration/change. Why is this fact an issue? Because our material based science relies on constants in the formulation of all of its theories in spite of the fact that the history of science itself demonstrates that these constants are continuously being revealed to be variables. Constants in scientific theories are tied to a static view of reality, but reality is fundamentally dynamic. The overall result is that the core phenomenon of change is a major source challenging the validity of the material perspective on reality. On the other hand, change is easily accommodated in the spiritual/universal perspective on reality. Change or Flow is a basic component in the condition of awareness/enlightenment in meditative/spiritual traditions.

Language and the Material Perspective

It is difficult to overstate the significance of language in the support it provides for the material perspective which is based on the principle of separation. Linear language is founded on the separation of sounds combined to create separate words to reference separate things and actions. As the basis for our

primary mode of thought, language imposes the principle of separation on the very observational and analytical activity of the intellect, informing at a very basic level our human conception of reality. Language, language based thought, and analytical language based logic in science have an enormous impact on our human worldviews,0 providing support at an essential level for the separation principle which is essential in the material perspective. Nearly all humans – including most scientists – are oblivious to this core fact!

Human Perceptual Limitations

Apart from religious beliefs, humans understand themselves and their surrounding reality to be composed of matter – the material domain, which is revealed by the human perceptual senses. Among these senses, sight is primary with our auditory sense as the main backup – taste, smell and touch being relatively minor. In this context, humans have no direct perception of the 70 – 90% of reality that is energy. Instead, we experience energy through the secondary consequences of its interactions with material phenomena. And our primary sight and auditory senses distinguish less than 0.01% of the full visual and auditory range of frequencies. All told, human perception is extraordinarily limited and highly biased in favor of focusing on material phenomena. Given this overall sensory situation, it is no surprise that the human conception of reality supports the material perspective. Most humans have no clue about the vast domain of reality they are missing, the presence of which a well developed spiritual perspective serves to reveal.

The Key Role of Paranormal Phenomena In the Debate Over the Nature of Reality

Most “modern” humans are committed to reality being revealed by the material perspective and its associated intellectual mental function. While the vast array of other human states of mind and mental functions may be recognized, they are considered unreliable when it comes to understanding the nature of reality. In this regard, many scientists dismiss spirituality and paranormal phenomena because, unfortunately, they have historically been associated with religious dogma, delusional mental states, illusionist fabrications, and new age hype.

So, what’s the problem? The problem is that language is being allowed to get in the way of appreciating alternative, major human avenues to experiencing, understanding and engaging reality – to our individual and social detriment.

As humans, we experience many different states of being together with their related states of mind: 1) deep sleep, 2) dream, 3) daydream, 4) reverie/ imagination, 5) meditation, 6) contemplation, 7) anticipation, 8) excitement, 9)

joy, 10) uncertainty, 11) frustration/agitation, 12) anger, 13) fear, 14) fright, etc. All of these states of being and mind are important and contribute to our ability to function appropriately and survive in the great variety of circumstances that we face. Contemplation, or intellect based analytical thought – to which we attribute such importance, is significant but alone it is entirely insufficient.

Reality is revealed in different ways depending on our state of mind. We must develop competence in multiple mental states to be most successful. The meditative state is associated with intuitive mental function and the spiritual perspective, and paranormal capabilities arise as options when significant competence in the intuitive is developed. Such potential competence is universal in humans and is as natural an outcome of development in this meditative mode as sophisticated reasoning is in the contemplative mode.

Problems arise because the unification based psychic phenomena that emanate from the meditative/intuitive mode conflict with the separation based assumptions of the contemplative/intellectual, material perspective. Both perspectives are valuable and contribute to the success of humans in their societies but in different ways. Although we may not like it, we must accept the fact that this contradictory perspective dynamic is fundamental and unresolvable. Humans have evolved to be successful competitively from the contemplative, intellectual, separation, material perspective at the same time they have evolved to be successful cooperatively from the spiritual, intuitive, unification perspective.

In this dynamic, paranormal phenomena are especially significant because they reveal the validity of the unification perspective in the material domain itself by “violating” the material separation principle in time – pre- and retro-cognition, space – clairvoyance, and action – psychokinesis. In this regard, psychic phenomena constitute a bridge between the material and spiritual perspectives on reality – a bridge that singularly committed materialists – supported by the domination of the materialist, intellectual perspective in science, refuse to accept. The alternative is for science to recognize that it needs to explore the nature of reality from both perspectives – a result that is already occurring due to the input from physics a) of quantum theory and b) of the discovery of the primary role of universal, immaterial energy fields in all material phenomena.

For the skeptics who resist committing to the dual alternative perspective goal in science and who have a difficult time with the terms “spirituality” and

"psychic or paranormal phenomena" or "Psi," I recommend exposing themselves to the following comprehensive reviews by experts of the consistent research results of the 100 plus year history of parapsychology:

Charles T. Tart, The End of Materialism: How Evidence of the Paranormal Is Bringing Science & Spirit Together, 2009, [416 pages].

Courtney M. Block, The Encyclopedia of Parapsychology, 2022, [366 pages].

Chris Carter, Science and Psychic Phenomena: The Fall of the House of Skeptics, 2007, [320 pages].

Annie Jacobsen, Phenomena: The Secret History of the U.S. Government's Investigations into Extrasensory Perception and Psychokinesis, 2017, [544 pages].

Dean Radin, Entangled Minds: Extrasensory Experiences in a Quantum Reality, 2006, [368 pages].

Dean Radin, Supernormal: Science, Yoga and the Evidence for Extraordinary Psychic Abilities, 2013, [369 pages].

Richard S. Broughton, Parapsychology: The Controversial Science, 1991, [408 pages].

Second Edition Preface Conclusion

The second edition of Dynamic Humanism retains all the components of the first edition and adds 40+ new essays that further support the core 2007 cultural worldview conception of reality. These 40+ essays are located at the end of the contents of the 1st edition as the final section in the 2nd edition. These essays are a sampling from the 300+ essays that explore this larger cultural reality conception proposal – all available on my professional website: http://www.dynamic-humanism.com .

For a more detailed presentation of the Dynamic Humanism worldview/reality conception including reference to additional essays, see:
"Dynamic Humanism Worldview Conception – Outline With Essay References," 2025…….. p. 67

For a more detailed presentations of my process in developing the Dynamic Humanism conception, see:
"The Creation and Development of the Dynamic Humanism Worldview Conception," 2025…….. p. 72

DYNAMIC HUMANISM

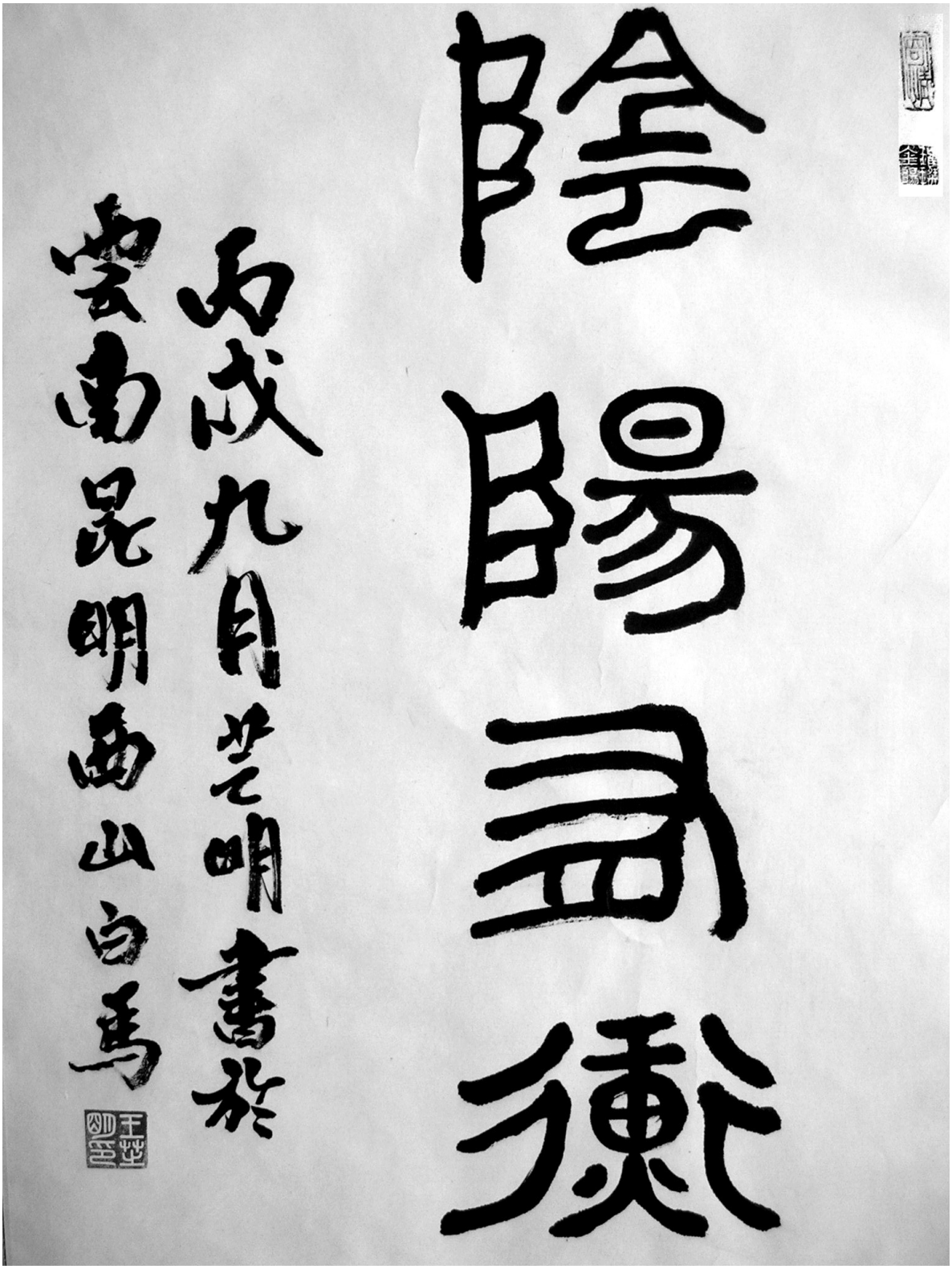
BALANCING
COMPLEMENTARY HUMAN PERSPECTIVES
AND MENTAL FACULTIES

Science and Spirituality
Intellect and Intuition

An Essay

1st Edition

Thomas A. Burns, PhD.



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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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 select list of overview works that provide access to the wealth of relevant literature under the "Reference" topic on my website http://www.dynamic-humansim.com .

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 pursing 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 <u>type</u> 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 <u>very</u> 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 the 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 potential reality of infinitely entangled energy or information 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/Frequency Quantum Fluctuations
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 http://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 - Anthropocentricism

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 my 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." Anthropocentricism, 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.

Geocentricism 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, material scales we have penetrated or have a scientific reason to propose, 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. Geocentricism, 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.

Ethnocentricism - 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 Ethnocentricism - 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, modem 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 [ethnocentricism, geocentricism, and anthropocentricism], 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 centricism 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 centricism 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 modem 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 modem 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 Psychic/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 song 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 fro 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

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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 <u>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</u>. 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 violet 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 are available on my website: http://www.dynamic-humanism.com .

ESSAYS OF THE SECOND EDITION IN SUBJECT CATEGORIES

Overview Essays

#1 "Dynamic Humanism Worldview Conception - Outline With Essay References," 2025.

As a social scientist focused on understanding the function of art and ritual in human life and society, I have had to venture far afield to locate, formulate and justify a proposed answer on this issue. It turns out that both the nature of reality and the human perception of it are essential in justifying my proposed solution. So, my view of the function of art-ritual nests within cosmology, within matter–energy physics, within the large system flexibility of Earth, within what I describe as the material–spiritual perspective continuum, within rational–intuitive human competence, within human language and society, and within individual, communal and ecological values and perspectives. The basic thesis that emerges from this worldview conception and the essays that elucidate it is that art-ritual emanates from the human faculty of intuition and functions in society to connect humans to the subjective/spiritual/energetic/unification perspective on and experience of reality.

Knowledge and Ignorance

Humans have made great strides in the pursuit of understanding the nature of physical reality, especially in the last 200 years. The problem is that we have discovered that our physical reality constitutes less than 5% of reality – as we currently understand it. And our knowledge of our own human biology and world ecology is probably not much greater. It is just a fact: at our best, our ignorance vastly exceeds our understanding. So, avoiding hubris is highly recommended. Our grand conceptions, like the one proposed in my work, are just propositions whose function should be to promote further investigation as we crawl toward more and more adequate understanding of ourselves and the reality of which we are a part. Offering useful stepping stones in this process is the best we can expect.

In what follows, I offer in two divisions a comprehensive worldview conception based on my understanding of what is presently known in many fields of knowledge. In the first division, I consider the larger "fixed" components of reality that impact worldview. In the second division, I offer a conception for the more variable components in the worldviews of humans.

The Larger Reality Context: Steady State Considerations

The Reality Unification Perspective

In reality, energy is primary with matter and all material phenomena evolving secondarily. Our present reality is composed of matter and energy which are transforms of one another. Individually and collectively matter and energy are totally integrated into one vast system. Reality exists in a completely unified state. There are no separate things or actions or causes or "observers."

Related Essays:

"Matter, Energy and Human Capabilities in Understanding Reality," 2022.
"Energy and the Human Conception of Reality," 2023.
"Human Knowledge of Reality: The Big Picture," 2023.
"Energy and the Human Conception of Reality," 2023

System Flexibility, Human Perceptual Limitations, and Free Will

A totally integrated system can be more or less flexible. Such systems are more flexible to the degree they are large, open, and/or made up of components of different densities with some being more mobile entities. Our reality is enormous, expanding and therefore open, its component filling the most "space" is the least dense – air/gas, and humans are mobile, solid entities operating in this mostly gaseous medium. In this context, humans exist in a surrounding system that has a great deal of flexibility, a situation that is further magnified by the fact that human perception of reality is severely limited. The overall result is that in a reality that is totally integrated, humans – together with most other organic species – operate under the false assumption that as solid, mobile, organic "things," they are separate and operate independently with free will. As minimal as humans as a species are on Earth, they must generate a great deal of collective change to encounter the flexibility limits of their planetary system – climate change being one such example!

Related Essays:

"Human Reality and Flexibility In a Totally Integrated System," 2023.
"The Fundamental Human Problem: Perceptual Limitation," 2021.
"Air Affair: The Matter and Energy Dynamic in Reality," 2023.

The Role of Language in Reality Conception

Oral and written language is our most fundamental means of human communication. As such it is essential. But it is also an artificial construct based on 1) the names we give to things and actions that we elect to separate from one another, and 2) the way we indicate how these things and actions are related in linear time and within space. In this respect, language attempts to

capture reality and define our worldviews, but critically it suffers from the illusion of separation which is fostered by human perceptual limitations. We have no other tool, but we must be aware that our language tool suffers from a very serious built in bias.

Related Essays:

"Language – Pluses and Minuses," 2024.

"Reality Unification, Mind, Thought, and Consciousness," 2025.

"Language and Reality – The Challenge," 2021.

Human Mental Capabilities

Apart from very significant human perceptual limitations, humans are capable of both verbal and visual based cognitive processes, rational and intuitive thought, dreams, daydreams and imagination, and an array of emotions that influence all of these operations. For all of our investigations into its nature, the human mind remains mostly a mystery. In this context, I find it useful to focus on the distinction between rational and intuitive mental processes, the latter being so little understood or appreciated. Analysis is key in rational thought, while synthesis is key in intuitive thought. Typically both modes are in operation most of the time with emphasis shifting in one direction or the other depending on the nature of the demands of the task at hand. Importantly, the synthesis function of intuitive operations seeks connections while analytical thought seeks distinctions. Analytical thought depends on the principle of separation among things while intuitive thought depends on the principle of integration. Humans need both operations to be developed and in use to be most successful, but modern cultures focus on the benefits of rational thought and tend to regard intuitive thought as unreliable – even delusional. My worldview conception retrieves the value of intuitive/subjective/inspirational mental processing in promoting creativity and understanding reality from the unification perspective. At the same time my worldview salutes the importance of rational/objective/ analytical mental processing in promoting material awareness and understanding reality from the biological survival perspective. Thus, I refer to the rational–intuitive continuum as fundamental and operating in parallel with the next topic: the material–spiritual perspective continuum.

Related Essays:

"Intuition – Intellect: The Dialectic of Human Life," 2022.

"Matter, Energy and Human Capabilities in Understanding Reality," 2022.

"Reality Unification, Mind, Thought, and Consciousness," 2025.

The More Specific and Varied Context

The core of the worldview conception in this division is presented in "The Material– Spiritual Continuum" together with "The Continuum of Emotions."

This combined framework provides for an array of options on many different significant variables. The human view of our more immediate reality and our responses within it are not fixed for individuals, groups, or societies. They change as social and ecological circumstances change. While for cultural comparison purposes it may be useful to claim that in the longer term a particular worldview can be relatively constant for a group or society, when it comes down to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral choices individual humans make in living their everyday lives, a worldview conception must allow for a lot of variation.

The Material–Spiritual Continuum and The Continuum of Emotions

Specific human activities, institutions, attitudes, and values are arrayed along The Material–Spiritual Continuum and keyed to The Continuum of Emotions. The individualistic ME orientated perspective favors the material, biological survival end of the continuum while the communal WE orientated perspective favors the spiritual, unification end of the continuum. These orientations correspond to the different mental faculties of intellect and intuition that respectively accommodate each perspective. The emphasis on connectedness promoted by intuitive mental operations supports commitment to cooperation in social relations and social values. These connectedness values are then expressed in political and economic domains to support sharing, equality, and giving rather than taking, power, and personal gain. At the far spiritual end of the continuum, love relations and most ritual and artistic-expressive behavior are located. At the far material end of the continuum hate relations and most highly aggressive human activities are located. Human behavior ranges across this continuum depending on the circumstances and which perspective overall receives the greatest emphasis in different groups and societies.

Related Essays:

"Material–Spiritual Perspective Continuum Chart and Statement," 2007.

"Continuum of Emotions Chart and Statement," 2010.

"Justifying the Spiritual–Unification Perspective on Self and Reality," 2021.

The Paranormal

Most worldviews ignore or deprecate this domain of human behavior, which, significantly, is cross culturally universal. In the worldview outlined here, the paranormal is an important evidential bridge between the material and the spiritual orientations demonstrating some of the cross-over results of the spiritual unification perspective in everyday material life. Paranormal events correlate with an active intuitive state of mind where connections that are not "allowed" under the rational/material/objective perspective are available with consequences in the objective. In a sense, the paranormal merely reveals that

multiple micro level principles in quantum mechanics also apply at the macro level, a position that science is more and more substantiating.
Related Essay:

"Matter, Energy and Human Capabilities In Understanding Reality," 2022.

Art–Ritual and Spirituality [Religion]

Religion is a social institution. At its core should be the unification experience, but religions tend to overwhelm this experience with elaborate belief systems and bureaucratic access structures. Religious belief systems provide an interpretation of the unification experience that most often reduce it to support for a particular social structure, which can easily lead to conflict among societies. For 96% of human history, religion as an institution did not exist. Instead, art and ritual were unified and provided a fairly direct avenue through concerted activation of the intuitive faculty to access the unification experience – the experience of reality as totally unified and of the self and group as participating in this unified state. It is important to recognize that by "art" I am referring to the entire zone of expressive human behavior from play and game to drama to music, to poetry, to all forms of narrative, to the graphic and plastic arts. Together with ritual, this domain accounts for a great deal of human behavior!
Related Essays:

"Art-Ritual: Connection, Flow, Oneness, and Unification," 2025.
"Intuition and Intellect in Human Mental Functioning and the Role of Art-Ritual in Human Societies," 2025.
"Human Energy Field and Art-Ritual in Dynamic Humanism," 2021.
"Matter, Energy and Human Capabilities in Understanding Reality," 2022.
"Energy, Matter, Reality, Worldview, Art and Ritual," 2023
"Art – Entertainment Continuum in Modern Complex Society," 2021.

Conclusion

Worldview is a complex subject. It is one of our highest order cultural abstractions. Its value lies in promoting the evaluation of the overall human societal and ecological condition, not in attempts to justify the concept per se. My focus in my career as a research social scientist has been to seek an understanding of the source for expressive and spiritual behavior – art-ritual. My search has taken me all the way back to reality fundamentals and basic human mental capabilities. In this essay, I present an overview of the results of this pursuit. Utilizing the worldview concept, I emphasize the value of the human intuitive faculty in providing access through art-ritual to understanding and experiencing the spiritual/unification basis of reality.

The human rational faculty and the role it plays in critical thinking skills and science is hugely important. It has provided the central point of view for assessing our reality, our selves, and our worldviews. No question, this capability needs to be fostered and developed to its maximum potential. But, the human intuitive faculty is equally important. And unfortunately, this faculty has been minimally recognized and developed – especially in our secular materially dominated modern western culture. Beyond behavioral domains of art-ritual and the paranormal, human dreams, imagination, creativity, and inspiration are also closely associated with a significantly activated intuitive faculty in the context of a much less active rational faculty. And intuitive capabilities manifesting in the spiritual perspective of connectedness/unification directly support cooperative social behavior – greatly needed in modern global society.

It is my view that we need a serious science of the human intuitive faculty to contribute to creating better balanced and productive worldviews!

#2 "The Creation and Development of the Dynamic Humanism Worldview Conception," 2025. [detailed biography of development]

The Dynamic Humanism Worldview Conception was developed in two major stages separated by 25 years of ranchette management in southern Oregon.

Phase One

The first stage occurred in the 20 year period from 1970 to 1990 when I was teaching and researching at the University of Pennsylvania. During this time, I taught a course titled "Psychological Approaches to Folklore," one of the core courses in the department's PhD program. This course covered the potential significance of theory in several branches of psychology including: behavioral, developmental, evolutionary, cognitive, and paranormal as well as various approaches to the analysis of personality and mentation [creativity, intellect, intuition, visual thinking, etc.]. Teaching an always expanding version of this course stimulated my interest in the basic creative process that underlay all of the traditional, expressive arts. Clearly these expressive arts were not primarily the consequence of the use of the analytical intellect. All of this behavior occurred in special "time out" conditions and promoted an alternative mental and emotional state as compared to that dominant in executing everyday tasks. Moreover, the individual and group experience of what is known as flow was common. It seems that when these expressive activities were considered successful, the participants were being transported to a different state of being

and awareness. I began investigating the nature of visual and intuitive processing in an effort to determine what was occurring in these experiences.

In traditional societies, art and ritual exist in a single expressive culture bundle with spiritual belief not being formally institutionalized in religion. Accordingly, I chose to focus eight years of field research on the ritual in an urban Black Deliverance church community. My efforts were centered on a) what was happening for the participants in the services and b) conducting extensive life histories with a large number of church members which amounted to "testimonies" of the transformative effect of their involvement in the church community. The services involved much emotive music, singing, and preaching creating a unified congregation with the culmination being a blessing line where many "fell out" in the spirit after being anointed by the pastor. Noteworthy was the description in interviews of this falling out experience generating a "different" state of mind where they felt enveloped by "love" resulting overall in their being relieved from the often negative/troubled/anxious conditions in their lives.

I was extraordinarily fortunate to discover that the pastor and associate pastor of this "fundamentalist" church, who both came from strong church backgrounds, had been educated in a generalized form of spirituality in their seminaries rather than in a set of absolute religious beliefs. It turned out that they were fully aware that they were using fundamentalist Christian belief to evoke a spiritual source of power in their congregants with the intention that that power would enable the members to improve the quality of their lives spiritually, socially, and materially. I did not have to render this interpretation; it was theirs! Evoke an intense spiritual awakening bringing the personal experience of joy and love, and encourage the use of access to this new found capability to motivate actions to achieve successful results in life. Fundamentalist belief was a means, not an end.

I wrote a book length academic report on this research, "A Little Bit of Heaven Here," 1979 [copyright 2010] – available on my website. This research confirmed for me the importance of intuitive mental processing and the validity of the spiritual perspective on reality being important in living successfully.

During this entire twenty year period of research, I was digesting all the scientific literature I could locate on intuition, creativity, visual thinking, the paranormal [parapsychology/noetic sciences], meditation, the spiritual experience, the psychology of the religious experience, and quantum physics. Unfortunately, my research corresponded with the rise of "New Age" hysterics in popular culture – all of which I assiduously avoided. I added exploring research

on the topics of shamanism, acupuncture and psychic healing as my field research moved to my next major effort – a four year investigation of a psychic healer. This research experience confirmed the value in use of the intuitive mode of mental functioning to effect changes in the conditions of others. I would later explore this change process in terms of interactive human energy fields. I wrote a book length work assessing my research with this psychic healer, "The I Within Me: The Life History and Intuitive Development of a Psychic Healer," 1990 [copyright 2010] – available on my website.

The above research supported my general interest in the creative process which was far from the focus of my discipline. So, in the early 1980's I spent three years at the Philadelphia College of the Arts in metal smithing exploring the roots of creativity in myself and the art students and faculty that surrounded me. This experience confirmed the importance of intuitive based visual thinking and its relationship to creative activities of all kinds in the arts. I found most of my fellow art school students to have had negative experiences with reading and intellectual processing from very early ages. In this regard, the instructors had found that it did not work to offer reading materials describing new processes and techniques that they wanted to introduce to their students. Instead, they had to rely for their visual/action focused students exclusively on hands-on bench demonstrations – the basic apprentice approach. I understood this situation personally as someone who had been a poor reader for most of my childhood when I was entirely committed to seeing and doing as my "way of being." I had been and still think of myself as primarily a visualizer in spite of having worked very hard beginning in early adolescence to acquire reading competence and language based critical thinking skills.

It is in the above teaching and research context that I developed the core version of my Dynamic Humanism Worldview conception. This conception is based on the proposition that all humans in all cultures depend on two contrasting, oppositional, dynamic perspectives on reality which I describe as the Material and Spiritual perspectives, with their correlates of the Objective – Subjective perspectives. This dynamic then gets "expressed" in all of the different aspects and institutions of life. At the mentation level, it manifests as the Intellectual – Intuitive opposition with its correlates of Analysis – Synthesis and Verbal – Visual. At the social level it manifests as the Competitive – Cooperative and Conservative – Liberal oppositions. And at the extreme emotional level it manifests as the Hate – Love opposition. I then explore how these oppositions manifest in the details of culture within these categories. In this context, I propose art/ritual provides a significant avenue to spiritual experience and awareness. The full description of this Worldview Conception

can be found in: “Dynamic Humanism: Balancing Complementary Human Perspectives and Mental Faculties, An Essay,” 1990 [copyright 2007] – available on my website.

Phase Two

The second stage of development of this worldview conception has occurred in the last ten years from 2015 to the present following our move from our ranchette to town in Klamath Falls, Oregon. With this move, my life has become less consumed by everyday development and maintenance activities allowing for the opportunity to engage in a great deal more research and reflection. Accordingly, for the last 10 years, I have been reading, reading. reading, thinking thinking, thinking, writing, writing, writing and gradually expanding the foundation of my dynamic humanism worldview conception with insights primarily from linguistics, research on perception, physics, cosmology, and energy field studies. The consequence of this adventure has been the generation of a great many essays all of which are available on the website I created to house the full collective of my writings – including over 200 poems:

http://www.dynamic-humanism.com

What follows is an overview of the conceptual results of this 10 year ideational expansion process:

Language and Perception

Language and perception have a very strong and almost entirely unrecognized impact on how we humans conceptualize reality – our worldview.

1) Language is founded upon the use of separate sounds combined to designate separate words to stand for separate “things.” As such, language artificially imposes the principle of separation on our conception of reality. Everything gets carved up into millions of separate categories in an attempt to capture a reality that is more accurately characterized by continua.

2) Our human perceptual capabilities are so extremely limited that we fail to “see” the dense degree of connections that exists among the “things” we artificially separate and designate. In this regard, as important as our sense of sight is to us, science reveals that we humans do not directly perceive any of the entire electromagnetic spectrum of energy. We participate in all of it, but we experience as “visible light” only the reflection of a tiny portion of this spectrum as it “bounces off” material entities. The overall result: our perception supports the assumption of the separation principle upon which language itself is based.

3) Both language and limited human perception support the separation principle, and this principle is fundamental in the Material perspective on reality.

4) Add to this situation the fact that the dominant mode of human thought is language based. We think in language! So, the human thought process is built on the separation assumption of language. Our thought process thereby compounds support for the separation principle of the Material perspective.

5) Science relies on language based thought, and, in addition, it requires the rigorous use of the analytical process associated with critical thinking – taking things apart and examining the nature of their relationships. This analytical process further reinforces the separation principle of the Material perspective on reality.

6) This set of a) language based communication, b) limited human perception, c) language based thought, and d) analytical language based thought processing supports the Material perspective on reality.

7) We humans fail to recognize the huge impact this language based complex in conjunction with our limited perception has on our conception of reality – even in science!

Energy

The phenomenon of energy supports a perspective on reality that is radically different from the Material perspective.

1) Energy is an immaterial phenomenon consisting of waves and fields.

2) Science has revealed that energy constitutes the vast majority of our reality with the physical/material reality that dominates our human conception of reality amounting to only about 5%.

3) As a phenomenon, energy is a) everywhere, b) all the time, c) infinitely connected, and d) totally integrated.

4) In Big Bang Theory, energy is primary with all material/matter based phenomena arising secondarily from the "consolidation" of energy, in some manner – as yet unknown.

5) All matter relies on energy for its existence and sustained integration.

6) Energy creates, maintains, and unifies all of reality including all material phenomena. As such, energy constitutes the foundational web of reality.

7) Energy supports the Unification principle in reality – very different from the Material perspective which is based on the principle of Separation.

The Energy and Spiritual Perspectives on Reality

The spiritual and energy perspectives on reality share nearly all of the same fundamental features: No separation, and everything connected, integrated and unified into one "entity" – the unification principle.

1) It follows that the energy unification perspective from science lends substantial support for the validity of the spiritual perspective on reality.

2) The energy unification perspective joins a) the entanglement phenomenon from Quantum theory, b) the Psi phenomena of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis from parapsychology, c) the evidence for the oneness experience of flow in most expressive activities, d) the critical importance of energy fields at all scales in all material phenomena, e) the nature of the core unification experience in all religions, and f) the fact that the spiritual perspective is universal in human cultures in supporting the validity of the spiritual/unification perspective on reality.

Change

Change is universal in reality.

1) In a Big Bang, expanding universe, the only constant is change. There are no constants – only variables, some of which are relatively constant at certain scales.

2) All of our mathematically based scientific theories rely on constants that do not exist.

3) Such scientific theories can not accurately capture the nature of reality.

4) These theories can nevertheless be very useful at limited scales.

5) It is the utility of such theories – not their inherent truth – that lends credence to material science's claim that its theories account for reality.

Conclusion

In line with a major Buddhist ascetic principle, it has been my experience that if I pursue the intellectual process far enough, I will discover the same core awareness arising from the rigorous pursuit of any of the alternative paths to enlightenment.

Accordingly, my pursuit as a scientist of the analytic intellect has led me to synthetic intuition as the key to understanding the Core function of True art/ritual – to facilitate the experience of reality unification and thereby envelop the participants in commitment to belonging – cooperating – sharing – oneness.

In our intellectually and materially dominated modern societies, where, with good reason, we reject religion per se, we have lost contact with and experience in the spiritual/unification perspective on reality. The result has unfortunately been that our selves and our cultures are severely out of balance, risking collapse, even species extinction.

We are in great need of TRUE art-ritual – not to be confused with dogmatic religious fundamentalism or sensational secular Entertainment!

#3 “Dynamic Humanism – The Basics,” 2024.

The psychological, social and cultural core of the Dynamic Humanism worldview has been stable from the time of development in the mid 1970s to the original copyright date of 2007. Since that time a great deal has emerged in the surrounding micro and macro understanding of reality that is highly relevant. In addition, understanding the nature of verbal language and the role it plays in shaping our thought and our conception of reality is critically important. The following updated outline of the Dynamic Humanism worldview includes new components on these topics. The entire Dynamic Humanism “package” with many related essays is available on my professional website:

http://www.dynamic-humanism.com

Outline of Dynamic Humanism Basics

Reality

- Reality is composed of matter and energy
- Matter itself is energy based, so energy is primary
- Matter and energy are both everywhere all the time
- Matter and energy are totally connected and integrated in ONE entity
- The entirety of reality is in a perpetual state of change – vibration and expansion
- There is no separation or independence of “things”
- Everything participates in the totality of change – causation is universal
- Every change ramifies through the fabric of the universe, but at the minute local level the effects are so small they are usually not observable
- Constant change, expansion and the enormous scale of reality allow for a great deal of flexibility at the minute, local level
- This condition of flexibility plus the thin density of air on Earth is sufficient at the minute, local level on Earth for most organic phenomena – including individual humans and human groups – to perceive reality as being composed of separate/independent things that are related by mostly very local and independent causes
- The fundamental assumptions of separation and local cause lead to the further assumption that separate things have “free will”
- Since system flexibility limits are very rarely reached at the minute local level, organic entities have literally evolved successfully under these separatist and free will assumptions
- The concept of natural selection with the successful competitors surviving exemplifies how what seems a scientific truth at the minute local level is in fact based on the false assumption of separation

Language

- Verbal language is the basic means of communication among humans
- Based on the human perception of separation among things [relying mainly on the extremely limited human sense of vision], language then operates on the assumption of separation with different sounds combining to make up different words representing different “things/ actions/categories/concepts.”
- From a very young age children learn that different words stand for different things and actions with the association becoming so strong that the words and the “things” are essentially unified conceptually
- From start to finish this is an entirely artificial process with the product being imposed on reality and claiming to accurately represent that reality.
- Language then connects these separated entities in an artificial set of linear grammatical rules to communicate complete “thoughts”
- Finally, language becomes the primary basis for the analytical thought process in which sentences are combined “logically” to produce an argument which, when “confirmed,” supposedly leads to valid conclusions
- The high value placed on the language based analytical thought process becomes the basis for asserting that the analytically oriented intellect is the primary human mental function
- Language and language based analytical thought are built upon and confirm reality as grounded on the assumption of separation
- Science brings rigor to the process of intellectual analytical language based thought but floats on the separation foundation of “independent” variables!
- Both language and language based analytical thought depend on the separation assumption, which much of the time seems accurate at the minute local scale, but which is false in the grand scale of a reality that is totally unified as one inseparable phenomenon
- At a fundamental level, humans have been largely successful in relying on language and language based thought to reveal reality and to define their behavior within that reality.
- Only when the effects of human behavior accumulate over time and clearly exceed the limits of grand system flexibility – as in the challenge posed by climate change – are humans forced to reassess. And most still do not understand the underlying conceptual source of their failure – their separation and free will assumptions.

Alternative Mental Processing

- Humans possess an alternative thought process based on the intuitive mode of mental operation
- This intuitive, mostly visual based process is oriented to synthesis much more than analysis as is the case for language based intellect
- As such, this intuitive process supports the unification principle in reality
- Reality is understood as basically integrated rather than separated
- This perspective supports the concepts of shared identity, cooperation and respect rather than competition among separate free will entities
- For 96% of homo sapiens existence, humans lived in bands and tribes, and for the most part these societies learned to balance the use and input of the intellect and intuitive modes of mentation
- While the intuitive mode of thought has been developed to a high level in some complex societies, its fairly exclusive focus on a goal of personal enlightenment has limited the potential productivity of its more general cultural application
- The discipline of parapsychology has emerged within science in the last century to examine the nature of competencies associated with the intuitive function – the psi phenomena of telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and psychokinesis
- While these competencies are “impossible” from the intellectual “separatist” point of view, they are legitimate options in the synthetic intuitive mode in a totally integrated and unified reality
- It should come as no surprise that these paranormal competencies are reported as universal in human cultures
- In the last 30 years or so, Integral and Humanistic Psychology have emerged as subdisciplines of psychology, and they include in their scope the paranormal, the spiritual and consciousness studies
- While consciousness is valid as a concept to assist humans in their analytical efforts to understand the various functions of mind [another concept], they make the basic mistake of language separation when they then convert the concept into a separate entity capable of independent existence and effects.
- Humans can experience their shared existence in Oneness through the intuitive mode without having to attribute this access and its benefits to consciousness and then going to the extreme of falsely claiming that independent consciousness is universal and creates reality

The Role of Art and Ritual

- Most human behaviors require both intellect and intuition mental modes operating together in unison, but some behaviors depend more on one than the other. It's a continuum.
- The whole range of rituals and arts in traditionally oriented human societies evoke and rely more exclusively upon the intuitive mental mode
- These special behaviors constitute "time out" periods from instrumental activities and have as their primary function transporting the participants to the unification perspective and experience of reality
- This perspective and experience is often referred to using the term "spiritual" and the category and function of these behaviors using the term "spirituality"
- The traditional arts include all of the graphic, dramatic, musical, narrative, and plastic divisions plus play and game
- In general, most modern media based entertainments are so sensational and secular oriented that they qualify minimally as art in this regard
- Ritual in traditional society deals mostly with life transition events: birth, initiation, marriage, role and event celebrations, health, and death
- For the most part art and ritual are inseparable in traditional society with ritual emerging as something considered distinctive when religion arises as an institution in more complex societies
- While religion has the unification experience at its core, it can become so encumbered with elaborate beliefs and administrative structures and personnel that the core experience gets lost for many participants and the primary function shifts to social control

The Current State of Imbalance

- Humans have the capacity to balance the legitimate inputs of the intellectual and intuitive modes of thought in their understanding of reality, but currently that is not the case
- The analytical language based mode of the intellect has dominated especially in modern technologically, scientifically and economically oriented complex societies
- When the intellect has more or less exclusive reign, its separatist and free will assumptions support excessive competition resulting in the potential for a high level of both internal and external conflict as well as the abuse of the environment
- Internally, egalitarian principled democracies are threatened by the excessively powerful and exclusive economic interests of competitive corporations and the self-focused hyper wealthy

- Externally, cooperation, which is supported by the integration oriented intuitive, is too weak to control the emergence of serious conflicts between nations and different religious, racial and ethnic groups
- Materialism, consumerism, and the pursuit of wealth are motivated under the separation and free will assumptions
- The underlying perspective difference resulting from the intellectual vs intuitive mental operations is manifested in many of our recognized dichotomies: individualism vs communalism, totalitarian vs egalitarian, conservative-right vs liberal-left, divide vs unify, reactionary vs progressive, Me vs We, Us vs Them, get vs give, competition vs cooperation, part vs whole, etc.
- In spite of science having discovered the unification principles of Oneness in the total integration of matter and energy in an ever changing reality, it sustains a mostly separatist, material based explanatory orientation seeking to identify the specific rules that define the relationships among select material variables that are considered separate and independent
- Science and the scientific model are a long way from operating within a balanced perspective on reality. Energy, upon which all material reality depends, must receive much greater emphasis, and at a minimum, investigations in science must be conceived and executed within a full system/subsystem framework.

Conclusion

Very few modern humans have any awareness of the pervasive underlying influence on their worldviews of language based analytical thought and its assumptions of separation and free will. They also are largely ignorant of the existence of the intuitive mental mode and its function to assist humans in being aware of both their totally unified reality and the advantages of participating in that reality from that perspective.

Humanity in the complex society condition has enormous potential. To realize that potential it must seriously adjust its current worldview to accommodate a proven reality of Oneness/Unification. In so doing, the intellectual perspective of separation, free will, competition, and language based analytical thought can be recognized for both its strengths and weaknesses. The contribution of the intellect needs to be complemented by refined input from intuition which supports the principles of integration, shared identity, cooperation, and respect. In proper dynamic balance, intellect and intuition are a powerful combination that can provide the basis for appropriate institutional design and operation at all levels. Humanity can not get to a sustainable, much-needed and empowered

global government without being supported by this much better balanced worldview perspective. For 96% of human history, humans existed in bands and tribes, and overall they figured this out and prevailed. Humans in modern complex society need to retrieve this balance so they can thrive and progress while living mostly in harmony among themselves and sustainably in relationship to their surrounding ecology.

#4 "Overview: Reality, Mental Modes, Religion, Spirituality and Truth," 2022.

The Key Components of the Dynamic Humanism Point of View

1) At the extremes, humans experience self and reality in two very different ways: as objectively and materially separated or as subjectively and spiritually unified.

2) This differential experience is not an either/or phenomenon. It exists along a continuum from one extreme to the other with both perspectives active and operating to some degree and in combination in most human activities.

3) Access to these two experiences of self and reality are accommodated through the two main human mental modes: Intellect [reason – rational thought, analysis], and Intuition [inspiration – spiritual unification, synthesis]

4) These two mental modes exist on a continuum where only at the extremes are they operating more or less exclusively. In most activities, the two mental modes associated with the corresponding two perspectives – operate together.

5) Everyday instrumental activities depend on a perspective that relies more heavily on the intellectual analytical mode because this mode better addresses the biological challenges and goals that humans encounter in objective material reality.

6) The activities of casual social interaction [eating together, joking, courtship, leisure, and relaxation, etc.] exist in the center of the objective – subjective continuum with both perspectives and modes about equally active.

7) Play, game, and all verbal, plastic and performing arts rely on a further perspective shift toward the intuitive, subjective, spiritual end of the continuum.

8) Paranormal phenomena [ESP and PK] and the core religious experience [ecstasy, born again, unification] rely heavily on the intuitive mode that reveals self and reality from the subjective, spiritual end of the perspective continuum.

9) Developed religions in complex societies surround the core unification experience with elaborate belief and ritual systems often with a hierarchy of intermediaries – priests, imams, gurus, etc. Such institutionalized religions have a strong tendency to demand commitment to the absolute truth of their belief systems. Unfortunately, the result of such demands often puts different religious groups at odds with one another to the point of conflict, violence, and warfare.

10) Spirituality focuses on the core unification experience. Belief systems are avoided. Seekers are encouraged to release the objective material perspective and its allied mental modes through various actions: deep prayer, vision quests, passive to active forms of meditation, psychedelic drugs, etc. The pursuit of the spiritual perspective in these activities evokes the expanded, inclusive sense of self and reality, reveals all phenomena as sharing one identity, and promotes cooperation and respect across all entities [the We point of view] that are separated in everyday reality [the Me point of view]. In so doing, spirituality rejects all forms of violence.

11) What constitutes “truth” is revealed through both the objective and subjective perspectives on self and reality. Humans cannot legitimately claim that the “truth” revealed by one of these perspectives is accurate and the other false. Humans need both perspectives, first as takers or predators trying to survive biologically and, second as givers or supporters assisting one another and working to respect and sustain the surrounding ecology.

12) Neither secular humanism nor religious fundamentalism accurately account for the dynamic relationship of the material and spiritual perspectives on reality.

13) Sometimes the “truth” revealed by the more extreme material perspective conflicts with the “truth” revealed by the more extreme spiritual perspective. Ultimately, humans can not escape this dilemma because it is a fundamental consequence of alternative perspectives being active in human consciousness.

14) The only constant is change. There is no absolute truth. All “truth” is subject to change. There is only the open-minded effort to understand reality

from both perspectives: the existing science of the objective material realm and the potential science of the subjective spiritual domain.

15) As the material – spiritual perspective continuum reveals the two ways humans engage and understand reality, so the matter – energy perspective continuum in modern Physics provides two ways to approach understanding the nature of reality.

16) Humans must negotiate the inherent tension between the self-interested competitive view [Me] associated with the material perspective and the social and ecological cooperative view [We] associated with the spiritual perspective.

17) Humans and their societies go wrong either a) when they fail to recognize and develop capabilities equally in the modes that support both perspectives – reason and intuition, or b) when they fail to adequately balance the inputs of these two ways of knowing themselves, others, and the surrounding world. At an essential level all of the institutions of human societies can be assessed individually and collectively in terms of these two criteria.

Knowledge and Ignorance

Humans have made great strides in the pursuit of understanding the nature of physical reality, especially in the last 200 years. The problem is that we have discovered that our physical reality constitutes less than 5% of reality – as we currently understand it. And our knowledge of our own human biology and world ecology is probably not much greater. It is just a fact: at our best, our ignorance vastly exceeds our understanding. So, avoiding hubris is highly recommended. Our grand conceptions, like the one proposed in my work, are just propositions whose function should be to promote further investigation as we crawl toward more and more adequate understanding of ourselves and the reality of which we are a part. Offering useful stepping stones in this process is the best we can expect.

In what follows, I offer in two divisions a comprehensive worldview conception based on my understanding of what is presently known in many fields of knowledge. In the first division, I consider the larger “fixed” components of reality that impact worldview. In the second division, I offer a conception for the more variable components in the worldviews of humans.

The Larger Reality Context: Steady State Considerations

The Reality Unification Perspective

In reality, energy is primary with matter and all material phenomena evolving secondarily. Our present reality is composed of matter and energy which are transforms of one another. Individually and collectively matter and energy are totally integrated into one vast system. Reality exists in a completely unified state. There are no separate things or actions or causes or "observers."

Related Essays:

"Matter, Energy and Human Capabilities in Understanding Reality," 2022.
"Energy and the Human Conception of Reality," 2023.
"Human Knowledge of Reality: The Big Picture," 2023.
"Energy and the Human Conception of Reality," 2023

System Flexibility, Human Perceptual Limitations, and Free Will

A totally integrated system can be more or less flexible. Such systems are more flexible to the degree they are large, open, and/or made up of components of different densities with some being more mobile entities. Our reality is enormous, expanding and therefore open, its component filling the most "space" is the least dense – air/gas, and humans are mobile, solid entities operating in this mostly gaseous medium. In this context, humans exist in a surrounding system that has a great deal of flexibility, a situation that is further magnified by the fact that human perception of reality is severely limited. The overall result is that in a reality that is totally integrated, humans – together with most other organic species – operate under the false assumption that as solid, mobile, organic "things," they are separate and operate independently with free will. As minimal as humans as a species are on Earth, they must generate a great deal of collective change to encounter the flexibility limits of their planetary system – climate change being one such example!

Related Essays:

"Human Reality and Flexibility In a Totally Integrated System," 2023.
"The Fundamental Human Problem: Perceptual Limitation," 2021.
"Air Affair: The Matter and Energy Dynamic in Reality," 2023.

The Role of Language in Reality Conception

Oral and written language is our most fundamental means of human communication. As such it is essential. But it is also an artificial construct based on 1) the names we give to things and actions that we elect to separate from one another, and 2) the way we indicate how these things and actions are related in linear time and within space. In this respect, language attempts to

capture reality and define our worldviews, but critically it suffers from the illusion of separation which is fostered by human perceptual limitations. We have no other tool, but we must be aware that our language tool suffers from a very serious built in bias.

Related Essays:

"Language – Pluses and Minuses," 2024.

"Reality Unification, Mind, Thought, and Consciousness," 2025.

"Language and Reality – The Challenge," 2021.

Human Mental Capabilities

Apart from very significant human perceptual limitations, humans are capable of both verbal and visual based cognitive processes, rational and intuitive thought, dreams, daydreams and imagination, and an array of emotions that influence all of these operations. For all of our investigations into its nature, the human mind remains mostly a mystery. In this context, I find it useful to focus on the distinction between rational and intuitive mental processes, the latter being so little understood or appreciated. Analysis is key in rational thought, while synthesis is key in intuitive thought. Typically both modes are in operation most of the time with emphasis shifting in one direction or the other depending on the nature of the demands of the task at hand. Importantly, the synthesis function of intuitive operations seeks connections while analytical thought seeks distinctions. Analytical thought depends on the principle of separation among things while intuitive thought depends on the principle of integration. Humans need both operations to be developed and in use to be most successful, but modern cultures focus on the benefits of rational thought and tend to regard intuitive thought as unreliable – even delusional. My worldview conception retrieves the value of intuitive/subjective/inspirational mental processing in promoting creativity and understanding reality from the unification perspective. At the same time my worldview salutes the importance of rational/objective/ analytical mental processing in promoting material awareness and understanding reality from the biological survival perspective. Thus, I refer to the rational–intuitive continuum as fundamental and operating in parallel with the next topic: the material–spiritual perspective continuum.

Related Essays:

"Intuition – Intellect: The Dialectic of Human Life," 2022.

"Matter, Energy and Human Capabilities in Understanding Reality," 2022.

"Reality Unification, Mind, Thought, and Consciousness," 2025.

The More Specific and Varied Context

The core of the worldview conception in this division is presented in “The Material – Spiritual Continuum” together with “The Continuum of Emotions.” This combined framework provides for an array of options on many different significant variables. The human view of our more immediate reality and our responses within it are not fixed for individuals, groups, or societies. They change as social and ecological circumstances change. While for cultural comparison purposes it may be useful to claim that in the longer term a particular worldview can be relatively constant for a group or society, when it comes down to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral choices individual humans make in living their everyday lives, a worldview conception must allow for a lot of variation.

The Material–Spiritual Continuum and The Continuum of Emotions

Specific human activities, institutions, attitudes, and values are arrayed along The Material–Spiritual Continuum and keyed to The Continuum of Emotions. The individualistic ME orientated perspective favors the material, biological survival end of the continuum while the communal WE orientated perspective favors the spiritual, unification end of the continuum. These orientations correspond to the different mental faculties of intellect and intuition that respectively accommodate each perspective. The emphasis on connectedness promoted by intuitive mental operations supports commitment to cooperation in social relations and social values. These connectedness values are then expressed in political and economic domains to support sharing, equality, and giving rather than taking, power, and personal gain. At the far spiritual end of the continuum, love relations and most ritual and artistic-expressive behavior are located. At the far material end of the continuum hate relations and most highly aggressive human activities are located. Human behavior ranges across this continuum depending on the circumstances and which perspective overall receives the greatest emphasis in different groups and societies.

Related Essays:

“Material–Spiritual Perspective Continuum Chart and Statement,” 2007.

“Continuum of Emotions Chart and Statement,” 2010.

“Justifying the Spiritual–Unification Perspective on Self and Reality,” 2021.

The Paranormal

Most worldviews ignore or deprecate this domain of human behavior, which, significantly, is cross culturally universal. In the worldview outlined here, the paranormal is an important evidential bridge between the material and the

spiritual orientations demonstrating some of the cross-over results of the spiritual unification perspective in everyday material life. Paranormal events correlate with an active intuitive state of mind where connections that are not "allowed" under the rational/material/objective perspective are available with consequences in the objective. In a sense, the paranormal merely reveals that multiple micro level principles in quantum mechanics also apply at the macro level, a position that science is more and more substantiating.

Related Essays:

"Matter, Energy and Human Capabilities In Understanding Reality," 2022.

Art–Ritual and Spirituality [Religion]

Religion is a social institution. At its core should be the unification experience, but religions tend to overwhelm this experience with elaborate belief systems and bureaucratic access structures. Religious belief systems provide an interpretation of the unification experience that most often reduce it to support for a particular social structure, which can easily lead to conflict among societies. For 96% of human history, religion as an institution did not exist. Instead, art and ritual were unified and provided a fairly direct avenue through concerted activation of the intuitive faculty to access the unification experience – the experience of reality as totally unified and of the self and group as participating in this unified state. It is important to recognize that by "art" I am referring to the entire zone of expressive human behavior from play and game to drama to music, to poetry, to all forms of narrative, to the graphic and plastic arts. Together with ritual, this domain accounts for a great deal of human behavior!

Related Essays:

"Art-Ritual: Connection, Flow, Oneness, and Unification," 2025.

"Intuition and Intellect in Human Mental Functioning and the Role of Art-Ritual in Human Societies," 2025.

"Human Energy Field and Art-Ritual in Dynamic Humanism," 2021.

"Matter, Energy and Human Capabilities in Understanding Reality," 2022.

"Energy, Matter, Reality, Worldview, Art and Ritual," 2023

"Art – Entertainment Continuum in Modern Complex Society," 2021.

Conclusion

Worldview is a complex subject. It is one of our highest order cultural abstractions. Its value lies in promoting the evaluation of the overall human societal and ecological condition, not in attempts to justify the concept per se. My focus in my career as a research social scientist has been to seek an understanding of the source for expressive and spiritual behavior – art-ritual. My search has taken me all the way back to reality fundamentals and basic

human mental capabilities. In this essay, I present an overview of the results of this pursuit. Utilizing the worldview concept, I emphasize the value of the human intuitive faculty in providing access through art-ritual to understanding and experiencing the spiritual/unification basis of reality.

The human rational faculty and the role it plays in critical thinking skills and science is hugely important. It has provided the central point of view for assessing our reality, our selves, and our worldviews. No question, this capability needs to be fostered and developed to its maximum potential. But, the human intuitive faculty is equally important. And unfortunately, this faculty has been minimally recognized and developed – especially in our secular materially dominated modern western culture. Beyond behavioral domains of art-ritual and the paranormal, human dreams, imagination, creativity, and inspiration are also closely associated with a significantly activated intuitive faculty in the context of a much less active rational faculty. And intuitive capabilities manifesting in the spiritual perspective of connectedness/unification directly support cooperative social behavior – greatly needed in modern global society.

It is my view that we need a serious science of the human intuitive faculty to contribute to creating better balanced and productive worldviews!

Alternative Human Mental Functions

#5 "Intuition – Intellect, The Dialectic of Human Life," 2022.

Introduction

In most activities of human life, the intellectual and intuitive functions of mind are both active – just to different degrees depending on the task. In modern western cultures where the material-objective-rational worldview dominates, we significantly underestimate the role of intuition and overestimate the role of intellect. And, many do not even recognize the intuitive at all! In this essay I will attempt to identify the attributes associated with the intellectual and intuitive faculties and locate the zones of human activity where these two mental functions – and especially the intuitive function – play important roles.

1) Goal of Balance

The utilization of both intellectual and intuitive capabilities in a balanced and appropriate manner at all scales is critical to the success of humans in both their individual and social lives.

2) Analysis and Synthesis

Intellectual mental processing relies on analysis – taking things apart to determine the "laws" of the interrelationships of the parts. Intuitive mental processing relies on synthesis – connecting entities revealing their shared identity ultimately to the point of unification.

3) Separation and Connection

All phenomena are regarded as separate in the intellectual perspective, while all phenomena are experienced as connected in the intuitive perspective.

4) Visual vs. Verbal-Mathematical Modes

Language and Mathematics are linear sequences of separate words and numerical references collected into sentences and equations to reveal larger intentions and assertions. As such, the verbal and mathematical modes accommodate the intellectual function of analysis. By contrast, the visual medium is holistic and reveals the simultaneous connections among many entities. As such, it accommodates the intuitive function of synthesis. In both cases, the primary processing modes fit the related function.

5) Competition and Cooperation

The condition of separation associated with the intellect invites a competitive orientation among phenomena, while the condition of connection associated with the intuitive invites a cooperative orientation among phenomena.

a. Taking and Getting for "individual" benefit – individualistic values at any social or ecological scale – are essentially competitive behaviors justified by intellectual functions. Every time humans spank a "bad" child, push aggressively through a crowd, or cut down a tree, they do so from a perspective of being separated from their "target," reflecting the intellectual orientation.

b. Sharing and Giving for "mutual" benefit – social and ecological values at any scale – are essentially cooperative behaviors arising from intuitive function. Every time humans assist a crying child, hug, or enjoy a flower, they connect and expand their sense of self in the direction of unification in line with the intuitive orientation.

c. In terms of modern American social institutions, economy tends to be competitive [capitalism] while polity and the judiciary tend to be cooperative [democracy and rule of law]. When these institutional forces are balanced in their influence, the results tend to be fair, responsible, and ecologically sustainable. When economy is allowed to "buy" polity – money in American politics – the results trend toward inequality, irresponsibility, and lack of ecological sustainability. On the other hand, when polity dominates economy

[communism] in the name of ubiquitous equality, individual initiative and effort at all levels are suppressed, leading to apathy and stagnation.

6) Everywhere in human life where connection and cooperation dominate, intuition plays a major role. Everywhere in human life where separation and competition dominate, intellect plays a major role.

a. Intellect dominates in personal gain, strategic planning, science, technology, engineering, manufacturing, construction, finance, legal work, etc.

b. Intuition dominates in communal benefit, social service, friendship, love, celebration, recreation, entertainment, ritual, art, Psi and spirituality, etc.

c. Emotion energizes both intuitive and intellectual activities with purpose.

7) Many activities in human life reveal the presence of a strong element of both intellectual-competitive and intuitive-cooperative functions: team sports, warfare, group hunting and gathering, corporate internal cooperation with external competition, etc.

Conclusion

When we look from one mental functional extreme to the other, we miss all the middle ground where the functions mix or wax and wane in their input along a broad and lengthy continuum. Separate-objective-analytical-rational science and connected-subjective-synthetic-intuitive spirituality are only viewed as incompatible when we fail to recognize that these extremes occur on a fully integrated and universally active continuum of human mental functioning. Revealing the continuum is important in relieving the unwarranted tension between these two equally valuable human mental functions and perspectives.

#6 “Reality Unification, Mind, Thought and Consciousness,” 2025.

We now know from science that energy is primary in all of reality and that all material phenomena are in fact concentrated and integrated forms of energy. Even particle theory within the standard model in physics now recognizes that its simplest components of material reality can be as legitimately viewed as tiny energy fields as “particles.” We must realize that immaterial energy in the form of waves and fields is everywhere all the time and that reality is both materially and energetically totally connected to the point of unification. It is only our extraordinarily limited perceptual capabilities together with our language and language based thought that promote the false assumption of the separation of things and actions. Within total unification, nothing is separate, and it can only be for heuristic purposes of “discussion” that we allow ourselves to carve out “different” things and concepts as if they are independent.

What follow are some of our major conceptual divisions dealing with human mental functioning where we all mostly fail to apply this awareness:

“Human Energy Field” is an entity artificially carved out of the unified condition of reality to accommodate our standard assumption of separation among individual humans. Correspondingly, this field is held to be composed of a hierarchy of lesser fields from cells to tissues to organs to organ systems, etc. All of these imposed divisions follow from our standard material perspective of separation, and our use of these divisions lends credence to that fallacious point of view. None of this separation exists in a unified reality.

“Brain” is an imposed concept reflecting the material view of the human body that artificially separates a portion of the “nervous system’ – another artificial abstraction.

“Mind” is the imposed concept we arbitrarily assign to the brain and within which we impose the artificially separated mental functions of “thought,” “memory,” “intellect,” “intuition,” etc.

“Consciousness” is the imposed concept we artificially attribute to mind and its mental functions to assert the existence of a holistic and “independent” entity that exhibits self-awareness.

“Universal Consciousness” is the concept we artificially impose under the assumption that artificial individual consciousnesses combine into a super state of consciousness that functions separately as an “independent” phenomenon which some even claim creates reality itself. Universal consciousness as GOD.

Notice how our artificial conceptual impositions of separate entities compound upon one another – layer upon layer magnifying the negative consequences of our failure to abide by the principle of unification. All of these divisions may be productive for discussion purposes, but in most cases they are “declared” and treated as if they represent separate entities with independent causal function. From the energy unification perspective, all of these “divisions” of unified energy do participate/resonate in reality – just not in any separate way.

Conclusion

Within our unified reality, there are no independent “pieces,” entities or concepts with separate functions at any scale – in this case from the “human energy field” to “universal consciousness.” We can use language and language based

analysis to discuss the situation as if such separation exists, but we must never confuse the view from within this artificial option with reality itself.

Beware the fundamental impact of the separation assumption that is implicit in language, language based thought, and especially in analytical language based thought. Until we have a sophisticated, alternative mode of communication – possibly through the more holistic intuitive process, we are caught on the horns of a dilemma. It is necessary to use language to communicate and analyze our view of parts of the whole while this very act relies on the false separation assumption and conflicts with the principle of unification.

ALL of my analytical language based work in the worldview that I present in Dynamic Humanism needs to be framed by this important qualifier. The full implications of reality unification have emerged only relatively recently for me!

Reality – Matter and Energy

#7 "Energy and the Human Conception of Reality," 2023.

Introduction

This essay presents an outline of the key facts that support the energy Perspective on Reality and the importance of it being expressed in human societies.

General

1) Energy is the basis for ALL of reality.
2) Energy is immaterial; it has existed forever, everywhere – since the Big Bang,
3) Energy constitutes a universal web that pervades and connects everything everywhere – even in what we regard as a vacuum.
4) The material world – based on matter – is a secondary manifestation of energy – energy in a compressed, integrated, field state.

Human Limitations

1) Even in the everyday existence of humans on Earth, human senses fail to perceive 99.99+% of reality.
2) Only about 4% of reality is physical matter, and in everyday life, human senses are capable of perceiving only a tiny fraction of this 4%.
3) In spite of these severe limitations, most modern humans assume that their material view of reality captures its true nature.

Science

1) While modern physics is well aware of energy's overwhelming domination in reality, it persists in pursuing an understanding of reality in terms of physical matter – the Standard Model.
2) For the most part, this approach explores the micro and macro dimensions of physical reality that humans can not perceive – as if determining the nature of this 4% of reality can account for reality as a whole.
3) Science needs to shift its focus and investigate how energy waves interact and consolidate into fields that combine to provide the "organic" structure for all complex forms in reality.

Energy and Matter

1) Energy exists in waves of different types and frequencies from galaxy long gravitational waves to quantum "string" vibrations.
2) Energy waves interact and combine to form energy fields.
3) Energy fields integrate and interconnect at and thru every scale from particles to plants and animals to planets to galaxies to the universe.
4) All matter – including all inorganic and organic forms – is composed of these integrated fields at different scales.
5) Energy in every form is in a constant state of change at every scale.
6) What humans see as change over a linear concept of time is the infinite web of energy vibrating.
7) Humans believe they can view this vibration/change from some particular perspective of scale and from an "objective" perspective outside the reality within which they exist. In a totally integrated energy reality, this is not possible – though proceeding as if this is the case can reveal some truths.

Human Condition and Capabilities

1) Humans are a material species created by energy compressed and highly integrated in energy fields at different scales – cells, organs, systems.
2) For the most part, humans are entirely ignorant of the energy basis for themselves and their material world.
3) However, most humans at least suspect that there is something significant beyond material reality.
4) Humans have dual mental capabilities of reason and intuition, and these capabilities offer humans access to two complimentary perspectives on reality.
5) Reason focuses on understanding and surviving in material reality, and it supports a mostly competitive orientation within reality.
6) Intuition focuses on understanding immaterial/subjective/energetic reality, and it supports a mostly cooperative orientation within reality.

7) Human individuals and their societies must balance the input of these different perspectives to be both responsible and effective at all levels.
8) Modern humans in complex societies are excessively focused on physical reality – secular materialism.
9) Modern humans and their societies are far out of balance, and their aggressive behavior toward both one another and their supporting ecology is endangering the continued existence of the human species in the civilized state.

Role of Religion

1) Religion is the primary realm of behavior where humans have the opportunity to experience and gain awareness in the subjective, energetic realm.
2) All religions have the experience of unification at their core.
3) The unification experience is the experience of reality from the holistic, totally integrated energy perspective of oneness.
4) Unfortunately, virtually all modern, institutional religions have lost touch with the unification experience and/or reduced it in material terms to dogmatic beliefs in spirits, gods, gurus, profits, saviors, and saints.
5) Fundamentalist religions in general retain access to the core unification experience, but they assign the most extreme forms of dogmatic belief in interpreting its "meaning."
6) The failure of modern religions to understand the unification experience in terms of the immaterial energy perspective has contributed substantially to undermining the awareness, importance, and scientific pursuit of the nonphysical, energy basis of reality.

Art

1) In less complex human cultures, art and religion are fused with art and ritual having the same function – to provide access to and expression of the human experience of the totally integrated understanding of reality.
2) In complex culture, the verbal, visual, musical and action forms of art tend to separate from one another and express a range of perspectives from the traditional unification perspective to the secular materialistic perspective. The greater the sensational focus of such expressions the more they qualify as entertainment rather than art in the art/ritual sense.

Conclusion

Development of human intuitive competence and access to the unification experience as they support the importance of the energy perspective on reality is as important as the development of rational competence and the intellectual-analytical experience as they support the material perspective on reality. Both

perspectives are pragmatically important as humans live their lives. But just as energy is primary in reality, so the unification experience is essential in human understanding of reality. Responsible human behavior both socially and ecologically depends on the input of this perspective of core identity being shared among all "things."

#8 "Air Affair: The Matter and Energy Dynamic in Reality," 2023.

Einstein's E= mc2 reveals that matter and energy are transforms of one another. Let's start out by taking that proposition seriously and explore the implications of how we conceive of Air in the world of matter and energy.

If air is not moving or we are not moving significantly within it, we basically experience "nothing" through our senses. So, since air as "nothing" is the default way we conceive of air, all visible material "things" exist within it as independent, separated phenomena. For the most part, we proceed in both life and science as if this condition of material separation is fundamental in reality.

Of course, intellectually most of us know air is not nothing. We are aware that air is composed of various gases made up of atoms and molecules that are collectively not large enough for us to perceive. Only when certain conditions apply and molecules accumulate can we discriminate things like fog, mist, rain, etc. But even when "things" precipitate out of the air, we do not view air itself as being material. Our view of air as vacuous supports the assumption of material separateness in our conceptions of reality and in our worldviews.

From the material perspective what is the difference between air and a rock? Answer: A rock is made up of atoms and molecules that are "heavier" than the atoms of air – greater mass, and these atoms and molecules are packed together more closely – greater density. This difference is significant, but it is relative, and we are well aware that our physical world comes in solid, liquid and gaseous forms with all qualifying as being material.

So, air – made up of different gases – <u>is</u> material. And because it is so "light" and "pliable," it has the important quality of being able to fill <u>every</u> space not occupied by solids or liquids. It is a material that is very "light," that we do not perceive for the most part, and that we mostly ignore when it comes to defining our reality in terms of separate material entities.

Of course, even air can be more and less "thin," to the point where "air" in interstellar space is composed mostly of a relatively few atoms of the lightest

elements – hydrogen and helium. But, as “light” as “air” can become, there is no vacuum – no void, just more and less dense gaseous material.

Air is the less dense material medium invisible to humans that connects and ties the vast majority of material reality together at all scales.

Why is this important? Because, when properly understood, matter is everywhere all the time in our universe – just in different densities. There is nowhere it does not exist in one of its forms, and it is a completely interconnected, integrated phenomenon – the web of material reality. Separation and independence of “things” do not in fact exist – only our very limited perceptual capabilities with respect to material gasses make it seem so.

Conclusion: the material world is ONE totally unified material phenomenon. We carve it up into separate “things” and assume that the resulting conception constitutes reality. And we get away with it because we have to consume/take within this material fabric to survive biologically. Of course in our “taking” we are really just participating in the constant motion as every interconnected material “thing” changes/fluctuates/vibrates and/or “interacts” within the different densities of material Oneness.

Why is this understanding of material Oneness important? Because we now know that it is matched by the immaterial oneness of energy in the form of waves and fields which are also everywhere all the time and totally interconnected and integrated at every scale.

What then is the credible conception of reality? Reality is the totally integrated, universal, and infinite material-immaterial “oneness” of existence. Matter and energy are always at every scale completely integrated. They are totally interconnected with both being essential to the universal whole. We can approach understanding reality from one or the other perspective as if matter and energy are separate, but we are the ones carving out that separation.

Science has revealed a great deal about our reality. But it is time for it to stop artificially imposing on reality the “principle” of separation at every scale. Only for heuristic purposes should we permit ourselves to employ this perspective of separation. And it is time to seriously pursue the equal contribution that the immaterial energetic wave field domain makes at every scale in the “dialogue” between the material and immaterial. It is time to stop regarding energy fields as merely secondary manifestations of material phenomena and start examining how these immaterial fields combine and expand through every scale. If we do

this, we may get a huge surprise: just as pure energy is posited as being primary in the universe's origination [Big Bang theory], so totally integrated energy fields may provide the glue binding the material realm together as well as being largely responsible for how material reality gets expressed at every scale.

#9 "Matter, Energy, and Human Capabilities in Understanding Reality," 2022.

Humans participate in the totality of reality, but their perceptual capabilities are both extraordinarily limited and focused on revealing the material sphere of reality [to promote biological survival]. Human conceptual and cognitive capabilities are much broader with only the analytically active intellect supporting the material focus of the senses. As the intellect is also the primary mental tool of science, it is no surprise that the material focus of the senses is sustained as the analytical focus in science. And science has made enormous gains pursuing this mode and perspective. But gradually over the last 100 years, science has reached the point of exposing the limitations of its own material fixation. In this regard, consider the following:

<u>Physics</u>

1) Relativity theory has established that energy and mass are transforms of one another – with mass being infinitesimally tiny and motion being the basis for the vast majority of the materiality that we perceive as matter.

2) Energy is everywhere all the time in different frequencies and fields concentrated to different degrees.

3) The realm of the material is one way in which energy concentrates.

4) In Big Bang theory, energy is primary with the first elementary particles of matter not appearing until about 380,000 years after the "Bang."

5) The vast majority of elementary "particles" are massless and probably more accurately understood as minimal "expressions" of energy [strings].

6) Since at the largest and smallest dimensions of reality, energy is primary, it follows that the immaterial energy perspective is at least as significant as the material perspective in seeking to understand our reality.

<u>The Human Energy Field</u>

1) The scientific study of humans and other material phenomena from the energy perspective – the energy field – is in its infancy. But…..

2) This study is identifying the key role energy plays at all levels of the human body from cell membranes to tissues to organs to the human as a whole to the relations among humans, etc.

3) This study is beginning to reveal an independent bodily system that is fully integrated with all other systems.

4) The human energy field may well constitute the system that is responsible for the integration of all other bodily systems.

5) This energy field may well be the final system of the body to be "discovered" – the most immaterial of all of the other physical systems.

6) It may develop that the relatively independent human energy field "system" is the basis for the distinction between brain and mind/consciousness.

7) This energy field based human system has been recognized for a very long time under different "names" in many cultures that have developed many techniques for manipulating it to different purposes including promoting health [acupuncture is the best recognized procedure in the West].

8) For an overview of the results of the study of the human energy field focused on its relevance in medicine, see: Deborah Shields, PhD., et. al., "Human Energy Field: A Concept Analysis," Holistic Nursing, 35(2017) 352-368. Paul J. Rosch, M.D., editor, Bioelectromagnetic and Subtle Energy Medicine, 2nd ed., (CRC Press) 2015, 653 pp. [50 sections by 50+ different scientists].

Paranormal Phenomena [Psi]

1) Paranormal phenomena are the phenomena for humans that most clearly demonstrate the bridge between the material and energetic domains of reality.

2) Telepathy, precognition, retrocognition, clairvoyance, and psychokinesis are recognized as universal in human cultures and have been studied scientifically for over 100 years.

3) The major ascetic meditative traditions that pursue personal enlightenment recognize the "discovery" of the paranormal by initiates as a standard phase in spiritual development. They discourage pursuit of it as a distraction, but a few "outstanding" practitioners do arise out of these traditions – some becoming major figures in religions [prophets, saints, gurus, saviors].

4) Paranormal phenomena in their extreme forms are associated in humans with the activation of specific intuitive [non-rational, subjective] mental states.

5) Psi practitioners universally across cultures evoke these mental states to achieve results in the material world – most commonly promoting the healing of the human body [manipulation of the human energy field!].

6) The results from Parasychology, together with all the arguments against these results, have been summarized and addressed many times over by academically credited scientists. [see Dean Radin PhD., Supernormal, New York, 2013].

7) The American Psychological Association recognizes Parapsychology as a legitimate subbranch of the discipline.

Art and Religion

1) Art and the core experience of religion – unification – are fused in the simpler human societies of 96% of human history.

2) Like Psi, art-religion is universal in human culture.

3) Similar to Psi, the art-religion human experience arises when humans situate themselves toward the intuitive end of the material/objective/intellectual – energetic/subjective/intuitive spectrum of their conceptual capabilities.

4) As the institution of religion develops in complex society, the core experience of unification becomes vastly complicated with surrounding dogma, elaborate ritual, and bureaucratic structures. In this context, the core experience of unification [sharing in the universal energy field of oneness] often gets lost.

5) The various institutional religions of different societies often become competitive with one another over their belief systems to the point of warfare.

6) The gross failure of institutionalized religion does not negate the validity of the universal core unification experience.

7) True Art [not sensational entertainment!] is a behavior that attempts to express in various forms the option for and the diverse meanings of unification awareness [energetic connectedness].

Conclusion

Both the material and energy perspectives are valuable, and each is important to the success of humans as a species. Their respective use reveals different aspects of reality. The material perspective has been dominant in modern complex societies, but it is beginning to be complemented by the results of scientific studies from the energetic perspective. Hopefully a science of the energetic/intuitive/subjective perspective will emerge and prove as enlightening as the science from the material/intellectual/objective perspective. Full understanding of any phenomenon is likely to require the results of systematic investigation from both perspectives.

#10 "Human Knowledge of Reality - The Big Picture," 2023.

Modern humans have existed on Earth for about 275,000 years. Mostly in just the last 100 years, science has determined that:

1) Our physical universe is:

a. enormous – at least 93 billion light years in breadth,

b. about 13.8 billion years old with our solar system being relatively young,

c. expanding at an accelerating rate,
d. totally connected and integrated both materially and energetically,
e. constantly changing at every scale – micro to macro,

2) Our physical universe constitutes less than 5% of reality,
3) 95% of our universe is made up of dark energy and dark matter which we do not yet understand or know how to account for in any of our theories,
4) Our universe is quite possibly only one among many in a multiverse,
5) Earth is one rocky planet in a medium size solar system in the Milky Way Galaxy – one among hundreds of billions of galaxies in the universe,
6) Humans are a late species to evolve on Earth where all complex species eventually have gone extinct,
7) Humans as a species and even Earth as a planet are so minuscule as to be essentially irrelevant in this vast – as well as mostly unknown – reality.
8) Human perception is extraordinarily limited. The primary human sense – vision – perceives only 0.0035% of the electromagnetic spectrum.
9) The epigenetic component of the human genome responds to experiential pressure and plays a critical administrative role in gene activation.

These scientific revelations are impressive, but they also reveal the following:

1) Our current scientific theories account for only a tiny part of reality,
2) Humans are ignoring their insignificance and continuing to celebrate themselves and their theories as being very important and "advanced,"
3) Our physicists, astrophysics, and cosmologists persist in trying to develop a "Theory of Everything" based on 5% of reality – the Standard Model.
4) All of our scientific theories of reality depend on assumed constants. This pervasive approach to explanation conflicts directly with the fundamental paradigm principle that <u>everything</u> in our reality is always changing and that there are no constants. The history of science demonstrates repeatedly that what <u>seem</u> to be constants at certain scales become variables at other scales [e.g. time, gravity].
5) If in reality everything is both totally connected materially and energetically and completely integrated at every scale, and if the system of all "things" is in a perpetual state of change, then <u>no thing</u> is in fact separate. It follows that the pervasive assumptions in science of separate variables, causes, laws, and scales, as well as researchers being objective and separate from their experiments are inherently false. Reality is One <u>System</u>!
6) Beware the impact of language! Our languages are extremely important in allowing for human communication, but the categories of differentiated things and actions that our languages create are dependent upon our senses, and our human senses are extraordinarily limited. Vision is our

primary human sense, but our vision perceives only the tiny “visible” light section within the electromagnetic spectrum; it fails to perceive 99.9965% of the rest of that spectrum. So, the “things” we differentiate/separate from one another, name in our language, and assume in large measure to reflect the reality that is “out there” are in essence entirely artificial constructs. If our perception included all of the electromagnetic spectrum, our visual world would be so dense we would be able to find no separation whatsoever. That is the reality of infinite connection/unification that our perception, language, and for the most part our prevailing view of reality misses. Our theories in the physical sciences remain caught in the conceptual conflict between our limited perceptual reality of separate things and the vastly expanded alternative reality of both physical and energetic unification that our technology has revealed.

7) Resolved: nature and nurture are active in human genomic evolution.

How do we respond creatively to the fact that modern science has at one and the same time achieved so much while exposing both the colossal insignificance of humans and the gross limitations of its own current scientific theories? Do we withdraw, accept existing in perpetual ignorance, and seek the comfort of religious belief? Or do we accept the enormous scope of the task before us, and:

1) Bring our scientific theories into compliance with the much larger domain of reality that must be included,
2) Evaluate the impact of assumptions about constants and separateness in all experimental results, if continuing to make these assumptions is deemed necessary in conceiving and conducting scientific research. Encourage broad system perspective investigation, analysis, and interpretation,
3) Make a much greater effort to educate the global public regarding science, its methods, its goals, and its consensus discoveries,
4) Accept the very delicate and challenging task of genetically engineering our species a) to become more productive and responsible in our human societies on Earth, and b) to see our species – probably in different variants and with the assistance of sophisticated robotics – eventually populate other planets, solar systems, and even other galaxies. Humans will have enormous potential to be successful in alternative environments when they are able to realize their own species’ options in evolution.

Conclusion

In a very short period of time, science and its associated technology – which have emerged within complex society – have made extraordinary progress in what they have revealed about our physical world – an important 5% of our

reality. But at the global level, complex human societies are very young and behaving in a way that reflects their immaturity. If these societies do not grow up and stop both disrespecting the limits of Earth's ecology and acting aggressively in behalf of their exclusive self-interests, the conditions will not be present to support the continued investigation of the 95% of reality that we do not yet understand as well as the potential for greater human participation in that much expanded reality.

The ability of science to persist in its quest to reveal the full nature of reality depends on current humans – including scientists – rejecting their narrow-minded hubris and collectively pursuing and achieving the above identified global societal, ecological, and species' goals. Otherwise, we humans will most likely be reduced to just another short term, complex species confined to planet Earth and headed for an ignominious extinction.

#11 "Energy – Basic In Reality," 2024.

The Human Focus on the Material

Most people are minimally informed about what energy is and how important it is in our reality. The basic reason for this lack of understanding is that we humans are so focused on the material domain as defining our reality.

Why is this the case?

1) We are material creatures, and we have evolved among other material creatures competing for our survival. In evolving in this context, our traits that favor close attention to these other competing creatures and access to the resources we need have been favored while other traits have been less developed. In the modern context of human species domination of the planet, our favored competitive traits are much less relevant – even serving to impede making needed progress. We can elect to emphasize our cooperative side!

2) All energy is immaterial so our nearly exclusive focus as humans on the material realm ignores consideration of energy for the most part. Even in science, energy is most often studied secondarily or developed as a tool technologically to reveal more about or to influence the material domain.

3) The vast extent of the material/physical reality that we have discovered mainly in the last 100+ years serves to confirm our material view of reality.

4) Our perceptual capabilities have focused primarily on the sense of sight and secondarily on what we hear. What we view as reality is largely defined by what we glean from these senses, and we are exceedingly ignorant of how limited our perception is. The Visible Light spectrum, which we do not see directly but experience in the way light reflects off objects, is only .0035% of the electro-magnetic energy spectrum. 99.9975% of this energy spectrum we have almost

no awareness of, even though we participate fully in it and its effects. If we were capable of perceiving directly the full electro-magnetic energy spectrum, we would be totally overwhelmed. The “space” and “air” we move through so readily would be so “dense” with waves and fields and our participation in them that we would not be able to move. And, as important as it is, the electro-magnetic energy spectrum is one among many such spectra. Of the sonic energy spectrum we are 99.9996% “blind.” So, in the larger sense, we humans “see” and “hear” virtually nothing, yet we are comfortable for the most part in relying on these senses to define the nature of our reality! From modern science we now know better, but we continue to ignore the serious implications.

Just because we humans focus on the material and are aware of so little energy does not mean energy is not hugely significant in defining our reality.
Let’s explore further.

Theories of the Origin of the Universe

Big Bang, Big Bounce, and Big Oscillation theory all view the beginning of the universe in terms of a single extraordinarily powerful event which has expanded over about 13 billion years to the present vast distribution of hundreds of billions of material galaxies more than 93 billion light years in breadth. In these origin theories, energy is what begins this process with the first single atoms of hydrogen not appearing for 380,000 years. Hydrogen is the simplest material element, and all more complex elements arise later with many of the “heavy” elements not evolving until large stars arise and collapse in supernova explosions. The key point here is that energy is primary in the origination of our universe with all material phenomena emerging secondary in time and occurring as energy enters conditions when it can condense/cluster/gather/integrate into particles and then into the atoms of material elements. Of course, different atoms then interact/join under appropriate conditions to form molecules and the process of material development proceeds to more and more complex material forms – eventually leading to all forms of organic life.

Energy In Material Phenomena

Energy is the basis for this entire material development process, and it remains essential in all material forms whether simple or complex, organic or inorganic. Consider the make up of atoms – a nucleus of protons and neutrons surrounded by electrons – all of it in constant motion. Energy is the basis for this inherent motion, and motion makes it possible for atoms to interact and integrate into more complex forms. Energy is essential to all matter because it is essential to the atoms of all elements that make up all matter.

Energy is often expressed in terms of differential charge – positive and negative, and atoms reflect this charged condition with electrons being negatively charged and protons being positively charged. This initial charged condition of atoms proceeds up the development chain to become fields of more complex material forms. An example is the cell in organic life forms where within the cell's energy field, the microvolt differential across the cell membrane is what makes it possible for nutrients to move into the cell from the outside and for waste to move from the interior of the cell to the outside – the essential process in all forms of life. Energy fields integrate and guide the development process as material forms – inorganic and organic – become more and more complex. Energy is essential to the development and ongoing existence of all matter – all material phenomena. It is not just the founding component in the creation of all matter. Without constant energy participation, all complex matter disintegrates.

The energy base of all matter is contained in the famous E=mc2 equation. When matter is "destroyed," a huge amount of energy is released – as indicated in the enormous motion component captured in the speed of light squared element of the equation. To get an idea of how dominant energy is in our world, consider the observation made by the Nobel Prize winning electro-dynamic theoretical physicist, Richard P. Feyman, that if all of the energy in just one cubic meter of air [energy contained in waves and fields and concentrated in all the tiny material particles we can not even see] could be extracted, it would be sufficient to boil all the water of all the oceans of Earth!

Independent Energy

Energy waves and fields are not just the basis for the development and continued existence of all matter; they are everywhere all the time independent of matter. Taken together both incorporated in matter and independent of matter, we now know that our reality is composed of about 70% to 95% energy – depending on what "dark matter" actually turns out to be. Our reality does not just originate as energy, it is mostly to almost entirely energy in its present state of development. The material/physical realm that so fascinates us humans comprises only about 5% of reality. Yet we permit ourselves to define reality in terms of this tiny portion of reality in part because we have discovered this material realm to be so huge in its own right.

Energy underlies and sustains everything material, and energy provides the infinite web that connects everything into One totally integrated phenomenon. Energy is the basis for all motion, motion is change, and change is constant in our totally unified reality. Everything is vibrating simultaneously, and everything

participates in every change. There is no separation, no independence of "things." Separation and independence are illusions fostered by 1) our extraordinarily limited perception, 2) the continued "open" expansion of the universe, 3) change as a constant throughout this reality, and 4) the enormous scale of the universe in which what amount to minute changes are not recognized. Every tiny move we make registers throughout the integrated fabric of reality, but we do not perceive it; so we operate as if things are separate and we are independent with free will and able to cause specific, independent effects. And for the four reasons cited above, we mostly get away with it – until the tiny effects of our behavior as billions of individuals collect and catch up with us, as in the phenomenon of climate change or the threat of nuclear catastrophe. Otherwise we humans have successfully danced through our species evolution to the tune of our separation and independence assumptions.

The Role of Language and Language Based Analytical Thought

We humans depend on verbal language for both essential communication and as the primary tool for thinking. But such language reinforces our separatist assumptions because it is based on separate sounds used to create separate words used to designate separate things and actions brought together in separate sentences to communicate separate thoughts. Separation is the underlying principle of our language tool and of our dominant mode of thought. And analysis relies on language, identifies the separate parts of reality, and claims to "write" the rules that inform the independent interaction of these parts.

Science depends on the rigorous use of language based analytical thought. But this thought process is grounded in the assumption of separation. Even though modern science has revealed all the elements of a reality in which energy underlies, connects and integrates everything into One entity, science continues to operate mostly under separatist assumptions and an exclusive fascination with matter – micro particle/string theory – as the foundation of reality.

Available Alternative Mental Mode

If science decides to focus on understanding the energy system on which reality is based and seeks to develop complementary tools of synthesis – rather than relying on the exclusive use of analysis, it can make a great deal of progress. The basis for these synthetic tools is present in the existing human intuitive mental process and its reliance on holistic visual thought – the source of inspiration and imagination. Many "simpler" cultures and non-western cultures have explored and utilized the intuitive mental mode with important results – most of which support the unification principle in reality. Refinement of the use of the human intuitive mental mode can bring results that serve to both greatly

enhance our understanding of reality and identify more meaningful and responsible approaches to our participation in it.

The development of the analytical thought process to the point of its rigorous use took thousands of years, even though we routinely fail to meet its standards. Harnessing what the intuitive has to offer will take time, but the sophisticated use of that mode together with the existing analytical process of the intellect can bring much greater awareness of both ourselves and our reality.

Conclusion

Science has revealed that energy is the basis for reality – including all matter within reality. Significantly, in so doing, science has identified key principles in energy that are also fundamental in the spiritual perspective: importance of the immaterial, perpetual connectedness, unification, shared identity, etc. These two perspectives support one another bringing the results of the intellect and intuition into alliance. We need a major worldview change in which immaterial energy achieves the recognition and influence it deserves while the material domain is respected but retired from its position of unsupportable domination!

Balance – Always Balance!

#12 "Human Reality and Flexibility in a Totally Integrated System," 2023.

Science has now revealed that reality is both materially and energetically totally connected, integrated and unified to the point of being one entity with all "parts" sharing in that identity of unification. Such completely integrated systems can be more or less fixed/rigid, or more or less flexible. In general, the larger and more open the system, the greater is its capacity for flexibility. In addition, systems that incorporate extensive "thin" components [air] provide denser and mobile components [humans] within it with the seeming option to "act" as if flexibility is virtually unlimited. Accordingly, our vast [cosmic], open [expanding universe], and overall very thin [space] reality exhibits substantial flexibility.

Humans exist in a reality – mostly defined by the flexibility limits of subsystem Earth – that is totally integrated, but that is still enormous and that allows for considerable flexibility. It is the flexibility of this reality that invites humans and all other more mobile organic phenomena to be successful acting as if they are independent entities with free will. The extraordinarily limited perception of humans as well as the nature of their languages further support this free will perspective [see essays: "The Fundamental Human Problem: Perceptual

Limitation;" "Language and Reality – The Challenge"]. While this perspective is an illusion, it seems to be accurate at the relatively limited, small scale of individual, community, nation or even species activities on Earth. Still there are limits, and the threat of climate change is the current example. The ecology system of Earth is now responding in a manner that has become noticeable – to the detriment of the human species.

Humans live in a totally integrated, vast reality whose flexibility has allowed them – and all other mobile organic species on Earth – to evolve and live the illusion of separation and free will. But pursing that competitively oriented illusion [man has dominion over or controls nature] to its extreme has resulted in its false, basic assumption being exposed in both science and the Earth's ecology.

So, we humans should now be aware that we are living an illusion of reality that promotes our aggressive behavior among ourselves and within our supporting ecology. What do we do since it is impossible to escape this illusion that underlies our very evolution as a species? We must seek balance!! We must re-invigorate input from our intuitive faculty that connects us to our unified REAL reality, and we must support cooperation, respect, and restraint among ourselves and all species to remain easily within Earth's system flexibility limits.

Change

#13 "Change As An Absolute," 2025.

In a reality where the only constant is change, there are no absolutes, no truths, no laws, no constants. Everything is relative. Truths of all types apply only in the present and at certain scales and are useful for a certain time frame. The universe/multiverse is no exception; it just exists on a much longer time frame while change is occurring within it at different rates throughout.

We humans live by rules/truths that we assume are constants. This reflects a perspective where reality is understood as being static. And yet, we also assume that we have free will to alter/change conditions within this reality when we want to achieve our independent goals. We want it both ways – static overall where we want to depend on it but changeable at the scales where we desire it.

If change itself is absolute as a principle in reality – our only constant, where is our God of Change? On the one hand we want our God to assure eternal life –

a static condition, while on the other hand, when we desire things to be different, we appeal to our God as the ultimate agent of change. We want it both ways – even in our religious conception of reality.

Is change itself an absolute? Within all the micro to macro scales that we can observe to date, it is a constant – occurring at different rates at different scales. But, change within reality remains a philosophical conundrum for us. Like most ultimate philosophical issues, we can never achieve a perspective outside of the smallest and largest scales of the reality within which we exist. Therefore, we are unable to resolve whether change is a true absolute.

So, What's the Conclusion?

It is necessary for us to be satisfied with knowing 1) that we live within perpetual change at all known scales of reality, and 2) that we also hang our hat on theories of reality that themselves depend on only relatively stable – but nevertheless useful – "constants" at certain scales!

Human Understanding,
Always
Betwixt and Between

Human Perceptual Limitations

#14 "The Fundamental Human Problem – Perceptual Limitation," 2021.

Let's get to the root of the human problem regardless of whatever issue in whatever sphere at whatever scale we consider: **limited human perception**! In spite of all the advances that we have made in understanding the tiny peek our senses provide us in perceiving reality, our worldview, procedures, and behavior continue to be defined almost exclusively by the highly questionable assumptions that we make from our peek-a-boo level of awareness. Even science, which is responsible for revealing our perceptual limitations, remains confined in many of its theories and methodologies by this basic limitation.

Let's examine what this is all about!

Start with our "major" human senses: sight/vision and sound/hearing. Humans perceive approximately 400 frequencies – the visible light spectrum – in the electromagnetic spectrum of 10 to the 24^{th} such frequencies from gamma rays to long radio waves. Humans perceive about 20,000 sound frequencies through

the medium of the air of about 10 to the 10th such frequencies. Our "minor" senses – taste, touch, and smell – are no better. When it comes to material phenomena, human perception is limited to mid-range scales – missing all microbes [bacteria, fungi, viruses, etc.], all molecular, atomic and subatomic particles, and everything at the macro solar, galactic and cosmological scales. Everything considered, humans do not have the ability to perceive 99.999% of all of the reality that is "out there"! Our technology makes us aware of the existence of this vast material and energetic reality beyond our direct sensory reach, but it has had little effect on our worldview and understanding of how we relate to the reality in which we participate.

Let's pursue this further by considering just one common phenomenon – Wind. By sight alone, humans look right through wind/air as if there is nothing there. Humans perceive moving air/wind by feel/touch and indirectly by sight as we observe how wind moves other objects – leaves, waves, snow, etc. So, we know air has mass, and from science we know that most of it is made up of various microscopic particles, microbes, and elements, but we cannot perceive it unless it carries larger components like combined water molecules in mist.

Now, imagine what it would be like to perceive the microscopic world of air/wind. We would have to move through seemingly surrounding "clouds" of perceived air to get to anything "else." Imagine further, if we were able to perceive all of the other micro and macro material phenomena as well as all of the electromagnetic and sound frequencies that collectively define most of reality, the "clouds" around us would become so "dense" that they would consume us to the point where we would lose our sense of being discrete entities. At the energetic level, the field that we know "surrounds" each of us would be integrated into the comprehensive energy field that exists across all scales, revealing our shared identity with everything. All separateness/discreteness among "things" would disappear because it is only our limited sensory awareness that makes it possible for us to separate different things and attribute separate actions/causes to them. In the REALITY of full perceptual awareness there is only the equivalent of a constant state of vibration in which all phenomena of different energy densities are field related and participate as one unified, infinite creation.

It is only our extraordinarily limited perceptual capabilities that create the illusion of our separateness and of other entities as discrete. And, very importantly, our language reflects this perspective – carving out and naming "different" things and attributing different actions to them. Our limited perception and our language define for us what constitutes our material reality which we accept as

the fundamental way reality IS. And we manipulate this reality in these terms plowing through the 99% of the rest of reality that we are privileged by our very stupendous limitations to ignore. Because we are very good at these manipulations, the results seem to be successful, which support our basic assumptions about a reality of material discreteness. In effect, humans operate in a self-perpetuating conceptual loop based on our grand perceptual ignorance.

Why is penetrating to this awareness important?

First, much of our science remains mired in this error, and we see the results all the time as scientists attempt to reduce the infinitely unified system of reality to particular causes and effects among separate entities. The consequence is that scientists are constantly discovering all of the "other" causes and entities that are involved in the phenomena and processes that they are examining. And when we shift the scale of our perspective up or down, scientists discover that their theories often do not hold up. Why? Because everything in reality is fundamentally interconnected, and the separate pieces of the fabric that we extract to "examine" and "explain" in science are inherently artificial constructs. Yes, what scientists discover can be useful as we attempt to manage the limited reality that we perceive, but the underlying assumptions of separate entities with causes and effects specific to them are not reliable because discreteness itself is only a convenient illusion. Interestingly, as modern science moves away from a material – particle perspective to an energy – field perspective, it is trending in the direction of recognizing the comprehensive state of connectedness in reality.

Second, socially our major weakness in modern complex society is our inability to sufficiently cooperate at the national and global levels required to address the many challenges that humanity currently faces. Cooperation and communal values are based on the concept of connection while competition and individual values are based on the concept of separation. Cooperation promotes unification at the social level and is in tune with an understanding of reality that recognizes the essential oneness of all "things." It is not THE answer, but it is a better answer than that provided by following the discrete/competitive orientation which perpetuates the view of reality from our grossly limited perceptual perspective.

Third, spiritual traditions in all human societies [not religions per se] have promoted a view of reality that emphasizes breaking through the material/ objective/competitive perspective on reality to the spiritual/subjective/ cooperative perspective. What constitutes enlightenment in these ascetic

traditions is very much in accord with the view of reality as totally connected and unified. It is more than a little interesting that the lead orientation in theoretical physics and cosmology in the direction of an energy based conception of reality accords in many respects with the view in these ancient spiritual traditions. As science breaks through to an awareness of a vast reality not adequately understood in terms of the assumptions based on our human perceptual limitations, it is coming to share more and more with the spiritual point of view. Physics, the science of discreteness, which has been historically committed to the material/objective/analytical/discrete view of reality, is progressively confirming its opposite – the energetic/subjective/synthetic/unified view of reality.

Conclusion – Where do we go from here?

On the one hand, humans operate as limited perceptual predators regarding other "things" as separate resources to take and use to their advantage. But on the other hand, humans should be aware at both the spiritual and full perceptual levels that they share identity with all other "things" in a totally integrated and unified reality. To survive biologically, humans can not abandon their limited perceptual bias as predators, but they can do so responsibly under the restraint encouraged by their awareness that what they "take" is really a part of themselves. Ultimately, the only solution to this dilemma is for humans to strive for balance and to develop societies that promote this balance. Unfortunately, many modern societies have lost their spiritual base of understanding, have committed to a winner take all material perspective, and are completely unaware of the totally integrated and unified reality that the sciences are revealing and to which they belong. If humans are to survive in the civilized state of complex society, they will have to repair this severe condition of imbalance.

Language

#15 "Language – Pluses and Minuses," 2024.

Language is not innate; it has to be learned, and it is crucial to human survival. We humans have the innate capacity/proclivity for learning language, but it must be activated and filled before maturity if it is to be realized. Any language will do; but to be maximally communicable, that language must provide the basis for thought, be directly and immediately shareable, and be capable of being written down in a version that correlates with its behaviorally shareable version. Verbally based languages are the only ones that meet all these criteria. Sign

language meets the first two but not the third requirement, and sign language monopolizes the use of the arms and hands. Communication based on gesture, touch and imitation are much less developed and capable.

Visual/imagaic thought is significant, but it lacks the very important ability to be shared in some form in the direct manner provided by speech for the words in verbal thought. And speech supports immediate and collective review and planning. The past tense arises to support better review, and the future tense literally emerges to support more detailed planning. Verbal language committed to phonetic writing allows for speech to be durable over time and for report and planning to be made much more formal and rigorous – legal documents and scientific accounts. Complex human society depends on these written tools.

Interestingly, intuitive based "thought" is often imagaic and holistic in nature and not be easily communicated while intellectual based thought is linear and parsed and readily communicated in standard verbal/mathematical vehicles. Both of these modes of thought are important, but verbal language based intellectual thought has a substantial communication advantage.

Human evolution and species dominance would never have reached their current states without language in both its spoken and written forms. Future genetic engineering is likely to make the lengthy language acquisition and skilled use development process much more efficient – to the point of being innate. With agreement on a single language base, such engineering could promote needed global social unification. Another potential genetic modification: telepathically shared language based thought to replace speech?

There is much more potential language development to come, if modern humans can cooperate enough to address their many current challenges and keep from competitively blowing themselves back to the stone age.

Any reservations about this marvel of language? Oh Yes!

Our verbal language is a necessary and effective communication tool. The problem is that we adopt it when we are very young with the grand encouragement of surrounding adults and without the slightest question as to whether it accurately portrays reality. Verbal language is a linear sequence of separate sounds themselves accumulated into word units that are further fit together into sentences. These sentences announce how separate parts of reality [nouns] relate to one another [verbs]. The carving up of reality into separate units – things and actions – forces desperate phenomena into

common “bags.” For example, all kind of different things can be “leaves.” Meaning depends on the context of other surrounding carved up “bags.”

Language is a very useful extrapolation from reality. It does not accurately capture reality by any means.

Verbal language rests on the assumptions 1) that separation/independence among things and actions is a fundamental feature of reality, 2) that it can capture in differentiated sound sequences – words – what these separate things and actions are, and 3) that it can describe how these things and actions are related. On close examination, none of these assumptions is accurate.

1) The assumption of the separation/independence of things and actions corresponds to the objective, intellectual, material perspective on reality. Indeed, language can be said to be the primary support for this perspective. But there are other perspectives – even ones currently being seriously explored in our physical sciences. One of these is the view that all of reality is so fundamentally connected and integrated by immaterial energy that it is unified as one “entity.” There are no separate “parts” or “actions.” The cosmic whole just vibrates with all “parts” participating in every vibration everywhere – however minimally. It is only our extraordinarily limited human perception – especially our vision – that suggests to us that more dense things are separate from one another in much less dense air.
2) Language is an artificial construct imposed on reality. The problem: we never recognize this imposition and instead assume that language accurately captures reality. The result is that our thought process and subsequent worldviews are captured by our own invention. And in large measure it is accurate to one perspective on reality – the objective, material, intellectual perspective which holds that you are separate and independent from the other “things” of reality and interact with those things as you choose or must. In this view, you have free will within the bounds of certain socially required restraints. This is the dominant view of the competitive everyday perspective of biological survival. And language supports it as exclusively correct.

But standard language does not reveal the alternative subjective, spiritual, intuitive perspective on reality in which all “things” are experienced as unified as one totally connected and integrated phenomenon. Our visual mode of perception is more in tune with this perspective in which carving things up and separating them proves impossible – it’s one continuous “picture” in an infinitely connected picture through micro to macro scales. This is the alternative view of the cooperative, art and ritual perspective of social and ecological belonging.

Many expressive behaviors support this perspective with special art and ritual forms of language [employing metaphor to make connections across standard categories] participating in this support.

So, the problem is that the standard everyday language of separation and imposition dominates – especially in modern secular material culture. And in this context, the limitations of that use of language are not recognized. Humans need access to both perspectives to balance their understanding of themselves and their reality and to behave responsibly. And the totally uncritical and almost exclusive use of the everyday standard language of separation promotes a false, incomplete view of reality and an excessively aggressive and exploitative approach to one another and the supporting system of natural resources.

We cannot avoid the separation perspective that the everyday material use of language supports, but we can be aware of both its inherent limitations and its complement in behaviors that evoke an alternative unification perspective – some being in the artistic use of language itself.

#16 "Language and Reality – The Challenge," 2021.

We love our words! Our words permit us to identify with some precision what things and actions we are referring to. In addition, we can "flavor" our words with adjectives and adverbs to provide emphasis. And through grammar in our language, we can announce relationships between the concepts that our words "capture" and place them in time. Add writing to oral forms of language and we get the option for greater precision and expression in a much more permanent form. All of this is in behalf of communicating more efficiently and effectively – a great asset, which seems to be much more elaborated and refined among humans than in any other life form of which we are aware. Our non-verbal forms of communication are important but they are much less precise. And, importantly, aural based communication complements rather than interferes with our ability to act. Our worldviews as individuals and societies are "contained" by the options that our language provides/allows. As such, language is always housing, communicating, and perpetuating our conception of reality.

So, what's the problem?

LANGUAGE IS A TOTALLY ARTIFICIAL CONSTRUCT!!

<u>Words create separate categories in what are continua in reality</u>. Moreover, we love our oppositions – slow/fast, light/dark, good/bad, liberal/conservative, but oppositions exacerbate the problem by reducing continua to merely either/or.

Take one opposition – light-dark. In fact, there is a huge range of light intensity from “blinding bright” to “pitch black” and all grades inbetween. Most obvious are the categories that we create to describe the visible light continuum – red-orange-yellow-green-blue-purple and the fact that we apply this sequence to characterize color in general. Consider the enormous number of the “shades” of green or blue as colors: when exactly does green become blue? This problem pervades all language because our words make artificial distinctions in what are really continua. Then, we rely on these words to make “claims” about how these artificial word based categories interact – an additional level of artificiality! Keep going and consider complex statements that evaluate these sentence level claims of interactions, and we arrive at another meta level of removal from reality. We do this all the time as we speak just conversationally, all the more so when we get to hyper meta levels as we use language in writing to propose complex theories in science.

As humans, we need language to communicate, and we cannot avoid these problems, but <u>we can be aware</u> of the shaky ground on which our language based assertions and conceptions about the nature of reality are based.

#17 “Language, Thought, and Science In a Reality of Separation,” 2025.

To facilitate communication, language artificially carves up reality, creating different words to reference the actions and things that we regard as separate entities. Importantly, our dependency on this basic language tool has an enormous impact on our conception of reality. Moreover, this impact enlarges significantly, as its use becomes pervasive – highlighted in the following.

Language is the basis for our major thought process. We “think” in language. Our reality of separate things and actions gets huge support as a consequence.

Science relies on the rigorous use of logical, analytical, language-based thought. This process magnifies the separation assumption in language itself since analysis involves taking things apart, identifying the separate units, and searching for the lawful relations among them.

Employing this approach, science has revealed a vast micro and macro material reality and generated a technology that has empowered humans enormously. The result is that science strongly supports the view that reality is composed of separate actions and things which we can investigate for their causal relations.

So, That’s the Way Things Are! What’s the Problem?

The problems arise and accumulate as the effort to establish causality among all these separate things runs into the need to account for larger phenomenological systems – example: climate. Understanding systems requires accounting for multiple causal sources which necessitates examining all causal factors. But, as we probe this larger domain, we find that the pursuit of "all" never ends. If we follow causality far enough from our singular system perspective, we discover everything is connected, because the systems we carve out are themselves not separate. Reality is all one unified, totally integrated "system" of energy and energy based matter. Our assumptions of separation and independence are illusions created by our compounded dependency on our conceptual tools of language, language based thought, and rigorous analytical thought.

In addition, our totally unified reality is ever changing due, at a minimum, to the fact that our universe is expanding. The only constant is change at every scale; so, even our best, large, system based, analytical investigations are inherently partial because they never include the whole picture and the system being examined is in a constant state of change. These are the underlying reasons why our theories are always having to be adjusted as "new" information "arises." The scientific procedure defined by the rigorous analytical process and the assumption of separation never reveals the complete "truth." This does not mean that the studies pursued under this process lack value, only that we must understand the essential reasons for their limitations. And we can anticipate that the larger the system being investigated, the greater will be the effect of these limitations.

No wonder results in our social/cultural sciences are so problematic: These are enormous systems of great complexity that encompass significant causal "variables" that are virtually endless. However rigorous our methodology, we cannot reasonably expect that our best such analytically based, scientific studies will be more than usefully suggestive. Proof? – very unlikely!

How Can We Improve This Situation?

First, we need to recognize the problems of relying exclusively on the rigorous analytical process with its problematic assumptions of separation and limited causality. Then, we can explore the potential value of alternative modes of thought that are not subject to these limitations. If we can develop these alternative thought processes to the point of their being rigorous, we can employ them to complement our existing analytical based approach. Non-western cultures have already achieved considerable sophistication in this regard in their intuitive based meditative traditions. But these traditions have focused on the

goal of personal enlightenment rather than the social and pragmatic use of the intuitive. And the association of this meditative tradition with religion leads many to reject, out of hand, its utility in the broader domain of scientific investigation.

We can make a start in exploring the utility of this alternative direction by recognizing the value of intuitive based insight and inspiration, which have played a major role in critically important breakthroughs in analytical science itself. The intuitive is always contributing in our mental processing, but it is paramount in the meditative state where its value lies in "seeing" the big picture – the principles that underlie system unification. Edison, Tesla, and Einstein are just three major theorists who developed their own idiosyncratic intuitive techniques to assist them in discovering major "answers" in their scientific inquiries. My view is that intuitive processing has a great deal more to offer.

It's time to wake up, include carefully developed and managed alternative modes of thought in our scientific process, and properly adjust our conception of reality to free it from the language based assumption of separation. In this process and in behalf of securing an expansive future for humanity, we can respect the social and ecological implications of our totally unified reality. Immaterial energy connects every "Thing;" so every "Thing" is included in "us."

Art-Ritual

#18 "Intuition and Intellect in Human Mental Functioning and the Role of Art-Ritual in Human Societies," 2025.

Intuition refers to the intuitive function or capacity of the human mind. It is associated with "right brain" visual thinking which is more wholistic and pattern oriented than linear "left brain" reasoning by the intellect. Intellect relies on analysis which relies on language which requires the assumption of separate actions and things. Intuition relies on synthesis which relies on discovering pattern connections in the whole to reveal the unification of self and reality.

The factual basis for the unified conception of reality is supplied by the primary role we now know immaterial, wave and field energy plays in reality where it is universal, infinite, and totally connects all "separate" things into one Whole. As material beings, humans are in fact concentrated and integrated energy entities, and they are full participants in this unified energy reality. Intuition is the energy based mental function that provides access to the vast web of interconnection in this unified whole. From the intuitive perspective, identity is totally shared; so,

the intuitive supports values of cooperation and respect. It can also reveal connections not apparent to the intellect. Indeed, many scientists resort to the intuitive to gain major insights which illuminate their otherwise analytical efforts.

Intuition and intellect are complementary mental processes, and both function all the time with different degrees of emphasis to provide solutions for our different human inquiries and activities. Modern western culture places great emphasis on the intellect and the language based analytical thought process which has been highly refined in science. The intuitive has been de-emphasized in this context because it seems less rigorous and has been associated with religion which materialistic western culture largely rejects. Eastern cultures are more accommodating with their development of sophistication in the meditative process which focuses on the refined use of intuitive mental capabilities.

Art and ritual are cultural activities where intuitive mental operations are primary, and as such art-ritual provides avenues for experiencing and understanding self and reality in the energy sense as totally connected and integrated. This perspective contrasts radically with intellect based awareness which promotes the view that all things are separate and competitive in time and space.

The full understanding of self, society and reality is fostered by the appropriate use and sophisticated development of both intellect and intuition. Art and ritual traditionally play an important role in achieving this condition in human societies.

#19 “Energy, Matter, Reality, Worldview, Art and Ritual,” 2023.

Energy is everywhere in the cosmos in different frequencies and concentrations.

Matter and energy are transforms of one another – matter being one way energy concentrates in energy fields of different types and complexities.

There is nowhere at any micro or macro scale in the cosmos that there is not both matter and energy. Atoms, molecules, bacteria, dust, rocks, animals, plants, mountains, oceans, planets, solar systems, galaxies, the universe are all energy expressed in matter in what we humans consider as different scales. These scales are just convenient ways we humans carve up an infinite material and energetic reality that we believe we can “observe” with our limited senses.

In fact, reality is a vast, totally interconnected, integrated, and unified three dimensional “web” of matter and energy that operates as ONE phenomenon. There are no separate “things” involved in separate “actions” that we can separately “observe.” We just perceive it that way and act as if it is accurate given the enormous limitations of our senses.

Our reality of separation is an illusion that we live by and have evolved by along with all other similarly sensorially limited organic creatures on Earth. This view is the basis for our competitive behavior which has evolved to be our primary means to access the energy we require to assure the survival of our species.

Through our human intuitive mental competence – in contrast to our intellectual competence, we have access to understanding and being in reality from the alternative perspective of total identity unification, but unfortunately a great many of us moderns make little use of this mode of awareness and operation.

Art and ritual are the primary vehicles within our cultures that we humans can use to access and express this expanded sense of our selves in a totally unified reality. The experience of oneness within art and ritual offers strong support for both the social, communal, and ecological values and the cooperative behaviors that allow humans to operate responsibly in their societies and ecologies.

I began my career seeking to understand the basis for artistic behavior. That expanded to include ritual/religion. In my life-long search for an answer to this question, I have had to pursue a variety of academic disciplines to discover the above overall picture of reality within which I contend that art and ritual function.

#20 “Art-Ritual, Connection, Flow, Oneness, and Unification,” 2025.

In the smaller traditional societies of the vast majority of human history, art is not separate from ritual and religion does not exist as a separate institution. Life’s individual and social activities range from the more instrumental to the more expressive with art-ritual being toward the expressive end of this continuum.

The expressive dimension of culture is itself a continuum ranging from the partial “time outs” in activities of relaxing, sharing meals, chatting, joking through more continuous playful behavior to full “time outs” in music, song, dance, game, story telling, birth to death rituals, etc. What is common to all of these expressive behaviors/events is a mental shift away from intellect/verbal thinking/analysis toward intuitive/visual thinking/syntheses and a behavioral shift

in the direction of the exploratory “as if” more than the present fixated “is.” In this shift we first highlight the sense of being connected to one another and/or the natural world and then invite the experience of flow into the situation.

Flow is the sense that something inclusive is happening largely without effort. Individuals experience flow in personal events of long range running, swimming, skiing, etc. when they pass through first and second “wind” and allow the activity to become “automatic.” Groups of individuals experience flow when their collective behavior unites them to the point of participation becoming effortless at the same time it is all consuming.

Flow is experienced to different degrees in different “time out” expressive culture activities when the conditions are conducive. In its extreme form – when everything goes “right” – this flow experience leads to the sense of connection becoming so complete, inclusive and strong that it leads to the experience of unification. Of course, ingestion of certain drugs can produce the same range of flow experiences – one reason drug use is so common in many ritual traditions. While flow and unification are central in expressive culture events, these experiences are not restricted to these events. In this regard, the deep experience of Love results when the ultimate pursuit of Flow carries the participants to the profound sense of oneness – all else “disappearing.”

Understanding and experiencing the unity of reality by generating flow in “Time Out” expressive events is the primary function of expressive culture – Art-Ritual. There are many other more specific social and psychological functions of expressive culture, but unification is the key underlying function. It is this function that serves to balance the understanding and experience of reality that prevails in everyday instrumental activities – everything as separate and subject to manipulation to benefit individual and social needs – the ME values of survival. Very importantly, by promoting connection, flow and unification, expressive culture supports the alternative WE perspective of communal and ecological values.

Human societies are most successful for the long term when they appropriately balance input from the ME and WE perspectives. Expressive culture plays a critical role in this regard. Art-Ritual is the time out expressive culture realm of behavior where individuals experience the sense of self and the rest of the social and natural world as connected with this experience, scaling from belonging to sharing to caring to flowing to oneness to unification.

Expressive Culture/Art-Ritual in Complex Society

In complex societies expressive culture is initially absorbed by the institution of religion. Ceremony then separates from ritual to celebrate social issues while art becomes more secular in orientation. Eventually, entertainment separates from art when expressive culture becomes less participant and more audience oriented. Entertainment then trends toward the sensational to engage the secondarily involved audience. In later complex societies, artists and entertainers often become full time specialists rather than ordinary community citizens with expressive talents as in traditional societies. In its latest iteration, entertainment becomes a media based industry – popular culture – catering in large measure to sensational secular themes of sex and/or violence to meet the goals of economic enterprise more than anything having to do with the unification perspective. Art in this modern context becomes "fine art" where the pursuit of technological and "artistic" innovation develops as the primary goal and unification in most cases moves to the periphery. And as secular materialism comes to dominate the complex culture worldview, religion descends into subculture fundamentalism with the unification experience being used to reify dogmatic belief. For the most part, traditional expressive culture gets converted in modern complex culture to entertainment and ceremony with traditional Art-Ritual being sustained in "alternative" subgroups.

Conclusion

Retrieving a "modern" version of unification oriented traditional expressive culture is an important goal in behalf of promoting greater ME-WE balance in modern complex societies. Justifying pursuit of this goal in terms of modern theory about the nature of reality is a primary goal of my worldview conception – Dynamic Humanism. Revival is possible in the modern context of universal energy theory, human energy fields, and the combined input from studies in intuition, creativity, psi phenomena, psychedelic drugs, and mindfulness.

Spirituality and Religion

#21 "Overview - Reality, Mental Modes, Religion, Spirituality and Truth," 2022.

The Key Components of the Dynamic Humanism Point of View

1) At the extremes, humans experience self and reality in two very different ways: as objectively and materially separated or as subjectively and spiritually unified.

2) This differential experience is not an either/or phenomenon. It exists along a continuum from one extreme to the other with both perspectives active and operating to some degree and in combination in most human activities.

3) Access to these two experiences of self and reality are accommodated through the two main human mental modes: Intellect [reason – rational thought, analysis], and Intuition [inspiration – spiritual unification, synthesis]

4) These two mental modes exist on a continuum where only at the extremes are they operating more or less exclusively. In most activities, the two mental modes associated with the corresponding two perspectives – operate together.

5) Everyday instrumental activities depend on a perspective that relies more heavily on the intellectual analytical mode because this mode better addresses the biological challenges and goals that humans encounter in objective material reality.

6) The activities of casual social interaction [eating together, joking, courtship, leisure, and relaxation, etc.] exist in the center of the objective – subjective continuum with both perspectives and modes about equally active.

7) Play, game, and all verbal, plastic and performing arts rely on a further perspective shift toward the intuitive, subjective, spiritual end of the continuum.

8) Paranormal phenomena [ESP and PK] and the core religious experience [ecstasy, born again, unification] rely heavily on the intuitive mode that reveals self and reality from the subjective, spiritual end of the perspective continuum.

9) Developed religions in complex societies surround the core unification experience with elaborate belief and ritual systems often with a hierarchy of intermediaries – priests, imams, gurus, etc. Such institutionalized religions have a strong tendency to demand commitment to the absolute truth of their belief systems. Unfortunately, the result of such demands often puts different religious groups at odds with one another to the point of conflict, violence, and warfare.

10) Spirituality focuses on the core unification experience. Belief systems are avoided. Seekers are encouraged to release the objective material perspective and its allied mental modes through various actions: deep prayer, vision quests, passive to active forms of meditation, psychedelic drugs, etc. The pursuit of the spiritual perspective in these activities evokes the expanded, inclusive sense of self and reality, reveals all phenomena as sharing one identity, and promotes cooperation and respect across all entities [the We point of view] that are separated in everyday reality [the Me point of view]. In so doing, spirituality rejects all forms of violence.

11) What constitutes "truth" is revealed through both the objective and subjective perspectives on self and reality. Humans cannot legitimately claim that the "truth" revealed by one of these perspectives is accurate and the other false. Humans need both perspectives, first as takers or predators trying to survive biologically and, second as givers or supporters assisting one another and working to respect and sustain the surrounding ecology.

12) Neither secular humanism nor religious fundamentalism accurately account for the dynamic relationship of the material and spiritual perspectives on reality.

13) Sometimes the "truth" revealed by the more extreme material perspective conflicts with the "truth" revealed by the more extreme spiritual perspective. Ultimately, humans can not escape this dilemma because it is a fundamental consequence of alternative perspectives being active in human consciousness.

14) The only constant is change. There is no absolute truth. All "truth" is subject to change. There is only the open-minded effort to understand reality from both perspectives: the <u>existing</u> science of the objective material realm and the <u>potential</u> science of the subjective spiritual domain.

15) As the material – spiritual perspective continuum reveals the two ways humans engage and understand reality, so the matter – energy perspective continuum in modern Physics provides two ways to approach understanding the nature of reality.

16) Humans must negotiate the <u>inherent tension</u> between the self-interested competitive view [Me] associated with the material perspective and the social and ecological cooperative view [We] associated with the spiritual perspective.

17) Humans and their societies go wrong either a) when they fail to recognize and develop capabilities equally in the modes that support both perspectives –

reason and intuition, or b) when they fail to adequately balance the inputs of these two ways of knowing themselves, others, and the surrounding world. At an essential level all of the institutions of human societies can be assessed individually and collectively in terms of these two criteria.

#22 "Justifying the Spiritual – Unification Perspective on Self and Reality."

The worldviews of all human societies are informed by two major contrasting perspectives. These two perspectives define the manner in which humans conceptualize reality and the self and determine the manner in which they interact with one another and with their surrounding ecologies. The first is the perspective that holds that all things are connected and integrated to such a degree that everything shares in one unified identity. This is the spiritual/ subjective/synthetic/intuitive/communal/unification perspective. The second is the perspective that holds that reality is composed of separate entities that relate to one another only when certain conditions are met. This is the material/objective/analytical/rational/individual/discreteness perspective. Every human society determines the nature of the input of these two perspectives both in its relation to its surrounding ecology and in its various social, economic, political, judicial, educational, religious, and technological/scientific domains or institutions.

In modern complex society, the material perspective dominates and justifies the primarily competitive way in which individuals, communities, states and nations relate to one another economically, politically, and militarily. By contrast, and as a mostly secondary influence, the spiritual perspective offers cooperative/ egalitarian input primarily in the social, political, judicial, religious, and ecological realms.

The justification for the material/discreteness perspective is embedded at a fundamental level – biological survival and reproduction. The justification for the spiritual/unification perspective is much less well recognized – especially in modern complex societies, and it is the subject of this essay.

There are at least four ways the spiritual/unification perspective on the self, society and reality can be justified. Three of these promote the spiritual experience of unification itself.

All human societies recognize a subjective as well as an objective dimension to the self and reality. In aboriginal societies this is often represented in the

acceptance of a sacred “Life” principle – animism – which must be respected in all of existence. This underlying principle gets much further elaborated as societies become more complex – from spirit, to separate spirits, to separate spirits with independent agency, to separate divine entities with full agency, to full blown independent gods with “societies” of their own, to religious institutions with their accompanying prophets, gurus, saints, and saviors supported by elaborate narratives and rituals and controlled by a hierarchy of priests, ministers, imams, lamas, monks, swamis, etc.

Spirituality refers to the basic acceptance and experience of a sacred/subjective principle as pervading all of reality, including the self. The spiritual perspective arises when the human intuitive mental faculty is active, and the intuitive faculty is most active when its opposite – the intellectual/rational faculty – is less active. This state of mind can be promoted in its more extreme forms in two ways: in conducive ritual behaviors like meditation/mindfulness, chant, or repetitive rhythmic movement/dance, or through the ingestion of substances that have psychedelic effects like LSD, MDMA, etc. The ultimate spiritual experience in this mental state is unification – the experience of all of reality including the self as so completely connected and integrated that everything becomes one – resulting in the discrete self being transformed into the expanded universal self.

While spirituality is at the core of all religions, religions construct elaborate belief, ritual and social systems on top of this spiritual core, often becoming more social control institutions than vehicles to carry individuals to the unification experience. And because different societies develop different religions, these religions, each of which usually claims to offer the exclusive path to the “truth,” have a decided tendency to become competitive. The result can be some of the worst human behavior imaginable – warfare, the antithesis of what the experience of unification in spirituality is about – sharing a mutual, totally inclusive, and loving identity with all of existence.

So, within spirituality, there are two avenues to the more intense core spiritual experience of unification: rituals and “drugs.” Religion provides a third avenue, but each religion confines the meaning of the unification experience to validating its specific belief system, and competition among religions contains the potential for promoting very negative, non-spiritual social behavior.

Interestingly, the fourth source of justification for the spiritual perspective on the self and reality is to be found in the implications of the material perspective itself when this perspective is fully understood in its most developed, modern, scientific iteration. I have argued in the accompanying essay, “The

Fundamental Human Problem – Perceptual Limitation," that from the material perspective itself human perception of reality is so limited that it renders humans acutely unaware of the extent to which they exist in a totally connected reality. Through its impressive development of technology, science – as the primary investigator of reality from the material perspective, is responsible for revealing the 99.999% of the material and energetic reality that humans do not perceive. When the vast system of interrelationship that defines all that is included in material and energetic reality is properly understood, the very notion of discrete entities appears more and more as an illusion.

So, science has pursued the material view of reality to the point of exposing the questionable nature of the basic assumption of discreteness upon which science itself has been based. While internally the physical sciences are slowly emerging from this problem, the commitment of humans in modern complex society to the dominant material perspective on reality remains solidly in place. But the fact is that when science pursues the material perspective to its extremes, it discovers itself largely transformed to the point of supporting the basic principles of the spiritual perspective. As such, in the end, the material perspective becomes a fourth avenue to the justification of the spiritual perspective and to recognition of the condition of unification.

See the companion essay, "The Fundamental Human Problem – Perceptual Limitation," for a more detailed consideration of the spiritual – unification implications that arise when we recognize the extraordinary limitations of human perception from within the material perspective.

#23 "Science, Religion and Spirituality: Two Fundamental Changes for Humankind to Make Progress," 2012.

Introduction and Overview

If civilized humankind is to proceed into the future with any assurance of continued productive development, two related changes need to be made in the foundation of our modern cultures. Finding adequate solutions for virtually all of the other major challenges confronting humankind are stacked on top of the need for these underlying and fundamental adjustments to be made.

First, a more wholistic science must emerge that pursues discovery in the subjective as well as the objective dimension of reality and that explores and utilizes human intuition as well as human intellect in the process. If science can

make this move, it will position itself to come out of the shadows and take the lead in guiding decision making in all of our cultural institutions.

Second, universal spiritual awareness must replace all parochial religious belief systems and thereby free the human intuitive capability for unfettered development so as to better access, understand and utilize the subjective dimension of reality. Relieved of the significant roadblock that religion poses, science can then include the subjective realm of reality in its purview for serious exploration and examination.

The consequence of these simultaneous changes being achieved would be to create the conditions for humans to realize the appropriate balance in their cultural worldview, a balance that can underlie true long-term sustainability for individuals, societies, cultures, countries, Gaia, and the human species. In my view, we have reached the point where survival of the species in a civilized state probably depends on these two changes occurring, most likely within the 21st century.

The Argument

Since humans learned how to locate resources in the surrounding environment and to form artifacts that could be useful for their survival, they have been engaged in exploring and testing the results of alternative actions in objective/material reality from a rational perspective – the basis for science. Correspondingly, ever since humans became self-aware, developed language and could share their reflections on why they live and die, they have relied on their experience of subjective/spiritual reality to suggest answers which they express in diverse belief systems. The subjective and objective perspectives are both fundamental in human experience and awareness. And humans possess different mental states and operations – the intuitive and the rational – that provide access to these two different perspectives and experiences of reality. From virtually the beginning, there have been these two different ways for humans to know the self, others and the world – each valuable and each revealing its own truths about reality as a whole.

The human intellect/reason discerns an objective/material reality defined by physical entities separated by space and related over time. Its primary task is to find and defend space for the individual and group in a competitive environment where physical survival and propagation are the essential goals. Reality from this objective perspective is a constant struggle for one individual or group to gain advantage over other competing entities until the end comes for that individual or group. By contrast, the intuitive discerns a subjective reality

defined by a web of connections that become so dense that space and time cease to define the situation and the self merges through different scales to share a common identity with other "entities." In this subjective/spiritual reality there are no beginnings and ends, just participating and sharing in a combined, larger identity where battling for dominance is futile – just fighting against one's greater self. This greater sense of a united self invites caring and cooperation rather than competition, and the core experience is one of pervasive Love and unending existence in the whole.

These two very different perspectives and experiences of reality and their associated mental functions – intellect and intuition – have been part of the human cultural fabric from the time that humankind became fully communicative and self-reflective. In most societies what may seem to be exclusive perspectives have been accepted as complementary, if in tension. Within this tension, some cultures emphasize one perspective or the other. So it is that in western cultures, science, technology, economy, and defense are the primary seats of the favored objective perspective, while the arts and religion are the primary seats of the less valued subjective perspective. In western culture there exists a constant tension between these two domains, and this tension has significant consequences for the institutions that are caught in the middle: politics, education, and the social and community services. When set against one another and not held to be a stimulating complement, the tension of the objective and subjective perspectives can be dysfunctional to the point of paralysis within societies and a source of severe conflicts across societies.

Is there a way to resolve this contest between equally fundamental human perspectives without having to select one and reject the other [either religion or secular humanism]? I contend that the answer is Yes, but the solution is neither easy to achieve nor easy to understand. We must re-examine some fundamentals.

A key fact is that the truths revealed by the objective and subjective perspectives are not expressed in the same way. Objective awareness of the material world can be shared directly between humans through mutual observation and manipulation of material entities as well as through literal reference in language. Subjective awareness has no such direct or literal vehicle for sharing. The experience of subjective reality is just as immediate as the experience of the objective, but because the subjective is intangible, it can only be shared among humans through symbolic reference – the domain of metaphor and "as if." In this vein, Evil is portrayed <u>as if</u> it is a living personality – the Devil/Satan/Lucifer. Likewise, the core spiritual experience of unification is

characterized in objective terms as [if] being “born again.” Art and Religion are the social “institutions” within culture whose primary role is to express subjective awareness in these kinds of symbolic terms. Critically important is the fact that at root, Art and Religion are **NOT** the subjective itself; they are symbolic representations of this subjective awareness or experience. So, social sharing of subjective awareness/experience necessitates an additional mediating layer in the communication process – symbolic representation.

Fundamental problems arise when humans 1) forget [lose sight of the fact over time] that their subjective awareness is expressed in the objective through a mediating symbolic layer, 2) regard what have become their traditional symbols as literally or concretely accurate and real, and 3) come to believe that their literally transformed symbolic beliefs represent the one and only true statement/characterization of the subjective. In this process, humans have mistakenly objectified the subjective and created as literally real their “as if” symbols – gods and spirits and saints and saviors and a whole sequence of “as if” narratives of interactions among them [myth]. Once institutionalized, these literal belief systems become religious dogma, which comes to define/restrict much of human social behavior. And it all begins with the natural human desire to share awareness of the subjective in probing for answers to basic questions about existence, but then failing to retain the realization that all such sharing is inherently symbolic and not literal/concrete in nature.

Given what happens as the symbols of spiritual awareness mistakenly get transformed into literal religious belief systems, I suggest that our first move must be to reclaim spiritual awareness itself and recognize that all of our religious symbols are “as if” constructs. In short, we must get back to fundamentals and retrieve the universal spiritual perspective, which underlies all religions, and release the parochial religious point of view of all institutionalized religions. Only when we do this can we retain the essential truth of a universal subjective reality while we avoid the many complications that arise when we allow ourselves the false privilege of reducing spirituality to literal religiosity.

By salvaging the essence of the universal spiritual awareness of subjective reality, we can erase the basis for the conflict between science and religion. And we can replace it with the concept that reality <u>as a whole</u> is revealed by the stimulating rather than contradictory pairing of the spiritual/subjective and material/objective perspectives. When science no longer needs to do battle with religion, it can relax its up-tight protective barriers and permit itself to explore the intuitive and the intuitive mental processes which offer humans a wide variety of subjective experiences. Science can explore human access to

the immaterial domain where the infinite web of connections rather than separate entities is fundamental.

I need to say something at this point about the proposal by religious moderates that tolerance within a continuing central place for religion in modern society is all that is needed. Unfortunately, the proposal for tolerance among religions rests on the assumption that the faithful can “somehow” respect the claims of other religions when the religion to which they are committed asserts that it is the sole source of the truth regarding the basis for human existence. Exclusive and absolute truth for the faithful cannot logically accommodate respect for alternative such claims. The tolerance compromise may seem reasonable, but in fact it contains its own contradiction. By leaving the same essential absolute truth claims in place, the tolerance “solution” does nothing to address the fundamental conflict between science and religion. As a result, this tolerance proposal leaves science in the closet, unable to achieve wholeness or to lead in human affairs.

With universal spirituality replacing parochial religiosity, a more inclusive science can emerge without fear of challenging or being challenged by religion. Science can lead respecting the greater whole and exploring the fullness of both human capabilities and the greater reality that these capabilities reveal. Reason, the intellect, and rationality are valuable tools for science, but there are other tools that can also be valuable that science has largely overlooked to date: intuition, inspiration, and imagination. To be whole, science cannot be divorced from creativity, and all aspects of the intuitive are key for really understanding human creativity. If scientists are honest with themselves, they are aware that the scientific process at its best combines the powers of human intellect and intuition, drawing upon them pulsating in tandem most of the time. At analytical and tabulation points in this process, intellect may take the lead, while in moments of reflection, the intuitive is likely to be dominant. There is no reason that the intuitive cannot be as rigorously developed and utilized as the rational in behalf of the objectives of science. But to explore this possibility, we have to first get beyond the objectivist/materialist door. Physics, astrophysics, and cosmology long ago discovered that in order to make progress they had to pry that door wide open. We now understand that energy is essentially the immaterial complement of matter and that these two expressions of reality are the transforms of one another. Balance and control is what is needed in science, not some antiquated pretense that reason alone is sufficient or that all of reality can be reduced to the material domain.

Conclusion

Until science finds a central place for the intuitive and the subjective reality that it reveals, modern humans will continue to dwell in a world where an incomplete science is forced to hide on the periphery of society and where we are subject to the spasms of religiously based international conflicts. To become truly whole and warrant taking the lead in directing social as well as material human affairs, science must be conceptually freed from its exclusive focus on reason and the effort to reduce all of reality to the objective. For this to happen, we must retrieve spirituality and the intuitive, which are not in themselves in any way in conflict with science. And we must discard our fundamentally mistaken commitment to religion in all of its iterations.

Yes, having the courage to make these fundamental changes across cultures and on a worldwide basis will not be easy. But only if we recognize the goal and what is at stake if we fail to work diligently toward it, can we be fully motivated to seek it.

Social: ME – WE, Competition – Cooperation; Balance – Imbalance

#24 "Dynamic Perspectives on Reality: Societal Implications," 2023.

Humans and their societies see and engage reality through two very different perspectives: Me and We [Get and Give, Exclusive and Inclusive]. These perspectives represent the collective consequences of a complicated set of neurological networks in the human brain and gut that are genetically predisposed.

The Me perspective supports biological survival. The We perspective supports social security and ecological integrity.

The Me perspective tends to be "now" oriented – presentistic. The We perspective encompasses a broader past – present – future point of view. Immediate Me needs and desires often conflict with what is required to assure longer term We oriented goals.

The human Intellect-Analysis-Verbal-Language mental function mainly serves the Me perspective while the Intuition-Synthesis-Visual-Image mental function primarily serves the broader We perspective.

The Me and We perspectives and their associated mental functions operate on a continuum where in most circumstances they are both simultaneously active but to different extents depending on the demands of the task or tasks at hand.

The Me and We perspectives are charged to different degrees with positive and negative emotions depending on the circumstances. The level of emotional charge influences which perspective takes precedence.

Our genetics, our experiences in life, and the worldviews of our surrounding cultures determine a) whether the Me or We perspective is generally favored, b) the extent and nature of their combination in different circumstances, and c) the degree and nature of their emotional charge.

In terms of societal institutions, the We orientation is supported by traditional Art-Ritual-Spirituality. The Me perspective predominates in the institution of Trade-Economy. The Polity and Justice institutions of society can be Me oriented in structure to support more authoritarian societies or We oriented in structure to support more egalitarian societies. The structure of Polity and Justice are key in this regard! While Intellect-Analysis based Science mainly supports the Me orientation in its experimental process and technological connection to the economy, it can support the We orientation at the level of theory [e.g. particle physics and cosmology based on principles from quantum mechanics]. In modern complex society, Intuition-Synthesis is a little recognized and largely underdeveloped human mental function, but it does offer substantial support to the We oriented societal institutions [especially the egalitarian option within Polity-Justice].

Appropriately balancing the input of the Me and We perspectives in the four major institutional areas of modern complex society is the paramount challenge for humanity. Responsibly relating the condition of these perspectives and societal structures to the surrounding planetary, solar, galactic, etc ecologies is essential for humanity's long term survival.

#25 "Me and We Values in Democratic Capitalist Societies," 2021.

There is a long history that has led to the overall dominance of the Me/Individual perspective over the We/Communal perspective in the lives of humans living in modern democratic capitalist societies.

Aboriginal Society

For 240,000 years, humans lived in bands and tribes – mostly limited to 20-50 individuals in bands and 150-300 individuals as bands coordinated in tribes. In order to survive in the long term as hunter-gathers, humans learned to cooperate and share in their internal social relations and to observe the limits in their relationship to the external ecology. At the subjective/spiritual/sacred level, they understood that all natural phenomena, including themselves, are connected and deserve respect. To the present day, social relations within bands and tribes are personal in nature, and, in spite of roles being differentiated, equality among adult individuals is the norm. While internal band and tribe relations are mostly cooperative and supportive, inter-tribal relations can be much more impersonal and competitive with periodic conflicts erupting over territory and access to resources. In brief, this has been the stable condition achieved by the vast majority of humanity for about 96% of its history.

Complex Society and Civilization

Complex society evolved with the advent of agriculture and settlement in the last 10,000 years with most of humanity only coming to live under these conditions in the last 3,500 years. Complex society itself has remained in a state of constant change never fully stabilizing, and currently it remains in a rapid state of change. As such, complex society – and civilization which rests upon it – really amount to ongoing experiments. In its early period [9,600 years], complex society was built on a highly authoritarian structure of nobles and priests with bureaucrats placed between the elite and the masses who existed as peasants controlled by institutionalized religion and internal enforcers. The equality based on personal relations of the aboriginal condition disappeared, and often natural resources were strained beyond sustainability to meet the excessive demands of the elite. Only in the last 400 years in some nations with the institution of representative democratic governments and justice under the law has the equality of aboriginal social relations been reintroduced within complex society. And, in terms of human history, this 400 years amounts to only an opening trial period in which the forces promoting authoritarian rule can be observed constantly pushing to reemerge in one form or another! Complex society is in its early childhood, while democratic complex societies are in their infancy.

Me and We in Complex Democratic Capitalist Societies

Under authoritarian rule, the dominant Me orientation is obvious in a fixed class system with the Me elite at the top. In democratic complex societies, Me is restrained by the We oriented government and justice system. But when this We governmental and justice system is combined with a Me oriented capitalistic

economy, a dynamic emerges where We is constantly under challenge. So, in many modern democratic complex societies with capitalistic economies, there is always the built in tension between the Me and We perspectives; always the need to keep the influence of these two perspectives in balance.

That is the overall Me versus We structural condition in modern democratic, capitalistic societies. Now, what role has the development of social relations in these societies played in this dynamic since the industrial revolution?

With dramatic population growth in these societies – in part resulting from medical advances in treating childhood diseases – the number of young adults greatly exceeded the ability of farms and village communities to absorb them. One result was that urbanization exploded bringing individuals together from diverse locations with virtually no obligation to or responsibility for one another. External trade had always encouraged mobility, but now internal mobility supported a focus on individuals realizing their personal potential. Society responded to the needs of so many "extra" children by instituting universal public education which separated children from adults and opened the path to a separate adolescent peer subculture. Together, universal education, a separate adolescent subculture, and necessary internal mobility led to the celebration of individual opportunity with young adults free to pursue their own talents and interests through higher education and/or employment beyond the local level.

With the dominant trend of more and more children and young adults moving away from their families and communities, extended family relationships progressively weakened with parents, children, grandparents, and siblings living lives mostly separate from one another. In this context, marriage and the nuclear family became the only remaining stable social unit. Then came birth control and the Women's Liberation Movement, freeing women from the confines of home and child rearing. As the influence of community and family weakened, individual pursuit of success increased and an overall shift occurred in society from moral behavior based on religious beliefs to secular materialism. The result was that the support morality provided for social commitment waned, further increasing the emphasis placed on individual values and individual freedom. Then came the escalation of divorce as more and more spouses were liberated to pursue their own interests and desires. Finally, as the nuclear family unit destabilized with divorce becoming common, the single parent unit emerged as prominent with mostly women responsible.

Through this entire historical process, the dominant theme is increasing freedom for individuals to pursue their own interests and desires rather than

commitment to marriage, family and community relations and values. Overall what we see since the industrial revolution is the ascendancy of the modern social culture of Me. It is no longer just the capitalistic economy in democratic complex societies that is promoting the Me perspective and challenging the We perspective. It is the evolution of social relations themselves that has significantly favored Me over We.

The great irony is that many among this dominant modern cohort of supreme individualists are social progressives who are committed ideologically to social values and social responsibility. They just do not want to lead their own lives in terms of these family and community values! They want "society," or government, to come to the rescue and support single parents, child care, health care, housing, food, and education for those in need while they continue to "dance" to their tune of full liberation and self actualization. And they do not even recognize the contradiction!!

Now, we are seeing what may be the final step in this personal "liberation" sequence: adult couple relationships without any form of legal commitment, but with the expectation that the independent desires of each of the partners will be satisfied even as the goals and desires of each partner evolve. Sometimes having lived together for years, these couples remain only committed to one another day to day with the option fully open to depart whenever they choose. No surprise, most of these serial monogamous relationships eventually dissolve – one person's freedom eventually conflicting with the other person's freedom. These modern couples remain together only so long as the We does not conflict substantially with the Me in the relationship. And, importantly, We has lost the strong combined support of extended family, community, and morality.

Social progressives do not provide an answer to this metastasizing challenge. Their governmental solution addresses the symptoms, not the causes of the underlying problem: the familial, communal, and moral failure of modern life that celebrates individual values and the "benefits" of a consumption oriented lifestyle. And, unfortunately, the development of an excessive Me orientation in modern social relations – when combined with an established Me oriented capitalistic economy – increases the pressure on a We oriented democratic government by reinforcing the Me values associated with 1) Me authoritarian rule [oligarchy, dictatorship, etc.], and 2) Me exploitation of planetary ecology.

#26 “ME and WE Perspective Complexes,” 2025.

Juxtaposed attributes of the ME and WE perspectives:

ME Complex in Society		WE Complex in Society
Freedom	----------	Equality
Individual Rights	----------	Social Responsibilities
Innovation	----------	Resilience
Competition	----------	Cooperation
Presentistic Focus	----------	Learn from the Past
Reactive	----------	Cautious
Encourage Change	----------	Maintain Stability
Analysis/Parts	----------	Synthesis/Whole
Dominate	----------	Assist
Manipulate	----------	Promote Fairness
Capitalism	----------	Communalism
Resource Exploitation	--------	Resource Sustainability
Market Society	----------	Mutual Benefit Society
Better Weapons	----------	Conflict Arbitration
Materialism	----------	Spiritualism
Power	----------	Security
Oligarchy	----------	Socialism
Autocracy	----------	Democracy
Empire	----------	Unified Global Government

Total ME Negates WE
Total WE Negates ME

Humans Are Genetically and Hormonally
Endowed
To Act from Both Perspectives.

Culture and Circumstances
Promote
One Perspective or the Other.

The Goal:
To Personally and Socially
Develop
ME/WE Perspective Balance.

Commentary

In the 96% of human history [300,000 years] when humans lived in bands and tribes, they mostly achieved balance in the use of the ME and WE perspectives.

About 10,000 years ago humans began the process of developing more complex societies – settling in larger populations as agriculture and husbandry became the major sources of food. The majority of humans have lived in the complex state of society for only about the last 4,000 years, and during this time overall balance in the ME and WE orientations has been the exception. Instead, the ME orientation achieved dominance with an elite group in one form of autocracy or another controlling resources, accumulating wealth, and – with the help of institutionalized religion – ruling over the vast majority of much less privileged others. Only in the last four to five hundred years has the WE orientation achieved greater input in many modern complex societies creating a more balanced overall condition. In these societies, the polity and judiciary are structured to meet WE egalitarian principles while commitment to strong individual rights and a capitalistic economy manifest the ME orientation. This more balanced condition has existed for a relatively short time period – not long enough to achieve true stability nationally or internationally. Throughout, the ME oriented forces favoring autocracy have been ever present and eager to reclaim dominance. Sustaining the equality and cooperation principles of the WE orientation is especially difficult in the modern societal context of huge national populations that are dispersed across large geographical areas and which often include an extensive diversity of races, ethnicities, languages, and religions.

Conservative forces of ME based autocracy are currently “on the ascent” in many modern representative democracies. Unfortunately, poorly informed citizenries commonly fail to appreciate how fragile and vulnerable the egalitarian principles in their governments are. And now, this autocratic ME movement has been empowered in the United States – the home of modern democracy – in the form of the resurgent Trump administration’s effort to implement the Heritage Foundation’s Project 2025. This “Project” details a path to greatly enhanced executive power giving the President and his associates the ability to control the other branches of government as well as the media – in other words a plan to enhance the “new” ME oriented government structures and return to autocracy.

Complex society is itself an experiment in the overall human adventure, and complex societies that are more balanced with respect to the input of the ME

and the WE orientations are currently under significant threat. If we do not want for most of us to become suppressed peasants again, it is time to wake up and renounce the misinformation and complacency that currently prevails and imperils so many of our better balanced ME and WE democratic countries.

#27 "Individual and Communal Values in Human Societies," 2021.

Introduction

Many social conservatives assert that individualism [individual values,] is the dominant human social perspective at all scales. To support this claim, they point to the necessity for individuals and groups to struggle against the competitive forces of nature and other groups to assure their survival. Many social progressives assert that socialism [communal values] is – or should be – the dominant human social perspective at all scales. To support this claim, they point to the fact that humans only survive in groups, and each individual's contribution to the welfare of the group is the basis for both the individual's and the group's survival. Let's examine how these two perspectives play out in what we know about the history of human society.

The Base State of Human Societies - 96.4% of Human History

Human societies have always recognized both communal/cooperative values and individual/competitive values. However, during the 96.4% of human history [289,200 of 300,000 years] when modern humans have lived in bands and tribes, communal values have reigned under normal circumstances. The talents and skills of individuals in these smaller scale societies as elders, hunters, gatherers, warriors, medicine specialists, etc. are celebrated for the benefits they produce for the group. But, individuals are strongly discouraged from accumulating wealth, power and privilege for themselves. So, in these smaller societies of bands [30-50 individuals] and tribes [150-400 individuals] where members a) know one another personally and intimately over long periods of time, b) cooperate and share virtually all resources with one another, and c) depend on one another for their well-being and security, the progressive perspective is more accurate – the basic social organizational state of humanity for the vast majority of its history has been socialistic in nature.

However, it is also the case that relations between tribes and even between bands in difficult times can become very competitive with these tribes and bands operating in terms of their exclusive self interests – individual values at the inter-band or tribal level trumping communal values. Under these circumstances, the perspective of the social conservatives is more accurate!

So, through most of human history whether communal or individual values dominate in smaller societies depends on the relative size of the interacting groups and whether the groups – of whatever size – are under stress to meet the needs of their members. Both progressive and conservative views apply.

The General Principle as Societies Become Complex

When human societies increase significantly in size, and when these societies withdraw from their nomadic hunter-gather lifestyle and concentrate in settled communities – relying on agriculture and animal husbandry to supply their basic needs, social relations generally become increasingly more impersonal, the sense of obligation to others and the ability to rely upon others weakens, cooperation among individuals and groups diminishes, competition increases, and individualistic/self-interested values [Me culture] escalate and come to dominate communal/cooperative values [We culture]. As complex societies develop, this is the default condition and challenge that they all confront – the shift from communal values toward individualistic values.

How do these larger complex societies associated with the "civilized" state [city states, states, nations, and empires] deal with this challenging situation?

The First Stage Complex Society Response - 3.5% of Human History

To overcome the loss of personal relations which support communal values, larger size human societies create 1) a more and more highly differentiated social structure resulting in relatively fixed social classes, 2) a formal belief system and religious institution that supports the division of the citizens into these different classes with different rights, privileges, and responsibilities, and 3) a separate bureaucratic class that provides for the basic needs and security of the common citizens while it services the special rights, privileges and desires of the elite. In adopting these changes, emerging complex societies assure that the state is supported, but at the same time they diminish equality for most citizens while they magnify the individual rights and privileges of the elite few. Power, wealth and privilege come to reside with the nobility and religious leaders, with this elite class often being additionally supported by hereditary and even divine claims of privilege. Under this social structural and belief arrangement, the peasantry and slaves do the hard work and are kept in place by the belief system and bureaucratic enforcement agents. And a military force addresses external threats and "opportunities."

Noteworthy here is the fact that in this hierarchical system the elite as a class operates in terms of the pinnacle of self-aggrandizing, individualistic values.

And social, economic, political and judicial equality disappears on a virtually permanent basis for the great majority of citizens.

This is the pervasive social condition of complex societies in their first 10,500 years [between about 8,500 BC and 1800 AD] with the majority of humans living under complex society conditions only for about the last 3,000 years.

The Very Recent Representative Democracy Adjustment in Complex Society

The Last 350 years - .1% of Human History

At the end of the 18th century, a number of conditions were in place that favored change in the structure of complex societies: 1) the considerable expansion of more independent subgroups of craft, technology, and service workers, 2) the increased concentration of common citizens in cities rather than in the more easily controlled rural agricultural zone, 3) the shift to a religious belief system that did not directly support the elite, 4) the emergence of a more independent justice system focused on fairness, and 5) the over expansion of complex societies into large empires of global scale. In short, the elite were vulnerable to losing control of their populations. Under these conditions, the common citizens began to first escape and then rebel against the highly inequitable conditions that had prevailed in the preceding authoritarian version of complex society.

It is in this context that the representative democratic movement developed, flourished, and spread first in America and then across Europe. This movement included the establishment of an independent judicial system committed to equality and fairness under the law as determined by the people – not as prescribed by the elite. And, under the newly instituted constitutions following revolutions in many nations, political equality returned first for the average male adult citizen of property, then for the average male adult citizen generally, and finally for all male and female adult citizens. The broad based success of this movement in many complex societies meant that communal values received a very significant boost in importance with the average citizen participating in and enthusiastically supporting government. Common man nationalism replaced the previous conscripted version of support for the nation under authoritarian rule!

What happens with respect to individual values in this context? In spite of major gains in the political and judicial realms that support equality and communal values, impersonal social relations – which restrain cooperation and sharing, remain the social norm. And a rapidly expanding and competitive economy rewards the most successful individuals and subgroups. Free enterprise and the financial industry that arises and supports it exist as major promoters of

individualistic values at both the individual and emerging corporate levels. So, overall, modern complex societies that adopt and sustain representative democratic governments evolve to support equality and communal values in their political and judicial institutions while they support personal gain and individualistic values in their capitalist economic institutions.

Politically, progressives tend to support government policies and laws that support egalitarian and communal values, while conservatives tend to support government policies and laws that favor individual/corporate gain and individual values. When these perspectives and their input in the governments of complex societies remain in balance, the results are generally constructive. But these two perspectives and the political parties that support them are constantly competing for increased influence. When the progressive perspective dominates, it can suppress economic activity in the pursuit of equality [public ownership and high taxation]; and when the conservative perspective dominates it can undermine the political and judicial processes by buying off legislative and judicial representation [high financial support for campaigns and PACs].

This is the relatively new, fragile, and dynamic situation that exists within democratic nations. But currently, among nations, the progressive perspective is much weaker and the conservative perspective is much stronger. The result is that the nations of the world are more competitive than they are cooperative – each pursuing its own self-interests rather than the benefits of the collective community of nations. This imbalance fosters conflicts and reduces the ability of nations to address and resolve global scale issues and challenges. And at the present time {2021}, it is global scale challenges that are most pressing and important for humanity as a whole. If these challenges are left unattended, they may well undermine the survival of complex democratic societies as the basis for the modern civilized state of humanity. To address this problem, what is needed is for the nations of the world to commit to an empowered and democratic global government. Currently, the conservative perspective, which emphasizes national self-interest – individualism at the national level, is blocking the path to this necessary level of global integration and cooperation.

Conclusion

In general, complex society remains a test case in terms of the long history of human societies. In complex society's last phase, which is much newer yet and in its very initial period of being tested, it has evolved from a conservative condition of gross inequality under authoritarian rule to a more balanced condition of progressive, communal, equality under a democratic polity combined with a conservative, individualistic, capitalistic economy.

Humanity in the civilized state of complex society does not have thousands of years to determine first, whether at the national level it can maintain balance between the forces of conservatism [Me Culture] and progressivism [We Culture] and second, whether it will commit to implementing a parallel system of balance at the global scale. Unfortunately, humanity understands neither its history when it comes to the expression of individual and communal values at the societal scale nor the serious perils it faces for its future if it is unable to "get it right" on this matter at both the national and global levels.

#28 "The Integration/Unification Trend in Human Societies: The Evidence and the Implications," 2012.

Introduction

Fundamentally there are in reality two opposing and alternating forces – joining together and tearing apart, or integration and dis-integration, or creation and destruction, or order and disorder, or aggregation [accumulation] and separation [dispersal]. Whether in shorter or longer time frames, all phenomena cycle through these phases. From the Multiverse, to our Universe, to galaxies, to solar systems, to planets, to plant and animal species, to cells, to atoms, to quarks, all participate in this overall dynamic. Depending on the timeframe and/or scope of our consideration, the forces for integration or the forces for disintegration may be more influential – even decidedly dominant. But overall, in the truly big picture these two forces seem to be mostly balanced. Moreover, at the most essential level, the elements that are freed in the destruction of one phenomenon become the seeds of creation for other phenomena.

Within the framework of these fundamental forces, what has been discovered about the material make-up of the Universe? Standard theory in physics posits that all energetic aspects of the Universe originate in the Big Bang with all material components emerging first in the instants after the Big Bang and in the further processes of star creation and of supernova explosion. All of the 100+ billion galaxies, all of the average 200 billion+ solar systems in each of these galaxies, all of the trillions of planets and moons surrounding the star[s] in these solar systems, all of the debris belts of asteroids and comets that surround and roam these planetary systems, and all of the dust, gas, asteroids, comets and planetary size objects that are present in the space within galaxies are composed of these common elements. So, the basic ingredients of the Earth are the shared ingredients of the Universe. Moreover, the water of life on Earth

is now thought to have come to Earth as a result of huge numbers of collisions with water bearing asteroids and comets – especially in the last two thirds of Earth's four and a half billion year development. And we have discovered that at least the elements of organic life [amino acids] are present in asteroids and comets and that they can survive at least some of these planetary collisions, with the possibility that even DNA and its ilk may be common to the Universe as a whole. Helping us to release our assumption of our centrality and uniqueness in the universe, astrophysicists now estimate that in our Milky Way galaxy alone there are probably at least 500,000,000 rocky planets positioned in their solar systems similarly to Earth with the likelihood that they also have the ability to support life from water dominated ecologies. This, not to mention what may be at least an equal number of habitable moons orbiting some of these planets.

More than 70% of what fills the universe is energy in various forms. And since energy is everywhere, all the time – just present in different concentrations, it constitutes an immaterial web that permeates the whole and connects throughout to the point of all apparent "things" ultimately being one entity. In very many ways, physics, astrophysics and cosmology point to the fundamental ways in which all parts of the Universe, including its organic life forms, are connected and share in one integrated overall system. The forces of creation and destruction are the dynamic norm in this universe of essential material and energy based interconnectedness. Humans are not separate or unique; they are just part of the shared identity of the cosmos. We begin, exist, and end in this shared and fundamentally interconnected state.

In this overall dynamic, humans on Earth importantly exist in the period of our solar system's evolution when overall greater order and integration have been favored and when conditions have greatly stabilized since the formative period of constant bombardment as the Earth and the rest of the planetary system coalesced. So, in spite of the substantial threats over the very long term that really do exist to this condition of relative order and stasis, humans on Earth exist within the larger trend toward greater solar system and planetary integration. It is within this context favoring order and integration that human societies have developed.

So, in the big picture, humans share both in the integration – disintegration dynamic and in their material make-up with all the rest of the Universe, and they have developed within a solar and planetary system that in recent geological time favors order and integration over disorder and disintegration. Now we can look to see if this overall surrounding planetary system trend corresponds to the dominant orientation in the development of human groups. Since humans exist

in a vastly more limited time frame and a more specific ecology, what are minor changes in the planetary dynamic can have major consequences for humanity.

The Evidence for the Overall Trend Toward Human Social Integration

First, consider the situation for hominids in the period just prior to the emergence of modern humans [Homo sapiens sapiens] as a species. In the ebb and flow of glacial periods together with the effects of various and common geological upheavals, the archeological record in the time predating about 200,000 years ago indicates that human species of several varieties went through a period of great stress during which all varieties were severely reduced in both numbers and distribution – to the point where most hominids experienced complete extinction. Modern humans [together with Neanderthals] were the only survivors, and they were very small in number and very localized in east central Africa. Since that time, the Earth has entered a temperate period of extraordinary climatic and geological calm [stasis favoring integration] during which modern humans have flourished and spread globally – especially in the last 50,000 years. So, having been severely depleted previously, modern humans have enjoyed to the present a surrounding ecological and climatic condition that favors both proliferation and integration.

Second, consider human genetics. Through the period of disintegration for hominid species, modern humans were reduced in numbers to a group of only a few thousand members. This very small and localized group constitutes the gene pool for all modern humans. Over the 200,000 years since that time [an extraordinarily short period in evolutionary terms], human groups have become minimally differentiated genetically into a few races, all of whom share at least 99.4% of their genetic make-up. Whatever their surface differences may be, at the genetic level humans are essentially identical – genetically interconnected. And in the modern world, humans from different groups across the globe relate and propagate mixing the genetic make up of humanity and further reducing any tendency to differentiation that occurred previously. The modern trend, then, starting from virtual genetic identity, is toward greater human genetic integration.

Third, consider the nature of social development among human groups over the period of modern human existence. Human groups were initially limited to nomadic bands mostly made up of extended family members – clans. From very small groups of this kind, humans slowly came together first as tribes, then as chiefdoms, then as tribal confederations, then as settled city states, then as nations, then as empires, and now as international confederations that may

unify further to actually become the “United Nations.” With each of these moves, human social organization has become more complex with relationships becoming more and more formalized and institutions arising to assure that security and social control are maintained [law, law enforcement, military, justice, taxation, regulation]. The benefits of increased complexity have brought humans the civilized condition with its allowance for specialization and technological development, which have themselves progressed geometrically.

Interestingly, in general, we can observe that there is a match between this integrative social trend in the direction of complexity and what we can refer to as the liberal human perspective, which supports greater inclusiveness [communal and cooperative values at the social and ecological levels]. By contrast, the trend to maintain and celebrate separateness [individual and competitive/exploitative values at the social and natural resource levels] corresponds to the conservative human perspective of exclusiveness [the force holding back or reversing further integration].

Of course in more limited time frames and more immediate contexts, the overall trend toward increased human social integration may be less obvious with the pendulum seeming to swing more or less equally from liberal to conservative positions. But if we look long-term over the period of modern human florescence, we discover that the result of most oscillations – both large and small – has been a gradual but steady shift in the liberal, more integrative and socially inclusive direction.

Fourth, consider the primary need of mature humans to be secure in their efforts to acquire mates, to raise their offspring, and to engage in trade. To assure genetic diversity, mature humans must find mates outside of their own extended family groups – bands. This biological necessity is the primary driver in motivating relations among the simplest of human groups. Raiding is one such means to provide for this need, but it carries with it high risk for injury or loss of life. Arrangements/Understandings among bands to allow for contact and the opportunity for potential mates to locate one another or to be selected is a safer option. So, humans adopted such arrangements as the norm, for the most part. Special occasions, often ones also involving opportunities for trade – another primary driver for connections across simple groups, became traditionalized, and the only way for these activities to occur was for all parties to agree to security for all participants.

Humans inherited from earlier primates the awareness that their best source of security lay in depending on the increased protection that the group could provide, rather than struggling to survive as individuals. The need for security beyond the domain of the band in order to allow for the lengthy raising of offspring is another essential motivation for human groups to seek secure

relations – at least with contiguous groups – their "neighbors." To serve three primary functions – locating mates, raising children, and engaging in trade, security was a necessity and neighboring human groups were encouraged thereby to cooperate. Of course, warfare was always a possibility if direct competition for immediate territorial resources arose. But if the mutual benefits from cooperation sustained, then the relations between groups could broaden and further integration could occur – the coalescing of bands into tribes. From this opening consolidation to tribes, confederations and alliances of all types follow, providing a secure context for interaction and the option for potential larger scale societal integration. As we have seen in the section above [#3], ever increasing social integration is exactly what has occurred in the development of complex societies – at least to the present.

Fifth, consider political developments as the trend toward social complexity has proceeded. In bands and tribes, roles are differentiated across the sexes and age groups, but equality among adult members prevails with decisions being made with respect for the input of all. As complexity increases further, the age of male domination and class distinctions arises first with chiefs and eventually with kings/priests and their ilk holding hereditary office while the rest of society is carved up into castes/classes of descending rights and privileges. During this period of social hierarchy, inequality reigned in complex society, and equality was sacrificed in behalf of the benefits of complexity.

In the modern period, equality has been returning led in the political realm by the slow spread of representative democracy across the complex societies of the world. Especially in the last 150 years slavery, the caste system, and much of the class system have been rejected by most societies. In addition, nearly all forms of discrimination – by race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, etc. have been discarded by most developed societies. While discrimination continues to exist in many less developed societies and while it can be perpetuated by some economic conditions [plutocracy under free enterprise], the overall trend toward equality among all people of all "types" is clear. The benefits of social complexity are now positioned to be shared by most citizens of the world, resulting in integration at a much greater scale of inclusiveness.

With the negative consequences and the rejection in the last century of attempts by individual nations to dominate all other nations [two World Wars and the Cold War], it may be the case that nations are now ready to respect the diversity of one another [the ideal of the United Nations]. Political equality and respect across nations, in contrast to the pursuit of the exclusive self-interests of individual nations [the conservative view at the national level], are the prerequisites to support the cooperative and further integrative social process at the international level.

Sixth, consider economic developments within the trend toward ever-greater societal complexity. Trade among different human groups has existed from the time of bands and tribes. Initially such trade was relatively informal – a medium of occasional exchange to serve the mutual benefit of each party or group. As societies have become more complex and less self-sufficient, commercial exchange systems have been formalized with allied monetary and financial subsystems arising to facilitate commerce. We are now at the point where the international economy is one of the major drivers for further integration across nations.

The rules of the World Trade Organization now take precedence over the exclusionary commercial laws and regulations of individual nations. This is not to say that these rules are sufficiently qualified by other important social variables, but the effect of how these rules are positioned "forces" increased integration. At the regional level, consider the significance of the establishment of the European Union [EU] with its twenty seven member states [and still counting] and its reach deep into the nations of Eastern Europe. It is difficult to overstate the change in relationships that the EU represents since it draws together nations that have deep histories of grand, long, horrific conflicts, some of these very recent [WWI and WWII]. Interestingly, the recent Great Recession has highlighted the need for tighter, shared economic regulations within this union. While the EU is formed around sharing a single monetary system, it also has nascent judicial and political bodies that suggest the potential for future unification in other major institutions. What has been happening in Europe in the last twenty years demonstrates a clear trend in the direction of societal unification and suggests a similar direction for other possible regional consortiums. In spite of its competitive basis, over time regulated capitalism is promoting integration across nations and even serving to slowly bring about a leveling of the economic standard of living across nations.

Seventh, consider the development of transportation. From hunter-gatherers using animal paths, to human trails, to horse drawn wheeled cart roads, to dug out canoes and skin covered kayaks, to sail boats, to steam powered trains and ships, to highways for automobiles, to airplanes, to missiles probing space, the extent, speed and number of ways human groups are connected by means of transportation have expanded exponentially with the development of complex society and the scientific and technological pursuits it now supports. In the multiple means for connection that they facilitate, transportation systems are a very significant integrative force within and across human societies. Together with the effects of modern economics [above] and communication systems [below], humans are nearing the point where global is the new local!

Eighth, consider the development of communications and information systems. As language developed within human bands, oral tradition became the basis for exchanging information and providing continuity for knowledge about society and the natural world upon which humans depend. Not until complex society arose did written language emerge, culminating in a phonetically based alphabet, which made sharing information across written languages much simpler. Written language greatly facilitated all of the other moves toward increased complexity and integration cited in this list. Knowledge now could be vastly expanded and housed in manuscript libraries, which could serve multiple groups across generations. With the invention of the printing press, the basic process for accumulating information and for sharing it among all the people of a language group became possible. The more modern inventions of the telegraph, telephone, radio, film and television served to vastly expand information dissemination.

Sharing information contributes fundamentally to promoting integration across groups. And the most recent development of various electronic media – able to almost instantaneously disseminate information via the Internet – has once again exponentially increased audio-visual communication of information among individuals and across the nations of the world. With the advent of what is called “social” media [Facebook, Twitter, etc.], it is now possible for individuals worldwide to be in nearly constant audio-visual contact at the most basic level of their every step and thought. At the electronic, virtual level, it is almost as if the citizens of the world now have the option to create their own instantaneous and collective global diary.

Cell phones and the like with GPS capability can now make the location and contact information of their users available covering most of the population of the developed and developing world. Now, employing the Internet, scientists from across the globe can and do cooperate as teams in the investigation of key issues, vastly speeding up the progress that science is able to make in reaching results. And the exponential advance in the reporting of these scientific results makes progress in the practical application of this knowledge that much more rapid. Soon to be implemented nanotechnology, combined with micro implants and mini-drones, will have the ability to connect humans down to the cellular and even the genetic levels. When all of these means of information connection are assembled into one system, it becomes possible to envision for the first time a future for global humanity as a single organism. That condition would represent the ultimate potential stage in the integration of humankind.

As complex societies have aggregated to the present, the entire history of the development of human communication systems has been one of humans becoming ever more connected through more and more immediately shared

information. Like all other technological developments, the level of information and the degree of connection that results from it can be managed to the benefit or detriment of humankind. By the nature of their perspective, conservatives tend to be very reticent about where these information developments can lead humankind – government intrusion into individual privacy and excessive control over the lives of its citizens. On the other hand, from the liberal perspective, the more connected humans are, the more immediate can be the social benefits of their contributions, the greater can be their collective security, and the less they will be able to justify gross inequality and self-serving aggressive activities, which lead to conflict and promote disintegration at all levels.

Ninth, consider the development of modern medical systems. All humans are concerned about their health and want to minimize the ill effects of health challenges. From traditional healers and herbal remedies, to midwives, to scientific medicine with its antibiotics, vaccines, and sophisticated surgical and imaging capabilities as practiced in the special environments of clinics and hospitals, medical understanding and treatment have made huge advances as human groups have become more complex. And whatever may be the differences among human groups, access to the means to sustain health and to treat illness and injury are universally appreciated and sought [e.g. Doctors Without Borders]. So, the treatment options of modern medicine reach through the differences among human groups and both promote understanding and increase connections. Greater integration among groups is one of the inherent consequences.

Tenth, consider the development of universal public education with its requirement to meet the standards of an approved curriculum. Education was initially an informal process of learning the ways of one's parents and elders by watching and doing. As societies increased in complexity and roles became more specialized, apprenticeship systems emerged for the average person while the elite had access to more formal education in special schools, which evolved to become private and then public colleges and universities. It was not until the 19th century that formal education arose for the masses – public education in separate schools. And ever since, the period of time devoted to this separate formal education has increased to the point where professional educations now commonly extend into early mid-life.

Secular education at all levels stretches human awareness and understanding and hones the mental and social skills needed for humans to participate productively in modern socio-economic and political environments, which are changing at an ever increasing rate. Preparing not just for what currently exists but also for constantly expected changes means that humans

have had to become more resilient and less inclined to regard the status quo as the way things ought to be. Forced to engage change as a positive constant, modern humans have to remain open-minded, always considering an ever broadening field of view – technologically, occupationally, geographically, and socially. Increased connectivity and integration among humans and across different groups are natural results of this process.

I have identified ten major areas where the history of human societal development reveals a clear trend in the direction of increasing integration. There no doubt are others. Individually the evidence in each of these areas is significant, but collectively, I suggest that it approaches "proof." And I have pointed to the conditions of the surrounding planetary, geological, ecological and climatic systems, which support this integrative societal trend. Now we can consider countervailing factors.

The Factors that Oppose the Trend Toward Increased Social Integration

In geological time frames, there are many events that have the potential to threaten the integrative societal trend of humankind. The following are three major examples:

First, a very large solar coronal mass ejection directed at Earth could severely disrupt the Earth's magnetic shield, altering fundamental conditions on Earth that support complex societies, even all of human life. Mass ejections directed toward Earth occur on average about every 500 years, and at a minimum our satellites and the electrical grid that we have come to depend upon over the last 150 years could be wiped out.

Second, a supervolcano could send the Earth into decades of darkness and glacial conditions that would so reduce habitable and arable land that the human population would be severely reduced and the basis for most, if not all, complex societies undermined. Considering its average 630,000 year cycle of eruption, the supervolcano in the Yellowstone basin is due and has been showing the signs of initial swelling for some time now!

Third, a large asteroid or comet could collide with Earth resulting in continental, or even global, conflagration followed in lesser cases by glacial winter. Depending on the magnitude of the impact, human societies could be severely reduced in numbers and complexity, even to the point of human extinction.

Humans cannot control these kinds of events, and they are rare, but they have occurred in the geological past, and they have the potential to so disrupt complex society that humans are greatly reduced in numbers and geographical spread to the point of returning to tribal conditions or even meeting with extinction. In the broadest sense, it is these kinds of planetary and interplanetary events that create the outer frame for the window of opportunity for humans as a species on Earth. 200,000 years of modern human development is a relatively short period in relation to the cycles that bring these kinds of events to impinge on Earth, but if humans expect to persist long-term on the planet, they will encounter events beyond their control with the significant threat levels of the kind just identified.

There are other factors that humans exercise more control over that can counter the dominant trend toward greater human societal integration. The following are some of the more important:

First, consider the effects of climate change. There are many consequences of global warming that collectively can very negatively impact human societies. One example is sea level rise. The global human population is concentrated along the continental coasts, and a great many of these coastal areas are very vulnerable to ocean rise. If significant melting occurs of the world's mountain glaciers [most importantly of the Himalayas] and of the East and West Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets, some projections suggest that sea level rise could amount to as much as 163 feet by the end of the 21st century. While most models suggest that this is an extreme projection, it is also true that most of our models have proven to be consistently far too conservative in their projections when judging the escalating rate of ice melting and sea level rise over even recent short time periods.

Climate change can displace billions of humans with potential catastrophic effects due to sea level rise. It can also greatly reduce the world food supply due to loss of productivity on land and in the oceans with devastating consequences. And it can even activate geological tectonic upheaval as the oceans rise and pressure from massive mile deep ice sheets is released. Clearly the multiple potential consequences of climate change can put humans under such strain that many complex societies could destabilize, disintegrate, and revert to feudal or tribal conditions.

Second, consider the effects of traditional warfare and potential nuclear catastrophe. From the time of human bands, humans have engaged in territorial conflicts over access to resources. As a result of these conflicts, humans in different groups have been pushed around and spread over the

globe to the point where viable new territory to occupy no longer exists. When territory is limited or when groups refuse to be moved, conflicts become warfare and warfare itself can be ongoing, if most often periodic. Because human cultural memory is long lived, when groups attempt to dominate other groups and take over their resources and territory, the resentments and desire for liberation by the conquered tend to run deep and long. Over time, conquerors who act in a benign fashion toward the defeated can encourage assimilation, but in the much more traditional outcome of warfare, the defeated are demeaned and subjugated with the spoils belonging to the victors. Traditional warfare causes the resentments of the conquered to fester while they await the opportunity to rebel and reverse the group fortunes.

Forced consolidation of groups through warfare is a constant source of tension and potential social disintegration. For the most part, to be successful in the long term, consolidation of human groups at any scale must be voluntary with benefits flowing more of less equally to all parties. Agreements that allow for mutual benefit are the basis for bands and tribes becoming federations and eventually nations, and it is the mode that must apply if a true United Nations is to be achieved. Traditional warfare is the ultimate outcome of the conservative, self-interested, competitive perspective, and its overall effect is disintegrative.

In the modern era, with the potential spread of weapons of mass destruction to terrorist groups, to countries with unstable governments, or to governments under the control of fundamentalist religious leaders with apocalyptic aspirations, attacks can occur that could rather easily escalate to involve multiple nuclear detonations. If these explosions rise to the level of about fifteen average hydrogen bombs, the following global devastation in the form of a radioactive nuclear winter could so decimate human societies that they devolve into whatever minimal states make it possible for some human groups to survive. Clearly, the technology of warfare has evolved to far surpass the ability of human societies to control their capacity for self-annihilating forms of aggressive behavior.

Third, consider the effects of competing major religions. The belief systems of our major religions appeal to supernatural causation to explain human existence and human destiny. And the fundamentalist faithful within these religions, who have grown in their influence in recent years, hold that their beliefs contain the exclusive and absolute truth with respect to these fundamental issues. For these people, many of the most essential discoveries of modern science constitute heresy, and scientists along with believers in any other religion are regarded as infidels or heretics and as appropriate targets for extermination. While religions support cooperative social behavior among their believers, to the extent that these same religions, whether fundamentalist or not, are by their

very absolutist nature sources of intolerance, they threaten respect and limit connections among societies. As such they are a source that significantly restrains continued societal integration.

Fortunately, there is a way to avoid the negative influence of religions on further human integration. A spiritual option exists as an alternative. And this alternative honors the meaningfulness of the experience of unification at the core of all religions, allows for the importance of the subjective dimension of reality, and recognizes the intuitive mental capabilities of humans as the avenue to subjective awareness. The spiritual perspective allows for all of this without having to rely on any literalist/absolutist dogma, which is the source of the grave negative effects of religion. Whether humans, many of whom live with a cell phone in one hand and a 12th century worldview ensconced in their minds, will become enlightened enough to adopt this spiritual option is not at all clear.

Fourth, consider the potential effects of overpopulation. Some ecologists calculate that the maximum sustainable carrying capacity for humans on Earth is about one billion people. Greater than one billion humans threatens the integrity of the ecosystem and has the consequence of depleting the natural resources upon which humans and the other components of the system depend. With a world population now at seven billion and counting, clearly humans have reproduced to the point of greatly exceeding the proposed maximum – even if that number is too low. Some ecologists claim that especially during the 20th century we began to see the prelude to the eventual collapse of the existing global ecosystem. How humans use natural resources and the number of humans making demands on these resources are the root causes of these negative effects.

Humans can be too successful in reproducing and in living lengthy lives, and like rodents the human boom can lead to over utilization of resources as well as increased species density, which invite disease pandemics with species bust as a probable result. In the case of humanity, the social disintegration of our complex societies is likely to be a consequence of such a “bust.”

Fifth, consider the effects of allowing a separate adolescent subculture to arise in modern complex societies and then promoting violent fantasies as a pervasive element within this subculture. Humans have lived in simple societies for 95% of their history, and in these cultures young adults are closely supervised by adults as they make the final moves rather quickly to physical and social maturity. Even in most complex cultures up to the 19th century young adults oriented to adults as they learned the skills necessary to survive as mature adults. With the advent of universal education, children and young adults were separated from parents and from the world of adults for the

purposes of society providing a “general” education. The concept of childhood and adolescence as separate periods in human development rose to prominence during this time. In the last century, this period of separation for the purposes of preparation has grown in magnitude to the point now where a professional level education may not end until early mid-life. Even a basic public education has expanded from the sixth grade to tenth grade to the twelfth grade – from 12 to 18 year olds.

As the adolescent period emerged and especially as it has grown to include high school and college age young adults, a separate adolescent subculture has arisen, a subculture over which parents and adults have mostly taken a permissive stance. In limbo as to their social status, these adolescents have been allowed to define their own world with its own dress, arts and activities often in direct protest of adult social norms and standards. The result is that for long periods many adolescents are being acculturated away from rather than toward and into adult society. While our separate educational setting is intended to produce young adults with the knowledge and skills to enter adult society, its lengthy separateness has encouraged the growth of a counter [or at least conflicted] culture of youth. This situation is sociologically dysfunctional, and it runs counter both to the need to integrate young adults into adult society in any human group and to the larger integration trend among human societies.

Within the relatively recent emergence of an adolescent subculture – counter culture, one of the outstanding features has been the growth of the involvement of adolescents in violent fantasies. Some would claim that fictional violence is an effective way to release stress and negative thoughts and emotions so these feelings are not played out in real life [catharsis]. To a point this may be a legitimate idea. It is all a matter of degree. But what we have seen over the last century in particular is the emergence of an entire dimension of the corporate media [music, film and video and computer games] arising to make billions of dollars by feeding the rebellious inclinations of adolescents.

Unfortunately, adolescents are impressionable with minds that we now know do not fully mature until humans are in their mid-twenties. A constant stream of gratuitous violence served up to these adolescents in ever more extreme and vivid forms goes way beyond any release function. In the main such fantasies model violent behavior as the way to “successfully” address and resolve challenges among humans. At one time, violence in myth and story required the imagination of the audience to fill in the scene, and narrative violence was rarely graphic in its description. Now, violence is at the center of a fully filled audio-visual encounter with a virtual reality. It is way beyond just graphic; it is all consuming, participatory, and non-stop. To be declared the “winner,” the “player” must enter the game fantasy as a participant with the goal

of decimating all iterations of the opponent that appear. And these opponents are very often “other” humans. Guns and their ilk are the only tools available, and violent actions are the only choice, not the choice of last resort. And many adolescents now play these kinds of violent fantasy games for hours every day!

As adolescents have been exposed for longer and longer periods to ever more intensely violent and vivid fantasies, what we see is an evolution in the same direction in adult entertainments. In a previous era, the sport of boxing was the most violent of sports with staged “professional” wrestling simulating more violent interactions, but these sports have morphed in the present to become extreme cage fighting where injury is common. It seems that as the level of fantasy violence escalates in adolescence, it seeps over into the increase in the violence of adult sports and entertainments [consider raves, adult “action” films and the lyrics of much hip-hop music!]. When we make guns the “answer” in pervasive adolescent fantasies, it should come as no surprise that when adults with this foundational background find themselves under emotional stress and duress, they resort to guns as the violent means to express their rage.

Violence among modern humans in all of its forms represents a failure to communicate, investigate, negotiate, and compromise in behalf of reaching a solution to a real life challenge. This fact of life is entirely bypassed in the violent fantasies served up by the corporate media to adolescents and now to adults. And in their more and more separate culture, many of our adolescents are spending years devouring these extreme fantasies. The development of this major fantasy trend runs entirely counter to all of the ingredients necessary to support adult human social integration, and ironically this development has arisen most dramatically in exactly the same time frame that the rate of societal integration itself has increased. Adult humans must decide whether they will allow a separate and rogue adolescent culture fed by these violent fantasies to persist and pose a disintegrative effect on adult complex societies.

Sixth, consider the recent rise of worldwide plutocracy. Throughout human history, there have been periods when wealth has been commandeered by a few at the top. In the long period of early civilizations, plutocracy was common in elite dominated dukedoms, kingships, empires, and the like. Revolution has tended to level the economic playing field as it did in the eighteenth century in Europe and America. And in the modern era, democratic government has often suppressed the split between the haves and have-nots through the instruments of progressive taxation and of trust busting. The Gilded Age of industrial plutocracy in the West in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was halted by these government-based actions to redistribute wealth and limit

power. And worldwide, the Great Depression was also a great economic leveler.

In all human societies, a moderate degree of economic inequality is a reasonable reflection of differences in responsibility, intelligence, persistence, and competitive excellence – for which reward is justified at the individual [or corporate] level. A moderate differential has been proposed as executive pay being up to fifteen times that of a skilled worker in the same field. Consider that it is not unusual today for executive compensation – combining income, stock options and bonuses – to be one thousand times the pay of that skilled factory worker. A truly moderate degree of economic inequality can reasonably encourage the average person or business to develop the same capabilities as the more successful and aspire to improve their position in the group – while still contributing to the advancement and viability of the group as a whole. But extreme inequality in all of its forms and at all levels works against social integration by fostering exclusiveness rather than inclusiveness. And it creates such a degree of separation between the haves and have-nots that there is no basis for aspiration on the part of the have-nots. Moreover, in these extreme conditions of plutocracy, the haves acquire so much economic power that they can have the ability to exert undue influence in the affairs of the government, democratic or not, and as a consequence arrange for self-serving laws to be enacted that help to protect and perpetuate their position of privilege. This amounts to the first step in resurrecting oligarchy as the social structure in a hierarchical, class based society.

Currently, in spite of the Great Recession, we are in another surge toward plutocracy brought about by the advent of the world economy and the success of conservative forces to reduce the tax obligations of the wealthy. With the rich enjoying much reduced maximum income and inheritance tax rates, with the ability of the haves to focus the bulk of their wealth in investments where an even lower tax rate applies [capital gains], and with the good fortune of the rich to be able to move their capital around to benefit maximally from the opportunities that arise in the world economy, the haves have prospered enormously while the economic position of the average citizen and of the middle class in general has mostly stagnated. As Chrystia Freeland indicates in her book, Plutocrats [2012], in 2005 the wealth of just two individuals [Bill Gates and Warren Buffett] was equal to the total wealth of the bottom 40% of the American population – 120 million people!

The question currently before the 98+%, who are not of plutocratic status, is whether they will once again require their government to develop and implement the policies necessary to level the economic playing field. Both sustaining the existing level of social integration in western societies and achieving further integration among nations depend upon this occurring.

Seventh, consider the effects of the conservative socio-economic and political perspective. This perspective is ever present in human societies, and it is needed to restrain what can be the excessive effects of the liberal perspective. It is in the dynamic interchange between the conservative and liberal perspectives that humans remain creative and adaptive. When the input of these two perspectives are properly balanced, humans are able to appreciate the past and the important contribution individuals and individual values make to human success [essentials of the conservative view], while humans are also able to look to a better future and respect the need to support cooperation, mutual benefit and communal values [essentials of the liberal view].

As noted earlier, the overall history of modern humans is one that has favored the liberal perspective, a fact that corresponds to the gradual increase in social integration among human groups. I have also noted that this trend is favored by a period of relatively benign surrounding planetary ecology and geology. And to the extent that humans can in the shorter term expect these surrounding conditions to persist [short term likely being the next few thousand years], support for this overall liberal trend and increased societal integration/unification is justified.

Conservative forces at all times work against this trend and restrain and reverse it when their influence is sufficient. If the surrounding ecological, geological or cosmological context becomes more challenging, the conservative perspective favoring competition, individual self-interest and biological survival may need to dominate. As we have seen, when it comes to human induced climate change and overpopulation, humans may themselves so negatively affect their climate and ecology that they negate the benign ecological conditions that currently favor the liberal integrative perspective.

Humankind must decide whether its window of species opportunity is wide enough to accommodate the current strength of the conservative viewpoint and the fact that this perspective is responsible in large measure for slowing progress in the integrative social direction.

Above, I have identified ten major sources or potential sources that restrain social integration. There no doubt are more. But in spite of all these countervailing forces, the overall trend is still clear – social integration has dominated and continues to dominate, even if it is at risk for a lengthy future.

Summary and Conclusion

Integration and disintegration are the fundamental dynamic forces of the universe. Among human groups these two forces are reflected in two opposing

social viewpoints – the liberal perspective favoring greater commonality, inclusiveness, cooperation, and integration and the conservative perspective favoring greater individuality, exclusiveness, competition, and separation. These two perspectives are both essential in human societies, and they exist in dynamic tension at all levels from individuals to communities to nations. One or the other of these perspectives is favored or not depending on the nature of the cultural situation as well as the surrounding ecological, geological, and cosmological conditions. Presently – meaning the last 200,000 years and especially the last 10,000 years, the evidence points to the fact that these surrounding "natural" conditions have favored increased integration among human groups – support for the liberal perspective. Developments in genetics, transportation, communication, medical treatment, education, and especially in social, political, and economic institutions all testify to the pervasive integrative trend among human groups as well as to the fact that the overall rate of this trend has been rising – especially in the last 200 years.

The surrounding natural conditions, which have been supportive of integration, can change, though the probability of such change when left to the planetary system itself is relatively low. But humans have now reached the point where in multiple ways they have impacted, and have the ability to further impact, the planetary system itself – especially the ecological and climatic domains – to such a degree that that system ceases to support integration and reverses to favor complex societal disintegration. If these changes occur and humans find themselves in a more challenging planetary context, then the conservative perspective, which is allied with this dis-integrative orientation [e.g. in extreme forms – militias and survivalists] may appropriately come to dominate. There are some significant implications for the fate of humanity if this situation arises.

Like the dinosaurs and all other species on Earth – especially complex species, humans have a limited window of opportunity in the overall evolutionary context. As a very complex, but very young, species, modern humans have been favored to flourish and to develop into ever more complex and interconnected societies – now looking at the option to achieve global social unification. For the most part humans now control their own open window. But if they fail to address the ecological impacts of their own success as well as the restraining influence of the conservative perspective – and the other major dis-integrative influences that it supports, their window may well close.

We know that eventually humans will face the severe disintegrative effects of supervolcanos, glaciation, and the like, and that the planetary calm, which has opened the window for humans to propagate and develop social complexity, will

end. And in the very long term, we know that conditions on Earth will change dramatically – to the point where Earth will no longer support humans, or most other current life forms [as Earth trends toward Mars like conditions]. Given these circumstances, the only option for long-term human survival as a species is for humankind to unify globally while the conditions still favor it. It is only in the context of such overall social unification that humans can then collectively commit to the global scale actions that are required to achieve two critical goals: first, to reverse the effects of the negative ecological and climatic impacts that humans have themselves created; and second, to curtail the multiple restraining effects of the conservative perspective and thereby eliminate the option for inter-societal conflict due to socio-political and religious differences. If humans can achieve these two consequences under unification, then they can set the stage to address other major negative influences – overpopulation, pandemics, weapons of mass destruction, adolescent separation and violent fantasies, etc. If humans can sustain these stable conditions under this social unification umbrella for the long term, then they may have the opportunity to escape the confines of Earth and establish a presence on other habitable planets and moons before conditions on Earth will no longer support either complex society or the species itself.

Without global societal unification, the greatest likelihood is that the window of human species opportunity will close as humans continue to squabble as nations over limited resources until they have so dirtied their own “nest” that the consequences bring conservative forces to the fore and return humanity to feudal or tribal conditions. Driven back to simpler societies, it is doubtful that humans would have the opportunity for a second chance at development before their elimination as a result of some inevitable catastrophic planetary or cosmological event.

So, humanity has reached a true crossroads, a tipping point in its development. At this juncture, the fate of humankind may well be in the balance. Humans are the only species to be able to both recognize the critical nature of the situation that they are in and to address it before they lose the opportunity. The Choice is before humankind. And a decision as to how to proceed probably must be made by the end of the 21st century, if not sooner. Given the fact that the great majority of humans still share a 12th century worldview and are not even aware of the choice, or of the basis for it, or of the need to make a relatively prompt decision with respect to it, it is a tall order to think that humanity will achieve the position of being the only species on Earth to really do what it takes to secure a truly long-term destiny for itself. Short of humans being motivated in the direction of global social unification by fear of a threatening, alien species, it

seems most likely that the distant archeological record of the cosmos will read that humans became aware that they had the option, but that they were so mired down in their competitive, self-serving earthly affairs that they were not developed enough to take it – until it was too late or until they lost sight of it entirely.

#29 "Crisis of Cooperation," 2017.

{This is a long essay. I recommend reading the overview in the "Summary" and "Conclusion," and then return to the full document for the detailed discussion}

Two Basic Forces in All of Nature

Two forces are fundamental in all of nature, including the human social domain. From the cosmos to sub-atomic particles, from the United Nations to the single family, these forces apply universally. We name these forces in different ways within different subject areas: attraction and repulsion, aggregation and separation, positive and negative, contraction and expansion, unification and division, integration and disintegration, accumulating and dispersing, assembling and disassembling, putting together and taking apart, synthesizing and analyzing, accepting and rejecting, arriving and departing, approaching and withdrawing, collecting and scattering, cooperating and competing, etc. I have explored the nature of this fundamental unification – division force dynamic in a separate essay ["Two Forces in Reality"]; and I have discussed in another essay how this dynamic has played out to the present in the very long range development of human society ["The Integration Trend in Human Society"]. Both essays are available on my website: http://www.dynamic-humanism.com .

In this essay, I consider one expression of this basic force dynamic – the role of the competition – cooperation opposition in human social relations. I first discuss why the state of this competition – cooperation dynamic is critically important in the modern civilized context. I then consider the biological variables in humans upon which the cooperation – competition dynamic rests. Next, I assess several cultural variables that influence how this dynamic is managed to favor one orientation or the other. Finally, I consider the potential of genetic engineering to "improve" human biology so as to promote social cooperation. I will argue that in the context of modern complex, civilized society, culture must shift to considerably strengthen cooperation at the same time that it reduces the influence of competition if humanity in the civilized condition is to sustain and make progress in the face of its several, imminent and potentially grave, global challenges.

In this regard consider the following observation by Nobel Laureate Richard E. Smalley in his 2003 lecture, “The Top Ten Problems of Humanity for the Next 50 Years.” Here they are in Smalley's descending order of significance: energy, water, food, environment, poverty, terrorism and war, disease, education, democracy, and population. As a social scientist, I would contend that while the efforts to address these challenges separately or in concert are admirable, commitment to universal cooperation across all nations is a precondition if these efforts are to get off the ground and have a reasonable chance for success.

The Competition – Cooperation Dynamic in the Modern Civilized Context

As the dominant species worldwide with technology to assure this dominance, modern humans are very rarely the prey for other species. So, competition is no longer across species to humans. Humans have reached the point where their predatory behavior is mostly expressed between and among different human groups as they compete for resources. Access to resources is most often the underlying cause for competition, although race, ethnicity, religion and other cultural factors are often fronted as the source of these predatory activities across groups.

In the last two centuries, with the advent of modern medical science, the worldwide human population explosion has become the underlying driver for competition for limited resources among different human groups. The concomitant technological explosion, with all of its many benefits, has at the same time led to planet wide pollution, species degradation, and global warming that together threaten the viability of the resource base that supports this expanded human presence. Technology is also the source of hugely advanced competitive weapons, which, if detonated in sufficient numbers, can severely impact resources regionally, and potentially worldwide, and even blow the current civilized human state back to a condition of bands and tribes, if not all the way to extinction. When we add to this global scale, nuclear challenge the salvation-through-apocalypse motivation that two of the major world religions justify for their fundamentalist believers, the vulnerability of humanity rises yet another notch.

At the same time that science has put humanity on the verge of controlling its own biological evolution and of beginning the process of colonizing the cosmos, humanity is in a position to destroy these unprecedented opportunities due to the imminent state of its multiple, global vulnerabilities. And while these vulnerabilities are significant in themselves, their threat is magnified

exponentially due to the combination of a very short time frame available for addressing them and the excessive influence of the human competitive "instinct" in social relations, especially at national and international scales. Being able to adequately address these multiple, worldwide vulnerabilities in a timely manner is only likely to occur if humanity insists that a high degree of cooperation in social relations at all levels becomes an unconditional requirement.

Compared with other species, modern humans are a VERY new species on Earth, and humans need to keep in mind that most complex species that have evolved on the planet have flourished for a relatively limited time only to go extinct. Humanity is living in its window of opportunity, and that window can close at any time from forces beyond human control: geological or cosmological causes. It would be the height of folly for humanity to be the cause of its own demise by failing culturally to promote social cooperation and to restrain social competitiveness so that the major global challenges over which humans do have control can be resolved.

The civilized state of humanity is but a recently floated trial balloon – for most humans a 3,000 year old infant in the 200,000+ year history of this relatively "new" Homo Sapiens species. This experiment in complex civilized society shows a lot of promise, especially in the last 300 years, since many leading nations among humanity have extricated themselves from the social organization that civilized humanity initially developed based on autocracy and hereditary class distinctions [eg. kingship]. But, overall, humanity continues to carry a great deal of absolutist religious, racial and ethnic baggage that creates hardened divisions and that justifies a lot of horrific, competitive behavior [jihad, genocide, ethnic cleansing, terrorism, civil war, guerrilla warfare, violent repression, world war, etc.].

If human civilization is to persist and have the opportunity to make further progress, humanity must curtail its competitive orientation and emphasize its cooperative orientation so it will be able to seek real, coordinated solutions to its significant global challenges. If these challenges are left unresolved, they can bring humanity to its knees and the promise of civilization to a close. So, the very survival of complex society is at stake!

Biologically Based Variables and Cooperation

1) <u>Competition and Cooperation "Instincts"</u>

Humans are genetically/biologically predisposed to be both competitive and cooperative. The human cooperative orientation is focused internally within

groups to assist with child rearing and collective predation efforts and to minimize conflict among group members. The competitive predisposition is expressed in predation itself and in conflicts that arise over access to mates and among human groups over resources. Culture has developed to support both cooperation and competition. But when biological survival is at stake, competition trumps cooperation except under special circumstances. Another way of saying this is that under duress self-interest tends to trump social obligation at all levels and scales from individuals to nations.

In the modern era, the human competitive orientation remains prominent throughout our societies – internally most apparent in child's play, sports, drama/film, trade, struggles over mates, conflicts over resources, domestic violence, gang conflict, and criminal activity – and externally in trade, conflicts over resources, and warfare among different human groups. The human competitive "instinct" is pervasive and fundamental. And, at the social level, this "instinct" to competitiveness is what underlies the self-interested perspective and individualistic values in human relations. As such, this competitive inclination and self-interested, individualistic point of view gets expressed at all social levels – between and among individuals, couples, families, communities, states, nations, and across ethnic, racial and religious groups. In short, competition can arise along any line of social differentiation that humans make.

As prominent as the human competitive orientation is, humans are also by nature cooperative. As a social species, human survival also depends on the ability of humans to work and live together in at least small groups – extended and multifamily bands and tribes. Through modern research, first in socio-biology and then in genetics, the biological/genetic basis for the cooperative "instinct" in humans has finally been proven. We now understand that cooperation is not just motivated by culture; it is built into human genes. The human cooperative "instinct" provides the foundation upon which culture builds to define positive social relations at all levels from couples to families to tribes to nations to international federations. The human cooperative "instinct" is fundamental. Together with culture, it forms the basis for communal [social] values as expressed in human relations at all levels. The human orientation to cooperate is what supports humanity's commitment to toleration, respect, fairness, equality, caring, and sharing in human relations.

Humans have always had to balance these two opposed and dynamic tendencies – competition and cooperation. Our various societies and cultures reveal the different ways we have attempted to accomplish this balancing act. Some cultures are more bellicose, some more pacific, but all cultures

demonstrate the ability to switch from one tendency to the other depending on the challenges they face.

2) Gender and Cooperation

This is a risky topic and one where the critique can be offered that any position taken is either scientifically inaccurate or "politically incorrect." But, the issue needs to be addressed, and I approach the topic from the perspective of evolutionary biology. Biologically human males and females depend upon the same primary sex hormones [testosterone and estrogen], just in different proportions. And this male-female dichotomy is in fact more of a continuum than a fixed division. So, while men for the most part have a much higher level of testosterone and a much lower level of estrogen than women, there is a range. And the same is true for women but in the reverse positions: much higher estrogen and much lower testosterone. The higher level of testosterone in men is related to greater male physical stature and musculature. The greater strength that results is then associated with the cultural role of men in virtually all societies as defenders of human groups and their territories from predatory animals and other human groups – that is responsibility for the integrity of human groups within and at their territorial boundaries. And the male assigned role of controlling animal predators is immediately aligned with the role of hunting animals to provide food. Women with their higher level of estrogen are generally smaller in stature and musculature than men and are assigned cultural roles that generally focus their activities internally toward childbearing, child rearing, domestic activities, and often community gardens.

These are the traditional roles of males and females and the associated difference in sex hormones that have pertained in human groups since the inception of the species – so far as we know. What seems to have occurred is that the inclinations set up by biological distinctions have been complemented by culture in the designation of roles. Or put another way, culture [roles] and biology [genes and hormones], as we might expect, have evolved together and in sync. Culture can, of course, work in the opposite direction, but this seems to have very rarely been the case.

Now, what are the implications of this division of hormones and roles when it comes to the competition – cooperation dynamic? Male testosterone in conjunction with adrenaline is the flight – fight hormone combination, and the traditional male role in defense and hunting calls on the capabilities that this combination affords. So, while the male can be cooperative when this hormonal combination is not engaged at a higher level, he is primed biologically and culturally for competition. Estrogen is the hormone that is essential in women

for childbearing and child rearing functions, which can consume most of the woman's life in aboriginal hunter gatherer bands and tribes. Domestic functions, which are often traditionally assigned to women, can be seen as ancillary to these primary childbearing and child rearing functions. Collectively, these are nurturing functions which require biological and social cooperation to be successfully exercised. So, while women can be competitive if circumstances demand it, they are primed hormonaly and culturally for cooperation.

So, what is the conclusion on the relationship of human gender and cooperation? While males and females are both capable of competition and cooperation, men are biologically and culturally primed for competition while women are biologically and culturally primed for cooperation. Together the two sexes balance one another, especially in aboriginal societies, in which equality across the sexes prevails in spite of the role differentiation. By contrast, in complex civilized societies, historically there has been a clear cultural tendency to authoritarian social structures where males have dominated and occupied the leadership roles, and where women have been assigned subservient and dependent roles. The implications of this imbalance is that civilized culture has tended to skew toward a competitive male orientation. Only in the last 200+ years, and mainly in western societies, have women emerged to demand equal cultural status with men, and they are still struggling to achieve full leadership and economic equality. So, at the same time that modern human civilized society is in significant need of greater cooperation, women are not in a position, even in the societies where they have gained in equality, to assist in offering this direction. Worldwide, most women in civilized societies continue in subservient status with little cooperative impact on a competitively oriented male world.

Gender can offer a significant biological assist in asserting a cooperative orientation in modern human society, but in much of the world the retention of the male dominated culture of a bygone era in civilization is suppressing this option. What is needed is not to just bring women worldwide into cultural parity with men, but for women to take the lead and to insist that culture restrain the male competitive orientation. Unfortunately, the present influence of gender in complex society continues to support competition both within and across human relations and societies.

3) Personal and Impersonal Social Relations and Cooperation

The approach humans have evolved to take in social relations was established during the 95% of the time – 200,000+ years – that humans have spent in social

structurally simple bands and tribes. By contrast, the complex social structure of civilization is essentially very new – 3,000 years for most humans. So, humans carry into the civilized condition their long established hunter-gatherer approach to social relations.

Cooperation in hunter-gatherer society is mostly limited to the personal relations that are known within the relatively small local group – family, friends and immediate neighbors. Most often, relations beyond this small group are regarded more cautiously first as casual acquaintances, then as strangers, and finally as potential enemies. So, for hunter-gatherers, impersonal relations outside of one's local group are approached with one's competitive guard up, not with the assumption that cooperation is to be expected.

Efforts to extend this limited hunter-gatherer view of personal relations and thereby gain in the social scope of cooperation encounter the difficulty that the distinction between familiars [personal relations] and strangers [impersonal relations] at the hunter-gatherer level appears to be biologically built in for humans. This is apparent in the very early differential response of infants to the faces of familiars [smile] versus the faces of strangers [cry] – long before culture has any impact. And while culture encourages adults within complex societies to at least tolereate impersonal “others,” the tendency to retain the more rudimentary hunter-gatherer distinction between personal and impersonal relations remains primary with humans both within and especially among complex societies.

In this regard, consider how humans “manage” social relations in the urban context where encountering a person on the sidewalk necessitates a glance to determine whether the individual is a familiar, and if not, to look away and ignore the person as a “tolerated” stranger. And the more noticably different this individual is from us, the more circumspect our behavior is within this toleration. In a really congested urban situation, we avoid all eye contact and all passers-by are treated as the impersonal, unknown “other,” unless something interrupts our calculated disattention. This basic differentiation between personal familiars and impersonal strangers sets the social stage for what becomes on the one hand greeting and cooperation [among personal relations] and on the other hand disattention and competition [among impersonal relations]. So, the biological basis for viewing impersonal others with caution is directly associated with the biological “instinct” to compete and the biological basis for recognizing personal others with acceptance is one with the biological “instinct” to cooperate. In each case, these built-in tendencies reinforce one another.

4) The Default Presentistic, Narrow Human Perspective and Cooperation

Humans are the only species able to anticipate, take a broad perspective, and plan long term including planning for significant changes in all aspects of their lives. But, unfortunately, humans are predominantly presentistic and quickly lose sight of the long term, broad point of view as the immediate needs of the present keep intruding and becoming focal. So, the short term, narrow perspective trumps the long term, broad perspective except for "time outs." Success in addressing the multiple and interconnected challenges of complex society and culture requires sustaining the broad, long term point of view, which is inherently more inclusive and therefore more cooperative. Modern civilized society is greatly diminished by humanity's biologically built-in, default, presentistic, narrow perspective which supports competition more than cooperation. A citizenry that is not capable of sustaining a broader perspective and of evaluating information from this point of view is not positioned to make choices to support longer term planning and the cooperation that it will take to realize the benefits of this planning.

5) Human Focus on Loss/Disappointment and Cooperation

Related to the above presentistic predisposition of humans is the fact that humans are inclined to recognize and enjoy the benefits and pleasures that come to them for a short time while they tend to remember their losses and disappointments long term. Benefits/gains are quickly incorporated as normative and become part of what is expected; losses/disappointments are retained and replayed with resentment and end up motivating long term animosity/grudges/ retaliation. It is much more difficult to cooperate when we are twice as influenced by our losses/disappointments as we are by our gains. Because our memory of the negative leaves us inclined to view the world before us with caution, our default stance trends competitive rather than cooperative. This is our biological survival instinct affecting our perception and taking social precedence. For complex society to make progress, culture has to battle against this built-in predisposition.

6) Human Self-Protective Psychology and Cooperation

When humans are anxious/stressed/disappointed, aspects of human psychology come to the fore that undermine cooperation. Humans are inclined to greatly overestimate their responsibility for the good that comes to them while they excel at both denying responsibility for the negative events that happen to them and projecting to others the cause for such negative events. We celebrate excessively our successes and play the victim when it comes to our failures. This built-in psychology protects our individual and group self-esteem, but it

undermines our ability to deal with the world objectively. And, importantly, it underlies our inclination to select facts that support our beliefs and to reject facts that we find challenging. Especially when we are under stress, this psychological complex greatly limits our critical thinking ability and allows us to commit to all kinds of falsehoods and misconceptions. When we employ these devices without awareness to protect ourselves and our groups, we limit the basic reality that we share with others and so restrict our options to cooperate. Culture has a huge task to overcome this built-in psychological complex, which, if useful at one time, is a significant impediment when it comes to civilized societies becoming more cooperative and making progress.

7) Human Capacity for Empathy and Cooperation

Humans have the built-in emotional capacity to identify with others and to be sympathetic and empathetic, which can result in altruistic social behavior. This capacity definitely supports cooperation. The problem is that this capacity tends to be evoked and expressed primarily in the zone of personal relations and secondarily as a response within the arts, especially drama. As we have noted above, it is in the vast area of impersonal relations in complex society that insufficient cooperation exists. Moreover, emotionally, empathy is countered by hatred, and unfortunately it is very easy to hate the impersonal stranger. So, emotions are important in determining the nature of social relations, but overall in impersonal complex society they tend to support caution and the competitive rather than accommodation and cooperation.

Overall, what do we conclude about the role built-in human biology plays in the competition – cooperation dynamic? Biology/genetics favors the competitive orientation in human relations, but is in better balance with the cooperative disposition in simpler, hunter-gatherer societies where personal relations dominate than it is in complex civilized societies where impersonal relations are pervasive. Humans come very recently to the complex civilized state – and especially to the modern complex civilized state, but human biology does not serve well the extent of the need for cooperation in this “new” societal condition. This situation means that the influence of culture to promote cooperation becomes that much more important.

Cultural Variables and Cooperation

At this point, I consider a number of areas of culture in modern complex society that influence the relative strength of either side in the cooperation – competition social dynamic. The tendencies we find within each of these cultural areas and

then collectively across the areas as a whole will suggest where we stand in our ability to attain the desired goal of increased cooperation in social relations.

1) Representative Democracy and Cooperation

Complex civilized societies arose about 10,000 years ago and only slowly came to dominate the human population about 7,000 years later. Until very recent times, these civilizations relied on highly stratified, authoritarian governments. In such societies it is most often exclusive access by a relatively small elite to power and resources together with repression that assures complicity, not voluntary cooperation among the populous. "Cooperation" in such authoritarian societies is more apparent than real. Only in the last 300 to 500 years has the movement arisen in leading civilized societies toward political equality first for all male land owners, then all men, and finally all citizens of age regardless of gender or economic status. Representative democracy based on the principle of equality among all citizens is the result. And political equality promotes cooperation. In voting, citizens cooperate in selecting their representatives. And through their representatives, citizens participate equally in the decisions that directly affect their lives. Candidates who offer different policy viewpoints compete to be representatives, and voters cooperate to decide with equal input which candidate with what perspective they prefer to represent them. In spite of the fact that in this competitive election process different parties often create intense divisions within the citizenry, if basic fairness is maintained and if political ideology does not foreclose on compromise, cooperation can prevail.

Political democracy rests on the concept of equality, and equality encourages cooperation. In contrast, economic capitalism encourages competition with the gains accruing exclusively to the winners. When democracy and capitalism are appropriately balanced, the consequence can be to encourage creativity and innovation while not allowing social inequality to become excessive. Balance is the key, and capitalism is always pulling in the direction of inequality and individual/corporate/business self-interest. Corruption and economic organized crime – kleptocracy magnify the competitive influence of legitimate capitalistic forces. Democracy must implement and enforce the regulations necessary to keep the pull of capitalism in check while not stifling the positive consequences of reasonable reward for risk, creativity and effort. If money/wealth/influence from special interests – legal or illegal – is allowed to undermine the integrity of the democratic process, the necessary balance can be infringed. This is one of the risks we in America are now taking.

2) Rule of Law/Independent Judiciary and Cooperation

In the authoritarian governmental structures of most of the civilized period, justice was as much a matter of one's political or religious position as it was of anything resembling universally applicable law. Only in the last 600 years and only in some civilized societies has the law slowly become truly codified, and applied universally and in an egalitarian manner – at least in principle. And only in the last 250 years has an independent judicial system arisen within government to assure equal and fair treatment for all citizens.

One of the important tasks of an Independent Judiciary is to assure fairness in the cooperatively oriented political realm. Assuring that the egalitarian principle is maintained lies at the heart of an Independent Judiciary and this applies to the election process, the creation of law by the Legislature, and the administration of the law by the Executive branch of government. Equality in basic civil rights, in the law, and in the enforcement of the law as assured by the judiciary creates a level “playing field” where all citizens are to enjoy the same guarantees and treatment, if not the same opportunities.

Of course no judiciary is entirely free from the influence of vested interests, especially economically and politically powerful interests. So, the judiciary itself, whose judges are elected or appointed through the political process, has to incorporate a layered system of review where decisions at one level can be appealed to a higher level to assure that the law is both fair and applied fairly.

Such a judicial system with its own built in checks and balances serves to guarantee equality for all citizens, and as we have seen elsewhere, the condition of equality creates the context in which cooperation can occur and be encouraged. Most nations within what is known as western civilization operate with such an independent judiciary in combination with a truly representative democratic political structure. Unfortunately, there are many ways to subvert the egalitarian orientation of a combined representative democracy and independent judiciary, and many of the non-western countries that claim such structures execute them so poorly or so weakly that they are in fact authoritarian – ruled by kings or dictators or the military. And not a few nations make no pretense of being egalitarian and define themselves outright as authoritarian.

So, while political and judicial systems exist in some countries that support equality among their citizens and thereby generally encourage cooperation, many nations are only nominally committed to such systems and continue to demand complicity rather than encourage cooperation through their legal

systems. And at the international level, there is only a relatively weak commitment to a worldwide judicial/court system [the World Court], even from the nations with established representative democracies and independent judiciaries. The overall result is that while the potential exists for judicial systems to promote equality and cooperation in social relations within and among nations, this potential has been realized at a rather restricted level – once again leaving competition as the primary mode at worldwide scale defining societal relations.

3) Education and Cooperation

In complex civilized society, education can play a critical role in supporting cooperation. As it stands, even in developed countries, education does not meet this need. Why? There are at least three reasons. First, education has to instill the skill of critical thinking in the populace. Without this ability the citizenry is subject to emotional and populist appeals as well as the whims of the rumor mill, which the Internet has become expert at purveying. Critical thinking empowers citizens with the ability to assess information for the logic of the arguments presented, the expertise of the presenter, and the adequacy of the evidence cited. Critical thinking also assists citizens to separate a presenter's communication skills [charisma] from the adequacy of the conclusions offered. Educating for basic reading, writing and math skills and for knowledge is valuable, but too often this is what passes for education with critical thinking skills left to develop without assistance.

Second, education has to broaden the understanding of students/citizens so they have the ability to recognize and respect alternative values, perspectives, and worldviews, while being aware of the assumptions implicit in the worldview they choose to adopt and support. When worldviews are adopted wholesale without examination, narrow understanding results and students/citizens are left without the ability to adapt creatively in the face of change. And change is inevitable, and rapid change is the norm in modern societies. Engendering open-mindedness, flexibility and adaptability in all citizens in all aspects of their lives as well as in their relations with others both within their societies and across nations forms the foundation for cooperation at all levels. Limited exposure means limited awareness, and the isolation that results promotes both absolutism regarding the truth value of one's own beliefs and uncertainty and fear of others with different views – strangers. And strangers are regarded as likely competitors.

Third, education in the round encourages development of the whole person: the old triumvirate of mind, body and spirit and the connection of these three to emotions. Of course in reality all three of these together with emotion are totally intertwined, but we separate them for purposes of discussion. In what has become traditional education in western culture, the developed mind tends to be associated with the two goals of education cited above – reason [critical thinking] and open-mindedness [breadth of awareness]. Spirit can be included in the domain of mind through the mental function of intuition, but in public education spirit has unfortunately been bundled together with religion and pushed to the periphery. In marginalizing intuition and spirituality, public education makes little effort to develop this aspect of the human mind and this source of awareness. Education in the round needs to retrieve and train this dimension of mind and bring spirituality, not religion, back into western education. When the education of mind develops both reason and intuition, instincts and emotions are aligned to play their proper roles. The intimate connection between intuition, spirituality and cooperation is explored in a following section, "Religion, Spirituality and Cooperation." Suffice it to say here that education that includes "spirit" in this sense is a very important source encouraging cooperation in social relations.

In the very lengthy past of aboriginal societies, education was ongoing with living as youth learned by watching and doing under the constant tutelage of parents and elders. In modern complex civilized societies with the florescence of specialized roles, education has become a separate domain. Efficiency in learning skills and preparing for diverse occupational options drives this separation. What is lost in this process is the connection of children and adolescents with adults and with the community as a whole. And what develops in place of this connection to the adult community is a separate adolescent culture with a time period that seems to extend with each generation. Adolescents, whose minds do not fully mature until they are in their mid-twenties and who are not integrated into the community, often lack a sense of direction and purpose and feel themselves to be adrift. The result is often an adolescent culture of protest that emerges in the teen years which is often associated with anti-social behavior. Such a separate subculture is frequently both dysfunctional [eg. gangs] and anti-educational. As presently structured, the goal of education itself is being defeated when these circumstances are allowed to prevail.

What is needed to address this counter productive adolescent situation in modern public education is to reconnect education to both community and activities that have a pragmatic consequence. At the junior high and high

school levels, the community based education model together with an experiential orientation to curriculum can assist greatly. Adults, especially senior citizens, need to be a continual part of this education environment, keeping students connected to community and to learning that has tangible results. Pragmatic results support self esteem in ways that abstract test results do not.

Adolescents can be encouraged to be creative and innovative without the need to protest and descend into anti-social activities. The more broadly connected students are to community and the more satisfied they are as a result of a sense of accomplishment from a real contribution to community, the more they will be inclined to adopt a cooperative orientation to social relations at all levels. Presently, public education is not adequately fostering cooperative social relations in its teenage citizens, and these adolescents are carrying this weak cooperative orientation into adulthood – by default, allowing competition to lead.

Overall, public education, even in most leading western societies, is not meeting the need to promote cooperation. Even higher education at the college and university levels in these societies often fails in this regard. Little wonder that the competitive orientation to social relations remains dominant worldwide.

4) Economy and Cooperation

In hunter gatherer bands and tribes, resources are generally shared fairly evenly among the members with some slight privilege given to elders, those who make provisions available, and those in special need. Sharing is common within the personal relations that apply in these small human groups. Across different bands and tribes, there is very often competition for resources, and what sharing occurs tends to be ritualized in special events that bring the bands/tribes together. Outside of these kinds of events, a more or less formalized network of relations exists to accommodate trading for resources. The most basic of these “traded” resources concerns reproduction and involves the location of mates. Trading networks tend to be local, but the extent of local to local to local connections can easily create what in effect becomes a regional trading system.

The alternative to trading is raiding, and the more tenuous the local connections across different bands and tribes and the more limited the availability of needed resources, the more common raiding becomes. And raiding can be violent to the point of constituting warfare.

So, at root, economic systems within traditional bands and tribes are internally very cooperative and the connections in behalf of trade across these bands and tribes require cooperation to some extent, becoming less cooperative and more competitive the more indirect and impersonal the social connections become. Managing this cooperative to competitive continuum is necessary in order for different groups to acquire needed and desired goods and resources. And as economic systems enlarge and become more complex with the advent of chiefdoms, city states, nations, and civilizations, this same cooperative-competitive dynamic sustains and must be managed. Communistic economic systems stress public ownership and the equal sharing of all resources within national level social structures, while capitalistic systems stress competition and wealth accumulation to the "successful" within and among these national structures. Regulated capitalism and socialism are located in the middle on this competition – cooperation economic continuum.

In the modern setting among larger civilized nations, the world economy, as constituted under the World Trade Organization [WTO], has become one of the forces for increasing economic connections across nations. As such it promotes cooperation, this within what are interestingly competitive economic enterprises. But, because the WTO, and most of the international trading agreements that exist beneath it, are defined almost entirely by economic criteria, they exclude consideration of ecological and social variables – leading to unfair economic advantages and disadvantages in the competition for trade among individual nations. So, the vastly increased scope of trade generated in the modern world economy is, as currently constituted, both a force for greater cooperation and a force for continuing competition and potential conflict.

If the nations of the world can commit to a revision of the WTO to incorporate important social and ecological variables and in doing so to become more fair, then the modern world economy can become a force for greater overall international coordination and cooperation with the potential for political and judicial integration to follow. It is even possible for this revised world economy to become the catalyst for the kind and degree of international integration that is required to meet the several serious and immediate global challenges facing humanity as a whole. It is no small irony that trade, which is essentially a competitive enterprise, could be the main factor that leads humanity worldwide to greater integration and cooperation!

5) Inequality, Poverty and Cooperation

People who are struggling to survive are by necessity in a competitive mode. And people who perceive themselves to be disadvantaged or victims in comparison to other citizens are inclined to view their advantaged “brethren” competitively. Poverty and inequality do not encourage an orientation to cooperative social relations. But promoting equality does not mean that talent and industry should not be rewarded with significant benefits. However, if these benefits become excessive or exclusive to a few, relations across the resulting inequality divide tend to become competitive. Citizens whose needs are being met and whose expectations are realistic are generally open to cooperation. In short, happy and satisfied citizens incline toward cooperation.

The lengthy initial period of complex society saw the relative social equality that was characteristic in earlier human bands and tribes abandoned and replaced with hierarchical authoritarian structures [warlords, kings, emperors, popes, pharaohs, dictators, etc.]. Only in the last 300 years with the advent of political representative democracy and in the last 100 years with the various equal rights movements has equality among the citizenry been partially reclaimed. But the trend toward equality is very young and fragile indeed, and we see this trend constantly being reversed in various authoritarian “take overs” among young democratic nations. As fragile and privileged as the social institutions are that assure equality in the modern social setting, it is astonishing that so few citizens take seriously their political enfranchisement and vote in elections. Citizens need to recognize that complacency undermines the integrity of democracy and invites the loss of social equality in complex society.

In today's “information immediately everywhere” world, the perception of inequality is not just within communities, states and countries; it is across regions and continents. What is fair and equitable in terms of life style and standard of living is slowly becoming standardized at world scale. The result is that the heretofore privileged standard of living in developed western countries is being challenged by those in under developed countries to the consternation of the citizens in these western nations who feel that their expectations for improved status are no longer being met. Unmet expectations in both developed and under developed nations together with grossly unequal standards of living are a significant source of the continuing competitive orientation in social relations both within and across nations.

6) Science and Cooperation

Science in its pure form of discovery is a strong force for social cooperation. Science in its practical expression is the basis for technology which can serve either competitive or cooperative social goals. More on this in what follows.

Science emerged as the study of the material dimension of existence. The further it has proceeded in its discoveries in the nature of the material domain, the more science has become aware of the significant role of the immaterial or energetic/field dimension of reality. Current theory in cosmology holds that this immaterial energy domain precedes material existence in the origin of the universe and constitutes at least 70% of all of current reality. As science is more and more concerned with the immaterial, it begins to explore what is otherwise known as the subjective, and the subjective is one with the spiritual. So, almost in spite of itself, science has become a major source for discovery in both the material/objective and immaterial/subjective dimensions of both human existence and the broader reality in which humanity participates.

Apart from science's practical application in technology that can provide the basis for products and thereby serve the competitive goals of corporations, the major input of science into social relations is to promote cooperation. It can do this first in affirming the immaterial/spiritual dimension of reality which supports cooperation [For details on this see the later section in this essay: “Religion, Spirituality and Cooperation”]. But science also promotes cooperation in its ability to challenge the worldviews of human groups when these worldviews are based on belief and opinion rather than on factual evidence. And since differences in beliefs and opinions are a primary source of competition/conflict among human groups, the input of science can be critical in unifying human understanding about the nature of reality and human existence. And, the more different human groups share in their worldviews, the easier it is for them to cooperate. So, at root the science of both the material and the immaterial has the ability to contribute to cooperation in social relations. But at the same time the technology that emerges from science can contribute to competition.

The potential value for cooperation that science can afford is unfortunately not realized in significant part because scientists are reluctant to actively assert the significance of the results of their work in the public domain. This reluctance dates all the way back to the Middle Ages when science emerged in a context where religion possessed the authority to assign heretical status to scientific findings with which it disagreed and put the scientist's life in jeopardy. Ever since, science has avoided conflict with established religious beliefs. And in

today's world where religious fundamentalism is being allowed to represent religion, it is easy for virtually any scientist's findings – or the findings of an entire branch of science – to be viewed as in conflict with such beliefs.

Until the 70% of citizens in western nations who are not committed to fundamentalist religious beliefs have the courage to support the factual and evidence based worldview derived from science, the potential of science to promote cooperation in social relations will not be realized. More on this challenge in the later section on "Religion, Spirituality and Cooperation."

7) Communication and Cooperation

Open and free communication [free speech] in all forms serves connections among humans, and as such it engenders cooperation. In the face of disagreement among individuals and groups at all scales, communication also provides an opportunity for discussion to resolve these differences and an alternative to direct physical action and conflict. Fighting and warfare arise when communication breaks down and is abandoned. This situation applies for all human groups across all of human history. The more thoroughly connected communities, states and nations are, the greater is the motivation to seek resolutions to disagreements through communication and the greater is the reluctance to shift to physical conflict.

From the beginning, face to face communication, especially oral language, has been the primary form of communication among humans with additional input mainly from visual sources in gesture, posture, action, dress, artifacts, and setting. Pictographs appeared to supplement this communication array relatively early with full blown written language arising in a few civilizations starting about 8,000 years ago. Every increase in communication capability has had significant ramifications on human relations, broadening the options for connecting and making information more permanent while reducing the time and increasing the distance for communication to occur.

Worldwide, humans now depend on virtually instantaneous electronically based audio-visual communication. With the Internet, observational satellites and ubiquitous security sensors, humans are more and more intimately known and connected to one another and to the vast repositories of information that are stored electronically. With ever greater means to assure transparency, it is harder and harder for individuals, corporations, states and nations to hide, to cheat, to keep secrets. And interestingly, competition thrives on secrets and keeping humans at all levels separated so one group can seek an advantage

over another. So, as more and more immediate and universal communication causes transparency to deepen and broaden, the norm becomes for all information to be shared, promoting cooperation and restraining competition.

The penetration of information has reached the point where satellites can read individual license plates and GPS can track the continuous location of individuals, where financial records contain virtually all personal and business transactions, and where comprehensive profiles exist for nearly all individual and group purchasing preferences. Infrared and other means exist to penetrate buildings allowing observation of activities behind walls and closed doors. In the modern world, privacy exists only where there is no interest in penetrating it. And while governments and corporations furiously scurry to protect their confidential information through encryption, opposing governments and corporations and hackers are equally busy decoding and accessing this information ever more rapidly.

Given the very clear trend that electronic communications have taken, especially since WWII, the potential exists in the modern world to increase connections among humans worldwide to the point where the unknown/uncertain "stranger" basis for impersonal relations dissolves and all relations become personal. Humans are in fact much further down this path than they even realize, and this path supports the advancement of cooperation at all levels from among individuals to among nations. But, while this is the clear potential trend coming from evolving electronic information technology, world culture lags significantly behind, dwelling in the more competitively oriented status quo. As such, humans are not able to currently take anything like full advantage of the cooperative option in social relations that information technology affords. Awareness of the potential and of the exponential speed with which this trend is proceeding is important as it constitutes one of the few developments that offers some encouragement that humanity may be able to address its several global challenges which are likewise escalating in pace and intensity.

8) <u>The Information Media and Cooperation</u>

If modern, instantaneously connected complex society does not require that information for public consumption be reliable, the basis for the public to make reasoned and effective decisions [political and otherwise] will be undermined. The privilege of free speech can be carried to the nonsensical point of not only allowing but also promoting the dissemination of misinformation and outright lies. Checks and balances must also apply to the media and all other public information sources. Currently this is not the case.

Ironically, while information technology has the potential to contribute to cooperation in social relations, the media, as it is currently practiced by a majority of its purveyors – as well as the media's adjuncts in talk shows and Internet blogs, tend to promote competition and conflict. If the media were committed to disseminating accurate information, it could complement the potential cooperative input of information technology. But currently most of the media is about entertainment or infotainment and it is driven primarily by the profit motive. What sells is the sensational, and the sensational is all about impression and rarely concerned with the truth. The more extreme the statement or video, the more the media is attracted to cover it; and the more sensational the coverage is, the greater the interest of the public; and the broader the range of public interest in their coverage, the greater the profit to the media and their advertisers. Somewhere in the world there is always a fire, a murder, a terrorist attack, a kidnapping, a robbery, a drowning, a flood, a major storm, a corrupt leader, an outrageous tweeting politician, etc. to report, and the media focuses on generating vivid accounts of these events.

The problem is that while the media's focus on the extremes does not reflect the majority conditions in the non-sensational center, the impression the public gets is that the conflict between the extremes reflects the norm. And the media's constantly focusing attention on the highly charged and competitive extremes results in unwarranted stress, anxiety and fear being generated in this exposed public. An anxious and fearful public is a public primed for caution, not cooperation as it approaches social relations. So, while some media products are responsible, unfortunately the overall effect of the media as it is presently practiced is to support a cautious/competitive orientation among humans.

In a world that is more and more oriented to and dependent upon information, the reliability of that information becomes critical. But in the present context where the right of free speech extends to allowing radio and television talk shows and internet blogs to promulgate outright lies and calculated disinformation, the public is exposed to everything from confirmed truths to absolute falsehoods without the means to distinguish between the two. Information that is made available for public consumption must be held to a higher standard if we expect citizens to be well informed as they make decisions and try to participate consequentially in their societies.

Just as an independent judiciary exists in developed western societies to assure that laws and the administration of the law accurately conform to the intent of our constitutions, so an independent information agency needs to exist to

rapidly assess the accuracy of the information that is made available to the public. Current information assessment sources on-line like FactCheck.org are valuable for the few who use them, but they are not sufficient in their speed of evaluation, their scope, their recognized validity, or their authority. Fully vetted public information can have the result of shutting down some of the worst Internet based rumor mills and tabloid like products, which presently taint the domain of public discourse.

Information dissemination is not a game where hyped offerings based on highly selected evidence, or no evidence at all, can be permitted to influence public opinion. Information is powerful, especially in our highly interconnected modern world, and the citizenry deserves at least the awareness of where the information they are receiving ranks on an accuracy scale as determined by an independent, unbiased public source. When the public can be assured that they are relying on accurate information, they can feel more comfortable in cooperating based on that information.

9) Health, Longevity and Cooperation

Modern scientific medicine, sufficient food, and life styles in later years that are not so physically demanding are making it possible for humans to live almost twice as long on average as they did just 2-300 years ago. One consequence is increased pressure on natural resources due to an increase in human population. And humans who experience or perceive themselves as being under pressure due to resource limitations are less likely to be cooperative and more likely to be competitive. On the other hand, senior citizens, who are not in the throes of the hormonal turmoil of the reproductive years, can offer a perspective on life and events that is more reflective and less reactive. In short, seniors can perform the traditional role of Elders in society whose wisdom can have the overall influence of supporting greater cooperation in social relations.

But to perform the role of Elders, seniors in the civilized context have to remain fully engaged in their communities and be broadly informed – well educated [see the “Education and Cooperation” section]. Unfortunately, at least in the leading modern western societies, the cultural celebration of youth together with the prevailing move of adults retiring from work to lead separate lives of relative leisure mitigate against seniors becoming elders and having a positive effect on increased societal cooperation. And many seniors are not “well educated,” so, they do not qualify as elders because it is not wisdom that they have to offer.

So, while seniors are a potential resource as Elders to promote cooperation, currently, nominally educated and disengaged seniors in civilized countries unfortunately do not perform this function. Under these circumstances, older citizens in their sheer numbers and resource requirements end up adding somewhat to the competition side of the competition – cooperation equation.

10) Defense, the Military and Cooperation

The more competitively oriented both individuals and the societies of the world are, the more they feel the need to defend themselves against their potential opponents. And the more individuals and nations feel themselves to be under threat from others, the greater are the resources expended in behalf of protection and preparing for potential conflict. In the U.S. private realm, the NRA supports an entire industry to feed everything from hand guns to assault weapons together with storehouses of ammunition to individual citizens and local militias. At the national level, the U.S. annual expenditures on military and military related activities amount to $1,300,000,000,000 – this in a total annual federal budget of $4,000,000,000,000 [33%]. This is a huge dedication of national resources to an exclusively competitively oriented enterprise. While the U.S. is an extreme case in this regard – even among nations with significant defense related spending, the worldwide natural and economic resources devoted in one way or another to national and regional security are tremendous.

Imagine the difference it could make if cooperation took the lead in social relations at the private, state and national levels, and these resources were applied to improving the quality of life for all of humanity. Unfortunately, private and public expenditures in behalf of personal and national security are currently founded on an exclusively competitive view of these relations.

11) Religion, Spirituality and Cooperation
{This section requires some background and explanation since the important distinction between religion and spirituality is not commonly understood}

In all societies at all levels of complexity, there are two basic sources of cooperative social relations: ethics – the culturally determined rules of social behavior; and morality – the spiritual awareness of how others are to be treated. With regard to ethics, citizens are explicitly taught from an early age to respect, assist, and treat other of their fellow citizens fairly and honestly. This ethical source of cooperative social behavior is very important; and it is a component in all societies – large and small, modern and traditional. By contrast, morality is often framed by religion with spirituality at its core providing the essential

awareness. Religion is the social institution within societies that asserts itself as the primary authority to represent spiritual awareness. However, spirituality itself is only secondarily housed in such institutions since there are a great many religions, and religions arise to support the other institutions of society at least as much as they serve to connect citizens to spiritual awareness. It is necessary to further explore the relationship of spirituality and religion before we come to a discussion of spirituality itself and its relationship to cooperation.

The role of religion in complex society is a double edged sword. On the one hand, religions specify a moral code of social behavior and tie adherence by its devotees to this code as necessary if they are to be accepted by society and if they are to expect a positive life after death. Many religions do not treat their members equally, so, while the behavioral code they require does produce shared social rules within the group, what may appear as cooperation in the membership often amounts more to demanded complicity. In addition, at the level of relations among different religious groups, contrary religious beliefs constitute a major source of competition which ranges all the way from disagreement to violent conflict/warfare. And some of the worst religiously motivated, aggressive behavior occurs across sects of the same religion where life and death can literally be put at stake over relatively minor differences in belief. So, internally religion promotes mostly complicity, not cooperation; and externally religion is a major motivator of competitive, often violent behavior.

At the present time, much of the citizenry of modern, developed, western society has withdrawn from membership in the churches, mosques, and synagogues of the religions of Abraham. For most of these citizens, this withdrawal does not mean rejection of the beliefs of these religions, just the adoption of an agnostic/bystander position. This agnostic fence sitting stance, which is practiced by the majority of the populace, together with the policy of religious tolerance, which most mainstream religions espouse for their members, are what allow the extreme fundamentalist believers to commandeer representation of the Christian, Islamic and Jewish faiths. The media loves to focus on the extremes, so these fundamentalists enjoy a totally disproportionate amount of both attention and influence. The result is that while most citizens of western society do not support the religious dogma that leads to religious conflict, they do not step forward in a vigorous way to challenge those believers that do support such extreme beliefs.

Until tolerance and agnosticism in the populace become rejection of religious belief systems, religions will continue to supply a major motivation through fundamentalism for social relations across religious groups being regarded as

impersonal and competitive – inviting serious conflict. An allied problem is that the majority of agnostic fence sitters are unfamiliar with the spiritual experience and perspective, which could replace the literal religious beliefs from which they have withdrawn and both relieve the impetus to competition and promote cooperation instead. Unfortunately, for many citizens, spirituality has been lost together with the withdrawal of support for religious institutions. If spirituality could be retrieved for the citizenry without reinstating religion, then humanity could revive a significant support for social cooperation.

All religions contain at their core the spiritual experience and perspective, which, properly understood, supports cooperation in human relations. Religion provides a framework for accessing and understanding the spiritual experience, but access can be more or less exclusive and beliefs more or less literal and convoluted. Spirituality is universal; religion provides the cultural container, and there are many different containers, each of which has its own issues, but each of which tends to lay exclusive claim to the truth – the one and only way to achieve spiritual awareness, proper behavior, and life eternal.

In the structurally simpler hunter gatherer/aboriginal societies of the long period of human social development, the spiritual perspective is conceived mostly in terms of a sacred principle that pervades all of reality in which all natural things, including humans, are alive/active, relate to one another, and in some way share in a common, unified existence [animism]. Young citizens within these societies grow in spiritual awareness, particularly as they are exposed to and increasingly participate in adult rituals [art, music, dance, story, and song]. At the time of physical maturity, adolescents are often encouraged through initiation rituals to have a deeper and more personal spiritual experience [eg. vision quest]. This experience inculcates the spiritual/moral source of cooperative social behavior in the individual, who, following this ritual, returns to the group with this newly solidified spiritual perspective, social understanding, and sense of self.

As societies have become larger and more complex – first as chiefdoms, then as city states, and finally as civilizations – full blown religious institutions with elaborate belief and ritual systems have arisen. In this process, spirituality became institutionalized and regulated with access controlled by specialists [eg. priests]. In addition, what had been a relatively simple sacred principle in all of reality evolved into highly defined literal and absolute belief systems with mostly social implications. And this religious system frequently justified subservient behavior by the common citizens, and served primarily the economic, political and social interests of an elite class of citizens.

In the last 500 years and within western civilization, as science emerged and as an independent artisan class arose together with the beginnings of a moneyed economy, religion was first challenged for its social exclusivity [Protestant Reformation]. The result was that devotees gained more direct access to the spiritual experience, but the core defining beliefs remained literal and absolute.

In the last 200 years capitalistic enterprise has exploded to take advantage of technological opportunities revealed by science with the result that the quality of life for modern humans has been substantially improved. As this has occurred, many citizens have discarded the literal beliefs and earth centered worldview that underlie the major religions of the developed world. In this process, spirituality was freed from the confines of religious dogma, but instead of its inherent value being recovered, it has been rejected along with the religions that circumscribed it. In its place, the perspective of secular materialism has become dominant with citizens focusing their attention on the satisfaction that can be gained through the accumulation of wealth and material well being.

From the spiritual point of view, this secular material result has merely replaced one error with another: the error of an exclusive and absolute materialism substituting for the error of an exclusive and absolute religious belief system. And in this pendulum swing, the opportunity to recover the major support for social cooperation that spirituality potentially offers has been largely squandered. More recently, Islamic, Christian and Jewish religious fundamentalists have provided further motivation for the public of modern secular societies to reject religion, and, unfortunately, spirituality along with it.

Since the deeper form of spiritual experience is unfamiliar to many in modern secular societies, it is necessary to describe what occurs in this experience so that its relationship to social cooperation becomes clear. As far in the past of human history as we can determine, humans have regarded their world in both pragmatic, objective, material, and rational terms and in sacred, subjective, spiritual, and intuitive terms. These perspectives and mental faculties [reason and intuition] are coordinated and flow imperceptibly in and out of one another most of the time as they are called upon to address different tasks. They are separated in this discussion purely for heuristic purposes.

With the preceding background finally in place, we are now ready to explore the relationship of spirituality and social cooperation. The core of spirituality is the experience of the unification of the self and reality. This experience occurs at different depths and encompasses more or less of the surrounding social and

natural world. The spiritual experience offers a perspective that is as fundamental as the material perspective in human existence. It requires no particular religious beliefs or rituals, just activation, development, and utilization of the intuitive faculty of the human mind. And intuitive mental competence is a basic human mental capability, as basic as rational competence, which also requires development and training. Spirituality is just an alternative way of knowing and experiencing one's self and of operating in the world. Disregard the intuitive capability or the development of human intuitive competence and humans exist in a diminished condition of who they are and can be.

Spirituality, which is the foundation for religion, provides the moral basis for the communal perspective and the cooperative behavior that proceeds from it. Here is how this occurs: When humans open wide their intuitive faculty [which accesses the spiritual/subjective perspective] and quiet their rational faculty [which accesses the material/objective perspective] the path to the deeper experience of the spiritual emerges. With guided training along this path, the unification experience emerges gradually as the self progressively incorporates more and more of the social and natural world. This is the approach that the ascetic Buddhist faith takes with the ultimate goal of attaining “Enlightenment.” Without training and under circumstances that promote a breakthrough into intuitive activation, the unification experience can arise suddenly and be experienced as the complete transformation of one's self. In the fundamentalist Christian religion this more sudden form of the spiritual experience is called being “Born Again” and is interpreted as confirming the literal Christian system of belief. In native American culture the unification experience can be the consequence of a successful vision quest in which a new personal identity is discovered by the initiate and a new, more refined way of understanding the self in relation to the band/tribe and the surrounding ecology emerges.

The core spiritual/unification experience is one where the sense of self expands to include more and more of both the social and natural world – as an integral part of the self, no longer separate and distinct. And as the social and natural world is incorporated into the self, or put another way, as the self expands to include the “outside” social and natural world, it becomes an obligation to treat the components of that world with respect. As an extension of one's own being, the individual shares identity with this “larger” world and therefore has responsibility for it. That is the moral sense and motive that lies at the heart of social cooperation because in the deep spiritual sense all other humans or animals or plants are YOU. With developed spiritual awareness, the requirement to cooperate and share and care is not just a matter of social rules [ethics]; it is a function of recognizing that these “others” are really extensions of

yourself [morality]. In a sense you are just treating your "greater" self with the consideration and respect that You deserve.

It is a grave loss when humans and their societies and cultures loose this deep spiritual sense of knowing the self, society, and the natural world. And the loss shows up dramatically in the reduction of support for the human "instinct" to cooperate, allowing the competition "instinct" to prevail in the vacuum that is created. The tendency to treat social relations as impersonal and competitive supports exploitation. By contrast, an inclination to treat social relations as personal and cooperative supports respect and assistance. And the modern, secular, material, a-spiritual western world suffers from the loss of input from spiritual awareness and its support for experiencing all social relations as personal – as extensions of the personal self. Relying solely on ethical training to promote cooperation is a weak alternative to having both a strong ethical and moral/spiritual basis of support for social cooperation – for treating all humans as personal relations. In today's world, between secular materialism on the one hand and religion on the other, spiritual/moral support for cooperation is much weaker than it could be. [For a more in-depth presentation of my approach to the relationship of religion to spirituality and both to social values see: "Religion and the Sources of Social Values," available on my website: http://www.dynamic-humanism.com .

12) Art and Recreation and Cooperation

Art and recreation begin in hunter gatherer societies as activities associated with either religious ritual or play. Celebration itself tends to be ritualized. So, what we separate out as art and recreation in civilized societies is mostly integrated into ritual or everyday social events in aboriginal societies. As such, these activities tend to be more cooperative than competitive in their orientation. In these cultures, there is little of what today in civilized societies would be called secular art, formal game and sport, and separate recreation activities. In the civilized setting, art [graphic, plastic and performing] and recreation [hiking, biking, sailing, kayaking, bird watching, etc.] can support cooperation but often they do not, depending on how they are approached and engaged. Art that is merely sensational entertainment [eg. most action films and video games] or sport that is highly competitive and aggressive [boxing and most professional sports] are essentially devoid of spiritual or cooperative value. The same can be said of rip and run recreation served by ATVs, mountain bikes, snowmobiles, dune buggies, jet skis, etc. In the main these forms of art and recreation exhibit and support competition both socially and toward the natural environment, even when they involve teams that secondarily support social values. In the secular

arts and entertainments, sentimentalism, gratuitous violence and sexual titillation are often focal, and in their sensationalism they attract an audience for their purveyors, whose objectives are almost exclusively economic. Unfortunately, there is little social or spiritual value in most of these offerings.

Some secular art explores social relations and personal character in a serious way, and such art generally supports social and communal values. And some recreation invites reflection and contemplation in and of the natural world. Where recreation invites connecting to, sharing in, and supporting the components of this natural world, it can be both socially and spiritually significant. So, some secular art and recreation do support cooperation, but they are in the minority within the domain of art and recreation in modern complex society.

Great Art derives from and expresses spiritual awareness in symbolic form – the realization of connectedness and a shared identity at some level beyond the individual. And it encourages in its audience this same awareness and sensitivity. Creating and experiencing this art is expanding in effect and it supports cooperation as it stretches the boundaries of individual and group identity. In the arts, great music, dance, and drama [in both theater and film] can evoke this kind of experience in both the performer and the audience. And in terms of recreation, there are ways to walk in the woods or on the beach or enjoy a flower or a magnificent landscape that can invite this kind of expanded awareness. But, unfortunately, this kind of art and recreation is not the norm in modern western cultures where art and recreation definitely trend toward sensationalism and the gratuitous display of aggressive behavior. As a result, overall, the arts and recreation support competition rather than cooperation in social relations. [For a more in-depth discussion of the role of art in the context of spirituality see: "My Approach to Interpreting Art and Religion," and "The Role of Art in Dynamic Humanism," available on my website: http://www.dynamic-humanism.com]

Genetic Engineering and Cooperation

As challenging as the issue may be, genetic engineering could contribute to achieving the needed shift to a cooperative biological foundation for humans in complex society at world scale. This, assuming that all the fears, ethical issues and potential complications could be adequately addressed! Genetic self-engineering of the human species is a huge socio-cultural challenge, but one that technologically is very rapidly emerging on the horizon. Rectifying genetic based diseases and defects is now available on a limited basis and is posed to

advance rapidly as the details of the human genome become better and better determined.

The follow-on “engineering” phase will be devoted to “improving” the capabilities of the species. It is in this phase that the greatest concerns arise, especially given the earlier horrendous excesses of eugenics. But it is also the phase where the option to enhance the human predisposition to cooperation emerges. It is here that the human biologically grounded traits that detract from the ability of humans to cooperate and to sustain cooperation can be considered for alteration. Apart from the panoply of ethical concerns, the greatest risk is that engineering genetic “improvements” will itself become a competitive enterprise and will be employed to favor one race or society over another – increasing competition rather than reducing its influence in world culture. It is entirely possible that in order for genetic “improvements” to the species to be universal and equitable at world scale, the level of cooperation among humans may be required that the engineering itself would be intended to effect!

Whatever role human genetic engineering may play in the future of both the species and human complex society, this capability is emerging, and its role must begin to be very seriously considered. And given the fact that it seems nearly impossible for cultural change to effect increased cooperation at anything like the pace and scale required, it appears that human genetic engineering will need to somehow be in the mix to assist with a solution.

Summary

In all of nature, two opposing forces are present: attraction and repulsion, aggregation and separation, etc. In the human social domain these are the forces for cooperation and competition. To the extent that humans have influence on this dynamic in their social and natural world, humans and their cultures must manage this basic dynamic so humanity can survive and thrive during the species' window of opportunity. Currently and on a worldwide scale, humanity faces several major challenges that require a high degree of cooperation at the international level in order to be adequately and fairly addressed: human population at least twice the ecological carrying capacity of the planet; basic resource depletion and contamination – especially air, fresh water and terrestrial and ocean ecosystems; plant and animal species extinction and habitat loss at an alarming rate; gross inequality in economy, standard of living and opportunity within and across social groups at all levels; high risk for drug resistant, viral and bacterial pan epidemics; nuclear conflagration capable of extinguishing the civilized state of humanity; climate change proceeding at a

geometric rate of impact capable of severely impacting the world food supply and necessitating mass migration and fomenting political and economic upheaval. Independently, each of these challenges looms large in the present and requires worldwide, international planning and coordinated implementation to be solved. Collectively, these challenges are truly daunting and essentially impossible to address without a commitment to full cooperation at every level of social structure from communities to all nations.

Sustaining the status quo of nominal cooperation together with an underlying and more powerful orientation to self-interested, competitively oriented social relations is an invitation to disaster at all levels for the civilized state of humanity. The status quo means humanity's current and imminent challenges will not be addressed individually or collectively and not in a timely manner. Sustaining the status quo means limiting cooperation to a very constrained view of personal relations and allowing an essentially competitive approach to prevail throughout the vast realm of impersonal relations. Presently, this approach to social relations at all social scales is responsible for the cautious, tentative, suspicious, competitive nature of most human relations in and among modern complex societies. The fact that assertive men, with their innate biological charge of testosterone and adrenalin, conduct most of these relations at the larger social scales supports the continuation of this status quo, competitive condition.

To date, culture within individual complex societies has only been strong enough to promote a state of toleration in the predominantly impersonal social relations of these societies. And toleration is the lowest level of the cooperative orientation. Toleration as a minimum condition across nations is a goal of the United Nations, but sustaining commitment even along this line is tenuous. Ironically, economic and defensive self-interest have proven to be the major motivators for cooperation in the international realm; this, in spite of the fact that economy and defense are fundamentally competitive activities. And the United Nations, with the veto power given to Security Council members, is structurally designed to be too weak to generate broad based consensus/cooperation on all but relatively minor issues.

No pan-national culture has yet arisen to require the higher levels of cooperation in respect, accommodation, assistance, and true caring and sharing. International, coordinated assistance in the event of major outbreaks of disease, genocide, or natural disasters are occasions when nations do come together, but these occasions are temporary. Once these issues are addressed, relations among nations tend to return to the default positions of

either self-interested cooperation or direct competition. What is needed to address humanity's collective challenges is the emergence of a universal world culture that is strong enough to require commitment to high level cooperation in all human relations at all social scales. This, together with an international institutional structure with the authority to enforce that commitment – a real, independent World Court overseeing mandatory arbitration to resolve all substantive conflicts.

On a few of the cultural variables considered in this essay, current trends are encouraging in suggesting that humanity may be able to achieve increased cooperation together with a reduction in competition: representative democracy emphasizing equality at the political level and allowing all voices to be heard and considered; equal rights and the rule of law in an independent judicial system promoting equality and punishing excessively competitive and exclusively self-interested actions; electronic communication of information to the point of full transparency eliminating the ability to hide self-interested intentions and seek advantage, which are essential for competitive activities to be pursued successfully.

Other trends on other significant cultural variables are discouraging: the failure of standard religious institutions to condemn religious extremism, even when such extremism promotes conflict to the point of soliciting the apocalypse; the loss of supportive input on cooperation from spirituality in developed and developing nations with their shift to a secular material focus; the competitive social proclivity of males as a result of the biological combination in males of testosterone and adrenaline hormones; the current world economy with the WTO operating under its existing insufficient and unfair rules and mandates; the entrenched private defense industry and military industrial complex which rest on a competitive base and which eats up huge economic and natural resources that could otherwise be used to promote opportunity, equality, and cooperation; the proliferation of nuclear weapons; blatant conditions of inequality and poverty which promote resentment and discourage cooperation; the role of media in focusing on socially divisive and extreme activities and pronouncements for their sensational entertainment and economic value – with the result that the stress and fear that are promoted in the populace end up eliciting caution and restraint in social relations.

On other important cultural variables, while the potential exists for them to contribute to increased cooperation, as they are currently formulated their influence is weak, neutral or negative: education could keep adolescents engaged with adults and their communities, and it could instill critical thinking

skills, intuitive competence, and breadth of cultural perspective so citizens would have the ability to properly assess information and be aware of their own biases; science could promote its major findings to the citizenry and challenge the legitimacy of contrary beliefs and opinions; an independent world court system could be strong enough to arbitrate and settle disputes among nations before they escalate to physical conflict; senior citizens could remain engaged in their communities and provide the kind of wisdom of which elders are capable; art and recreation could withdraw from purveying the purely sensational and aggressive and provide experiences that encourage citizens to discover and develop their more expansive sense of self; the world economy could be governed by fair WTO rules and regulations that could promote connections among all nations that are so complete that moving to conflict would become clearly counter productive.

Genetic engineering to increase humanity's orientation to cooperation and to reduce its tendency to competition will arise in the relatively near future as an option to assist what seems to be an almost impossible task for culture change alone to achieve at the scale and pace required. But human genetic engineering to “improve” the species, whether for increased cooperation or other capabilities, comes with its own set of very significant issues and challenges, if it is to be applied equitably.

Conclusion

While much greater cooperation is what humanity needs if the civilized state is to survive and thrive, it is a Herculean task to achieve it, in part because humans are not inherently primed to be cooperative beyond local personal relations. Given the biological and cultural behavior set that humans bring to impersonal relations in the modern civilized condition from their long hunter gatherer past, we cannot be naive about what we are asking/proposing when we suggest the need for a pan-culture strong enough to convert impersonal relations into personal relations. And presently, universal human cooperation has not been asserted as the primary underlying need upon which all other national and international objectives rest. Without this recognition, the commitment does not exist to create a pan-cultural entity, which would develop a plan and formulate an implementation strategy to address humanity's challenges. The need is immediate and urgent, but the components are not in place to begin to see cooperation dominate in human relations at a national level, much less at world wide scale.

Sure, every enlightened individual can make their personal contribution to be more cooperative, and that is important. But the fact is that most people in the world devote virtually all of their time and energy to just making it through their "everyday." If we had a couple of centuries to work from the bottom up toward this goal of greater cooperation, such an approach might work, but in all likelihood humanity does not have anything like that luxury of time. In my view, the only real option to address the need for a world wide movement to demand much greater cooperation is a top down approach led by a world wide enlightened elite that has the skill and authority to break through the political morass of current national and international relations and insist on action. Where is this enlightened and empowered elite, or even the recognition that it is needed? Within the United Nations? Potentially, but not as it is presently constituted!

If humanity is not paralyzed by the scope of the cooperation issue and how incredibly unprepared humans are to address it, humanity can at least start by recognizing the goal and understanding why this issue is both so inherently difficult and so critical to be met.

Polity, Universal Government

#30 "The Ultimate Unification Option," 2024.

At most levels of modern society, the self-centered ME perspective dominates the communal WE perspective. Whether at the municipal, county, state, national, or global scale, the controlling point of view is inward and protective, not outward and sharing; fundamentally competitive rather than cooperative.

Modern society at the global level faces many significant challenges and collectively these challenges threaten the survival of humanity in the complex state: climate change, disinformation/propaganda, pandemics, migration, inequality, injustice, ecological abuse, resource depletion, out-of-control pace of change, run-away capitalistic economy, over population, and religious, ethnic, racial, and national conflict. Throughout, the dominant ME "sovereignty" point of view means that cooperation is insufficient to allow for quality planning and implementation of the actions needed to address and adequately resolve these issues at all scales. We find ourselves in a state of short-term thinking, ME paralysis waiting for "the next shoe to drop" in our escalating descent into chaos.

Humanity has managed to integrate socially all the way from bands and tribes to nation states of billions. Unfortunately, it is now failing to take the next step: commitment to integration at the global scale under a fully empowered global government of federally organized nations. The current condition of the United Nations is entirely inadequate, but complete revision plans exist that, if implemented, can convert the UN into the empowered entity that is required. If only humanity was not so focused on struggling to address the ever-present issues within its current ME oriented state and national structures. The result: the global level solution that provides the vehicle to solve virtually all of our big problems is almost entirely ignored. And while we dither, the challenges magnify and the threat to our species' continued viability increases.

Humanity is on the edge of great promise: to unify and live well on planet Earth and to "engineer" itself into variations able to begin the process of successfully occupying other moons and planets in our solar system and galaxy. But this potential future requires commitment to the WE perspective of global human unification and the containment of our excessive self-centered ME perspective. A resurgent universal infusion of spirituality – not religion, together with awareness of the unification function of energy in reality can support our committing to this positive future for ourselves. The key question before us:

In Sufficient Time,
Will We Recognize the Global Government Option and Then Firmly Pursue It?

#31 "The Global Challenge for Humanity – Stated Simply," 2019.

As simply as possible, let's identify the present challenge before humanity.

1) The key issues humanity now faces are global in nature: nuclear war, climate change, pandemics, cyber/information malfeasance, pollution, species extinction, over population, uncontrolled genetic engineering, unsustainable demand on and waste of natural resources, runaway expanding capitalist economy, vulnerable global financial system, inequality within and among nations, escalating pressure of human migration/refugees.

2) Many of these challenges require relatively immediate attention at the global scale if the potential catastrophic impacts to humanity are to be avoided.

3) Adequately addressing these challenges requires a very high degree of cooperation among all the nations/citizens of the world.

4) Unfortunately, individual states and nations are consumed for the most part by their internal concerns and issues and by their pursuit of their exclusive external interests. As such, their basic orientation to one another tends to be more competitive than cooperative.

5) Individual states and nations tend to deny or avoid responsibility for global issues since they assert that they have limited capacity to address/resolve them.

6) Many nations are restrained from attending to these challenges as a result of the worldviews of their dominant religions which predict and invite catastrophic consequences for humanity [Armageddon, the Hour, Kali Yuga]. Fundamentalist Christians, Muslims and Hindus regard these challenges and their potential catastrophic consequences as fulfilling God's pledge to extinguish a depraved humanity and to admit true believers to a "better" existence in a new phase.

7) Individual states and nations tend to consider cooperation on a global scale only in response to immediately present, major global challenges or after global level catastrophes. They are not good at anticipatory planning and implementation to avoid challenges that have not yet manifested.

8) No global governmental structure currently exists that is capable of addressing/resolving any of these challenges in a timely manner.

9) Some regional federations of states and nations exist but they are usually focused on particular goals, some of which can even exacerbate the larger global challenges: defense and trade treaties.

10) NGOs with international scope exist with particular interests and goals, but they are mostly restricted to assisting at the discretion of nations and federations of nations.

11) The United Nations is the only global level organization that is comprehensive in the scope of its concerns. But, unfortunately, as it is presently structured, the UN is not empowered <u>as a government</u> to effectively and efficiently act and direct the actions of nations in behalf of the collective good of all nations.

So, what are the alternative conclusions to be reached from these facts:

The fatalist looks at the situation and throws his or her hands in the air and says, “We’re doomed.” “There is nothing humanity can do.”

The pessimist looks at a) the immediacy of the many overlapping needs, b) the complexity and diversity of the situation politically across 193 nations, c) the lack of collective will/motivation to develop and pursue the solutions, d) the primacy of the competitive rather than cooperative orientation among nations, and e) the resistance to do anything until the conditions become dire. The pessimist then concludes that humanity will not be able to get its act together in a timely manner, and at a minimum civilization is doomed to extinction. After all, he/she observes: every species and civilization that has ever existed has suffered eventual collapse/extinction; so, it makes little difference whether the cause of this inevitable collapse/extinction is geological, cosmological, or the activities of humanity itself.

The optimist/idealist looks at the overall situation and assumes that humanity will come up with the needed solutions in sufficient time to avoid catastrophe just as it has been able to do in its outstanding development to the present under the umbrella of civilization. Some combination of democracy, capitalism, rule of law, science, technology, bio-engineering, robotics, artificial intelligence, and Big Data will provide the answers to the survival of humanity in some state that will lead to fulfilling its destiny to continue to progress. No need to worry excessively; it will all work out. Just be smart, adjust, and stay the course.

The realist looks at the overall situation and recognizes all of the factors that contribute to the high degree of difficulty in seeking the global solutions required. But he or she allows that humanity has no choice other than to make a good faith effort to do what it takes to sustain the species in a state that can support the civilized condition for as long a term as possible. So, the realist supports any and all strategies, activities and changes that can resolve humanity’s global challenges individually and collectively. The realist says, “Get on with it; win or lose, every day counts.”

Each of us as individuals, communities and nations has to decide to which of these perspectives we subscribe. The time for denial/procrastination is over.

I am a realist. So, from this perspective, what needs to be done?

1) Every individual, community and nation must accept responsibility for and significantly curtail their level of contribution to humanity’s global challenges.

2) The developed and developing nations of the world must recognize their primary responsibility for creating the problems that now threaten humanity.
3) These developed/developing nations must come together, take the lead, and provide most of the financial and technical means to resolve these problems.
4) The United Nations must be reformed on a comprehensive basis to provide a fair and empowered, federally structured global government which is fully capable of developing, implementing, overseeing, and requiring the changes in the activities of all states and nations that will lead to resolution of humanity's current and future challenges.
5) These U.N. based, required changes must be implemented by 2030.
6) Steps #2, #3 and #4 must occur more or less conjointly.

Significant global challenges necessitate the presence of a fully functional, efficient, and effective global government. There is no other realistic solution if humanity's collective problems are to be resolved in a timely manner.

An organization already exists that is promoting global level goals that address humanity's global level challenges within a fully reformed U.N. as an empowered global scale government. Citizens, communities, states and nations can support the efforts of this organization, which has been around for many years under outstanding, international, expert leadership:

World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy: www.wfm-igp.org [with affiliated national organizations]
In the U.S.: Citizens for Global Solutions: www.globalsolutions.org
See especially: Joseph E. Schwartzberg, Transforming the U.N. System, (U.N. Univ. Pr.) 2013. [Summary https://globalsolutions.org/portfolio transforming-the-united-nations-system-by-joseph-e-schwartzberg/]

Information/Media

#32 "The Social Disaster of Unregulated Social Media," 2020.

In the last ten plus years, internet based social media has exploded at the national and global levels. Google, Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, Instagram, etc. have become multi-billion dollar companies while both they and the independent internet blogs and podcasts have become the major sources of information for most individuals. Initially, social media projected itself in ideal terms – connecting at light speed virtually every citizen of the world, first with everyone else and second with anything that these citizens might want to know

or buy. That is the positive function claimed by social media and internet browsers.

It did not take long for the dark side of this enterprise to emerge because as financial ventures, these global scale companies are exclusively focused on maximizing their profits. Using artificial intelligence [AI] together with huge data collection bases, these social media companies can access, retain, and deliver to any interested party willing to PAY all of the choices that every individual makes as he or she utilizes the internet. And, most importantly, this capability opens the door to enormous monetary gains for these companies.

While the initial focus of these internet and social media enterprises was promoting the products and services of commercial businesses, in short order information itself emerged as a VERY "valuable" product. And these social media enterprises, along with the many internet blogs and podcasts, quickly realized that the more sensational the information that they made available to a gullible – and often frustrated – public, the greater were their financial returns. In addition, unlike the established print and broadcast media, no restrictions or "journalistic" traditions of responsibility exist for social media regarding the accuracy of the information that they project into the worldwide public domain. Moreover, these internet information platforms could hide their greed and irresponsibility behind the 1st Amendment free speech right, and/or assert that entertainment rather than accurate information passing was their intent!

The consequence: In this entirely unregulated context, social media companies along with internet blogs and podcasts have been allowed to become instantaneous and global scale rumor mongers and dispensers of propaganda, disinformation, fake news, and baseless conspiracy theories. In addition, utilizing AI, these social media companies can target the exact individuals who will be most receptive to [interested in] specific types of disinformation on nearly any subject. The result: a highly efficient, worldwide and instantaneous rumor/propaganda system has arisen which is readily available to be exploited for nefarious purposes by all kinds of interested parties, including "cyber" actors at the state level who seek to influence the attitudes, behavior, views, and votes of whole national populations.

In this totally unregulated setting, social media becomes an extraordinarily powerful mechanism to rapidly concentrate and radicalize targeted populations of individuals. As people worldwide have come to rely more and more on the internet and social media for all kinds of information and as social media tailors more and more of this information to the specifically identified interests of these

separate individuals, people are being fed only what 'the record" indicates that they want to "hear." In this highly prioritized system, exposure of individuals to alternative information sources and views shrinks exponentially. As a consequence, individuals have become isolated in their self-affirming information bubbles, whether this bubble is politically, economically, or socially conservative or progressive. The political result: extreme polarization is magnified to the point of radicalization/insurrection in a system that is currently generating and targeting information that is without any filters for its reliability.

So, WHO cares?? Society Cares!! Because society is only sustainable if its citizens cooperate, share, compromise, and have basic trust in one another. The disconnect of public information from truth invites very dangerous consequences at all social scales from families to nations. The answer to this currently disastrous situation: Integrated national and international regulation of social media and internet browser companies must be created and implemented which requires that all information made available for public consumption on the internet by any individual, group, organization, business, or government must pass a universally available fact checking filter before it can be distributed.

Yes, it is a huge challenge to develop and implement such regulations, but we have succeeded at least at the national level with other similar challenges that have necessitated careful regulation and enforcement – water, air, food, utilities, drugs, even banks, etc. Information in the internet realm is just one of the next big regulation challenges [together with climate change, gun control, money in politics, inequality, etc.] that our incessant pursuit of "progress," economic gain, and new technology has produced!

A free press must also be a responsible press – whatever the media/medium of this "press" may be. Internet based social media and all of the relevant "platforms" within it must be brought under this regulatory umbrella if modern society is to survive with a modicum of integrity. Social media must stop being allowed to cry the equivalent of "Fire" in the theater of national and global society. Free speech <u>in the public arena</u> must be responsible, reliable speech.

#33 "Why Social Media Is Currently So Dangerous," 2024.

Shared Information to which all group members are committed is the basis for their cultural worldview. The solidarity of all human societies at all levels rests on the strength of their worldviews. The reliability of the information that is purveyed to the public is absolutely critical if societies are to remain stable. The

core reason Social Media [SM] is currently dangerous is because it is easily exploited, thereby allowing much of the information it purveys to be unreliable.

Why is this the case?

1) SM is a totally unregulated information distribution conglomerate. There are no licensing, journalistic ethic, or information accuracy requirements for its internet based websites, podcasts, and many App information sharing systems.
2) SM providers claim protection from regulation under the individual right of free speech as if the information it purveys to the public is private speech.
3) SM is internet based with unexamined information being distributed instantaneously and nearly universally at the global level.
4) SM is mostly free to individual users but supported by a huge economic enterprise of mostly corporate advertisers who benefit from exploiting "captured," mostly "always connected," huge targeted user groups.
5) SM users constitute an isolated population of individuals who – once connected on the basis of their shared opinions – are rapidly converted into a consolidated social group of highly supportive "friends."
6) SM promotes unverified information claims going viral by taking advantage of the "instinct" of humans to share awareness of immediately sensational phenomena ["news"] to assure their survival.
7) SM exploits the fact that isolated humans under stress/threat are vulnerable to radicalization when they experience social connectedness that offers mostly unchallenged, simplistic solutions to their "problems."

In its unregulated state, Social Media can be easily employed to purvey disinformation, conspiracy theories, propaganda, and outright lies. This situation is not tolerated in authoritarian societies where access to information is carefully controlled. Democratic societies risk being converted to autocracies if they fail to insist that all information purveyed by any means to the public be both independently assessed for its accuracy and appropriately labeled. Economic and partisan political interests can not be allowed to undermine the integrity and reliability of the shared information that legitimately supports the worldview of a democratic society. All public media must be fully and fairly regulated!

#34 "Ever Increasing Social Isolation in Modern Life: Individualism and Modern Communication Technology," 2020.

In some areas of the world, it is now common in 2020 to see the majority of city dwellers walking down the street focused on the smart phone screens that they

are holding forward in one hand. It is even possible to see individuals seated right next to one another and communicating by texting on their phones. Early childhood educators have identified a pervasive social interactive deficit in their young students due to their excessive focus on television, phone, and game screens – and not on learning how to interact socially. And the elderly are essentially more and more individually warehoused in separate rooms in nursing homes with the television droning on non-stop.

How did humanity come to this??

The Answer: Initially, Communication Convenience/Efficiency; Later, Exploited for Economic Gain and Political Control

The Originating Source: Oral Language

The Lineage: Oral Language, Image Painting, Numbers/Arithmetic, Alphabet, Writing, Copying, Maths, Science, Printing, Photography, Telegraph, Telephone, Radio, Motion Pictures, Television, Video, Mainframe Computer, Satellite Surveillance, GPS/GIS, Personal Computer, Cable and Satellite Internet, Cell Phone, Artificial Intelligence, "Smart" Phone, coming soon – Holographic Media, and eventually the "Brain Implant"

The Combined Verbal-Visual, Computational, and Data Storage/Access Capabilities Are Referred to As: Information Technology – IT

Any communication system/technology – including the initiating form in oral language – can be employed to achieve positive or negative consequences. Just so, oral language itself can be used to communicate accurate information or to deceive with disinformation and lies. Over time, human societies develop rules/regulations/punishments to discourage irresponsible/negative exploitation of IT. Overall, the problem is that IT has developed so rapidly – especially in the last fifty years – that mechanisms of social control/regulation have lagged far behind with the result that in multiple ways the integrity of modern society is threatened. One of these negative "ways" is IT's promotion of social isolation.

The development of IT over the long term has paradoxically on the one hand supported and promoted the growth of tribes into enormous complex societies, and on the other hand encouraged individualistic/self-interested values and weakened social connectedness, interpersonal relations, and community at all levels. Why is this the case? On the positive side, more and more efficient communication and calculation makes it possible to successfully manage larger

and larger groups of people who can be engaged in a great many specialized occupations. These capabilities can result in social progress – greater security and a "higher" standard of living. On the negative side, as human societies have grown from bands to city states to nations to empires, the citizens have come to know one another more and more impersonally instead of personally in many roles over lifetimes. As impersonal relations become the norm, citizens evolve to be just one step removed from strangers to one another, with the result that they are inclined to be more and more reserved and competitive rather than cooperative and helpful with one another. This condition is compounded by the fact that diversity in the citizenry in complex societies – differences in class, race, dress, language, ethnicity, religion, education, etc. – accentuates the tendency among citizens to regard other citizens in impersonal/competitive terms. In short, even in democratic societies, impersonally related citizens focus more and more on their individual success/happiness/gain – individual values, and less and less on their responsibility to cooperate with, share, and contribute to their societies – communal values.

So, as communication/information technology "advances," it serves to bring humans together in larger and larger societies at the same time that it works to pull these same humans apart – converting personal relations into impersonal relations – cooperation into competition, communal values into individual values. And in the most recent stage of this developmental process, individualistically oriented citizens become more isolated as the electronic form of IT – with its "sifting" algorithms – draws them more and more into a narrower and narrower virtual reality rather than into a more inclusive, social interactive reality. The overall result: social interactive isolation in what otherwise seems to be a flood of virtual connectedness.

The negative consequences of increased social isolation due to evolving IT is very significant in itself. But this negative impact is greatly compounded as a result of the current failure by most representative democracies to screen information that is offered to the public on social media platforms for its reliability. Isolation with reliable information is problematic enough; but social isolation with low quality information is a recipe for generating extreme social problems.

When humans develop societies and technologies which separate and isolate individuals more and more, these isolated individuals develop a desperate need for face-to-face social interaction. And this intense need renders these isolated individuals maximally susceptible to unrestrained, alarmist, fear producing

propaganda/rumor/conspiracy theories. Why? Because fear paralyses rational thought and social media offers otherwise isolated individuals the ILLUSION of their being brought together into cohesive, committed groups. And once these socially needy citizens are inside their VIRTUAL bubbles with their newly discovered "friends," it is as much the friendship as it is the truth value of the ideology that sustains their commitment. Polarization and radicalization is a predictable follow-on in the context of the resulting sense of intense and intimate relations for the participants. For the socially isolated, the benefits of belonging and sharing in commitment to a new "movement" takes precedence while critical thinking fades into the background. And the algorithms of the capitalist form of IT both feed this narrowly identified new virtual commitment and "protect" the participants from information that might challenge their ideology. As this process proceeds, it becomes more and more likely that what begins as a focused, if fallacious, ideology [eg. progressives are out to take away your guns, open the borders to any and all non-white immigrants, replace capitalism with full-blown socialism, etc.] will have a good chance to evolve into a comprehensive conspiratorial worldview [eg. the "Deep" State, One World Order, Qanon – with Trump as the Q "Savior," etc.].

Social isolation spells trouble for both individual and societal health. The current trend toward social isolation and ideological extremism is promoted by the combination of increasing individualistic values and an ever expanding, unreliable social media that encourages socially isolated citizens to define their worldview in terms of an unchecked, virtually constructed reality. This modern trend has a long history moving through a series of technological communication changes, the pace of which has increased dramatically in the last fifty years. Modern humans need to recognize how potentially destabilizing the current situation is and do what it takes to reverse this overall trend. Otherwise, the combination of 1) social isolation, 2) unreliable and algorithmic fed information in an increasingly virtually circumscribed reality, and 3) social, economic and political polarization have the potential to undermine the integrity of complex, democratic societies.

Economy

#35 "Market Economy $, Market Government $$, Market Society $$$: Is Modern Complex, Civilized Society Sustainable?," 2019.

Everything Goes Back to the Fundamentals of What Constitutes Being Human!

Introduction

When Humans get into trouble at any scale from the individual to the family to the village to the state to the nation to the global community, it usually reflects an imbalance in how they are manifesting the two major tendencies that contribute to species survival: the competitive and cooperative "instincts." Other ways of describing this basic dynamic opposition include: individual versus social values, personal vs. communal perspectives, self-interest vs. community benefit, Me vs. We, etc. Now, both competitive and cooperative human "instincts" have been proven to be genetically based. And, importantly, both of these ways of engaging the world – when kept in appropriate balance – are essential to individual and social security and ultimately to species survival. Supporting both aspects of this fundamental dynamic are our emotions which exist to charge the exercise of both of these "instincts" in our behavior with "felt" importance. The essential competition-cooperation dynamic is expressed at all social levels/scales and throughout all of our human societal institutions. If the manifestation of these "instincts" are kept in balance first, at all scales, second, within and among these social institutions, and third, in relationship to the surrounding ecology, humans best position themselves to thrive for the long term. By contrast, to the degree that these "instincts" are expressed in an imbalanced manner in any of these domains, humans put themselves at risk.

Conditions in the Very Long Period of Bands and Tribe

In the first 240,000 years of human existence, humans existed in bands and tribes where they learned to balance these two ways of understanding themselves as individuals and of relating both to other humans and to the resource system of the environment that surrounded them. If they did not achieve this state, they failed in the long term "test" of their viability and were added to the trash heap of species experimentation. The multiple millennia provided the long term test across many different ecological contexts of the basis for true sustainability. Ultimately, the winning formula favored smaller groups of relatively mobile bands organized into more loosely structured tribes, all operating within recognized territories. Within bands and tribes social relations were personal in nature with others known in the round and over time in multiple roles. Others were regarded as brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles and cousins and elder grandparents even if they were not truly blood relations. Individuals depended upon one another in multiple ways. And while individuals could excel and be recognized and rewarded for their individual talents and skills, they were fully aware that the positive results of their efforts were to be shared, not hoarded. Allowing for individual differences and often the different roles assigned to the sexes, individual adult humans were mostly equal in

status and position. Elders were respected for their knowledge and skills, and children were raised along side supervising adults learning the skills necessary to survive and be successful. And typically young people transitioned to adult status around the time of puberty – no extended, independent adolescence. Individuals who competitively pursued their exclusive self-interests invited being banished from the community, which was often a death sentence. Among tribes and across their territories there was competition, but there was also trade that encouraged cooperation; and disputes were often settled by ritual means rather than violent confrontation.

Viewed in strictly modern material and secular terms, this aboriginal/native life was physically demanding, vulnerable, and relatively short. Viewed in spiritual and social as well as ecological terms this lifestyle was balanced, sustainable, and of a much higher quality than is typically accorded by us moderns.

For those who think I am idealizing the aboriginal/native cultural condition of bands and tribes, I suggest examining the work of Bill Gammage, The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia, Sidney, 2011. This thoroughly documented, multiple award winning study reveals how aboriginal bands and tribes in Australia coordinated across a vast continental territory and across huge differences in climate and ecology to achieve social and ecological balance for millennia. This was the situation prior to their relatively late contact with the forces of civilization, mostly in the latter part of the 19th century. Especially interesting is the assumption of the invading Europeans as to their superiority and their corresponding view that these mostly “naked and black” aborigines were savages, ignorant and definitely not utilizing their land to its best advantage. The result: under European management, the land and wildlife were greatly degraded and put in peril. Note: these “simple” people managed their population [infanticide] so as to keep the numbers in their bands and tribes within what were sustainable limits even in periodic times of ecological stress.

The lesson from an impressive work like The Biggest Estate on Earth: it was a long, slow process for humans to develop a worldview and appropriate following behavior that supported a truly sustainable/balanced societal and ecological system. By contrast, most modern humans have existed in complex society under “civilized” conditions for only 1-2,000 years, a period that amounts to a strictly experimental phase. And during this time modern humans have been pursuing change so rapidly in all aspects of their lives and institutions that there has been nowhere near sufficient time for the systems to settle out and for sustainable balance to even be recognized, much less achieved. The result: in the name of making rapid “progress” pursuing their current developmental projectory, modern

humans may be about to blow the chance for the species to take advantage of the incredible opportunities that complex society and the civilized state really have to offer. Exposing the relationship of this unfortunate potential result to the fundamental imbalance that exists in modern society between our competitive and cooperative “instincts” is what the remainder of this essay is about.

The Thesis of This Essay

The thesis of this essay: Modern Complex Society suffers from a pervasive imbalance that favors the competitive, individualistic, self-interested perspective and diminishes the influence of the cooperative, communal, community benefit perspective at nearly all social scales and in many of its institutions – including those institutions that rely upon and are intended to promote cooperation. This trend toward the competitive begins with a minimally regulated capitalistic economy, expands to an increasingly market oriented government – including the judiciary, and ends with what is now being identified by social scientists as a market society. The consequences of the over emphasis on the competitive at all levels of modern society results in significant social and ecological problems all the way from local to the global scales that have the potential to threaten the sustainability of the human civilized state.

History – The Early Period of Complex Society

With the advent both of concentrated animal husbandry and especially of agriculture in the first 3,000 years of the “modern” period, the population of human societies grew very substantially, and it settled in concentrated, specific locations. But, critically important, the benefits of this new “enlarged” human condition were not shared equally among the members/citizens. Whereas in bands and tribes all adults were relatively equal and mostly shared equally in resources and benefits, with settlement, enlargement and concentration, citizens rapidly came to be differentiated into ranked classes, with the elite/privileged citizens controlling more and more of the benefits/resources/wealth. As this elite system of power, privilege and wealth developed further, the classes came to be assigned permanent positions often with a hereditary basis; and differentiation among the elite resulted in the emergence of the institution of Kingship. In this process, formal religion arose to provide support for this system of differential social status by associating privilege and high social position with elevated spiritual status – ultimately assigning divine status and combining it with kingship. The result of these developments was that the mostly egalitarian social condition of bands and tribes disappeared along with the equal sharing of resources. Such extreme differentiation supported competition between individuals and classes for power

and wealth which in turn gave rise to both formal external [military] and internal [police] security forces to suppress dissent and to protect the elites and their territories/states/nations/empires.

For 5,000 plus years, this highly differentiated and relatively permanent state was the condition of complex society as empires arose and fell across much of the planet. Civilizations and empires frequently fell due to corruption, competition and incompetence among the elites, the exhaustion of resources, natural disasters, or defeat by competing city states/kingships/empires. In some instances, revolution by the less privileged classes was either a major or contributing factor in these downfalls. On average these complex society civilizations persisted for about 350 years with longer surviving examples going through cycles of ups and downs. They were the first experiment in complex society, and they were not stable or sustainable for the long term in anything like what pertained in the multi-millennia time frame of bands and tribes. The lesson: Complex society based on a high degree of political and economic inequality, competition and self-interest was not sustainable – socially or ecologically. The cooperative, community benefit "instinct" in human behavior and this principle in social relations had not been respected. Most kingships are gone today, but some intermediate stage warlord/chieftain based societies persist.

Trade has always been important among human groups including bands and tribes, and trading relationships require cooperation and encourage at least a limited form of federation. And city-states prior to being unified into nations or empires often participated/cooperated in extensive trading networks. But competition among city-states, and especially empires, frequently descended into full blown warfare at a scale and with disastrous consequences that bands and tribes never experienced. Of course, competition among modern nations/empires have resulted in even more devastating global scale conflicts with weapons that threaten humanity as a whole.

Warfare – along with efficient trading/transport systems and food production – were significant motivators of technological innovation in early complex society. And these societies allowed for a level of specialization in the crafts and the pursuit of knowledge that favored much more rapid progress in understanding the nature of the material world and implementing improvements in manipulating this world to the benefit of humans. Improved security and a "higher" standard of living was the result – at least for the elites and for those that were more closely associated with them. Progress was made technologically in a number of areas, and relatively separate craft, soldier, scholar/bureaucrat, and artist categories of citizens emerged. In short, opportunities began to arise for citizens to advance their

position in spite of this highly stratified society. They could improve their personal situation if they were competitive and industrious in applying their talents, knowledge and skills. And since bureaucratic skills were needed in many areas, basic financial and accounting systems arose to provide the basis for efficient management, which required at least a basic level of organizational cooperation. Social rules were codified forming the basis for a legal and eventually a judicial system. And written languages were created allowing for events to be recorded and knowledge to be retained in a more reliable form.

The overall result: the ground work was laid in early complex society for very significant "improvements" in the human condition in spite of the diminishing of the egalitarian/cooperative principle in the reliance upon highly stratified social relations.

The Transition to Modern Complex Society

The Greeks were the first to explore addressing the inequality issue in early complex society by instituting a "congressional" structure of government and the voting privilege for elite men of property to determine policy and resource use decisions. This was a huge leap, and while it did not persist beyond the period of the Greek "empire," the precedent was noted in the historical record to be revived later in the 18th century. What had always been the egalitarian group decision making process in bands and tribes was formalized in the later 1700s in America and different European countries in a democratic government with elected representatives who voted in legislatures on proposed bills to determine how the country would be managed with separate executive and judicial branches to assure that the laws were both implemented and fairly respected by all citizens. While voting privileges were initially restricted to men of property, this development in the political and judicial institutions of government greatly revived the previous egalitarian social character of bands and tribes regarding both cooperative decision making and cooperative judgment for how the rules of society – laws – were to be applied and enforced. With the later extension of voting privileges to all adult citizens regardless of sex or most other distinctions, the egalitarian ideal was realized in principle in the political structure of most modern complex society governments. Nevertheless, the modern period is rife with examples of once democratic governments reverting to authoritarian rule in one form or another. Retaining the cooperative, community benefit, egalitarian "instinct" of humans in the major institutions of governments in modern complex societies remains a challenge.

While the polity and judiciary domains of complex society under the governmental structures implemented by the originators of modern democratic governments were designed to promote and implement cooperative, egalitarian principles and values, the economy – under the umbrella of a free enterprise, capitalist point of view – was left free to pursue the competitive, self-interested orientation and values. Accordingly, individual citizens and collective groups of such citizens elected to invest time, effort and resources in various enterprises in behalf of seeking exclusive economic benefit.

This initial definition of modern complex societies is the basis for the underlying dynamic in nearly all modern "democratic" nations: an egalitarian/cooperative polity and judiciary and a competitive/self-interested/capitalistic economy. When this dynamic is managed and kept in balance, it can be extraordinarily productive, encouraging creativity and innovation through the activity of the competitive economy while assuring the maintenance of egalitarian principles, communal values and community benefit through the institutions of the polity and judiciary.

What was not anticipated in the 18th century formation of modern representative democracies was the extent of the power that could be accumulated and then directed at the government by a free enterprise, capitalist economy and its super wealthy individuals, large corporations, and an allied financial/banking industry. The most recent period in the history of modern developed democratic nations – the 19th, 20th and now 21st centuries – has been characterized by successive efforts by governments to contain the excesses of the advocates for and beneficiaries of the capitalist economy. In America, the major attempts have included: 1) anti-trust efforts to stop unfair attempts by big businesses to create monopolies by excluding competition, 2) banking and investment regulations to address the near collapse of global societies due to the run away, fraudulent investment practices that caused the Great Depression, 3) the implementation of personal and corporate income and inheritance taxes to curtail the excessive accumulation of wealth by corporations and a few individuals and families, and 4) again, banking and investment regulations to curtail the unsustainable and corrupt practices of the financial industry which were responsible for the Great Recession.

Unfortunately, in America and elsewhere this century long, reactive approach by governments to address the excesses of the various components of the economic forces has always been insufficient and behind the curve. And most importantly, these efforts have never dealt adequately with the fundamental underlying problem – most dramatically represented in America: the negative impact of money in

politics! When money from the economic domain is allowed to “buy” undue influence in the election of our federal governmental representatives from Congress to the White House, our polity becomes vulnerable to being controlled by our economy. And since polity is responsible for the appointment of federal judges, the judiciary also becomes susceptible to being “bought.”

Big Money in America coming from large corporations and the wealthy – often hidden and distributed through their PACs and encouraged by the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision – finances long primary and federal campaigns to elect representatives that favor the self-interests of capitalistic enterprises. And their hired guns – their well funded teams of Washington lobbyists – press for and often literally write the legislation that subsidizes their concerns and reduces both regulations and corporate tax obligations. So long as corporations are legally defined in virtually all states as being obligated to return the maximum financial benefit possible to their shareholders, and so long as the members of the managing boards of these commercial and financial corporations are drawn almost exclusively from the management and financial investment domains, corporations themselves have no real option to even consider what decisions they might take to at least in part cooperate and contribute to community benefit.

Both major American political parties have participated in the growth of the country's orientation to a market government and ultimately a market society. The Republicans are the party of enterprise, investment and finance, and they have become more emphatically so in the years since Reagan – the most recent example, the 2018 major Tax Reform bill. They are also supposedly the party of limited government, but really they are the party of major military spending to “police the world” and if necessary to intervene militarily to protect American “interests.” These “interests” are always spun to the public and other countries as being concerned primarily with the protection of individual rights, the rule of law, and democratic values, but in fact the key “interest” is protecting and promoting American commercial enterprise. In this regard, America now spends as much on its military as the total combined military budgets of the next eight highest military spending countries – including Russia and China!

Republicans are America's market party. And they are very good at hiding their primary market focus by diverting the attention of the voting public to secondary issues like anti-abortion, anti-gay rights, anti-non Christians, anti-non whites, anti-non English speaking ethnic groups, anti-welfare recipients, etc. Republicans decry the pressure of immigration, especially from any of their many “anti” groups, while at the same time they avoid full immigration reform because many of their

market “clients” benefit from the cheap labor made prominently available by several of these “anti” groups.

In general, Democrats support spending directed more to social services which the Republicans regard as “welfare” or more pejoratively as “socialism.” In this regard, Republicans do not want to talk about all the corporate subsidies that they implement with special “deals” and tax breaks that conveniently rarely sunset. In fact, this total corporate “welfare” far exceeds the federal expenditures devoted to social assistance. The Democrats were the party of labor, but in recent years they have supported more and more market oriented legislation and deregulation as unions have waned in influence and monetary support. And Democrats gave away the major protection afforded the public by the Glass-Steagall Act, which kept the investment and banking domains of finance separate following the lessons learned about the causes of the Great Depression. Following the Great Recession, in which the same underlying causes arose in the financial “instruments” created by the “too big to fail” banks, these restraints on the financial industry were partially reintroduced in the Dodd-Frank Act and the creation of the Consumer Protection Agency. No surprise, under recent Republican Congressional control both of these efforts have been significantly weakened in subsequent anti-regulation legislation.

Democrats may be somewhat less a “market” party than the Republicans, but until the 2016 presidential election, Democrats have been about as deeply in bed with Big Money and their PACs as the Republicans. However, through an internet solicitation process, the primary campaigns of a few 2016 Democratic candidates for national office were almost entirely financed by “small contributions” from individual citizen donors. And these campaigns demonstrated that this approach can be viable at least at that level. But in the general 2016 federal election, the Democrats reverted to the big money funding base – with all of its associated influence buying problems. There has been a lot a squawking over the years about the need for federal level campaign finance reform to provide for publicly financed elections and limitations on political PACs, but there has been no meaningful action to date. Interestingly, at the state level, two states with opposite political leanings have instituted such reforms, and they have proved to be very successful.

In its many manifestations, the negative influence of Money in Politics is both a key symptom and major cause of the current “disease” of imbalance in and among America's major institutions. And this “disease” is rampant in most nations of the world leading to gross levels of corruption in many cases. This “disease” favors the competition/self-interest/individualistic side of our human nature rather than our cooperative/community benefit side, and it affects how we organize, operate and

manage our social institutions at all levels. So, the clear trend emerges that is carrying most countries of the world – and definitely including America – toward what is now referred to as a market government with – in America – its market legislature, market executive and market judiciary! The result: currently economy is the driving force in America and in most of global society, and the imbalance that it is promoting may well be taking global civilization toward the cliff edge of survival.

Major Problematic Consequences of the Modern Conditions of Imbalance

There are many problematic consequences that follow from the competitive, capitalistic, market orientation of the economic institution of modern society being allowed to dominate the operation of the egalitarian, cooperative institutions of democratic governments. This condition of imbalance is especially notable in modern American society. What follows is a list of many of these major consequences with brief associated commentary:

1) The middle and lower middle "classes" have experienced stagnant or depressed economic conditions since the mid 1970s as the global economy has taken off and outsourcing by corporations first of manufacturing and then of basic professional services to cheaper labor and material markets has become common. Investors seek out corporations that look for the greatest competitive advantage to make the greatest profit. In this context, the interests of middle class employees receive minimal consideration resulting in job and wage insecurity and losses.

2) The frustrated middle and lower "classes" have become vulnerable to simplistic populist appeals from proponents who suggest that they can solve the related problems. They then most often claim that government itself is the major cause. In fact, government, with what should be its core concern for the common benefit of the citizenry, is the only entity that can do anything significant to address the situation. The Republicans, and especially the hyper conservative Tea Party and Freedom Caucus together with Trump, end up promising much but only exacerbating the problem.

3) Labor unions have decreased in numbers and strength in the face of outsourcing options for business enterprises limiting the influence of the middle class. And, corporations are able to "buy" representatives to state and federal legislatures who promote the "right to work" agenda and "open shops."

4) Over the last 40 years, economic inequality has become more and more prominent as mostly only the wealthy upper 1% of the population has been in a

position to secure the economic benefits from global investment opportunities. The 1% now own more than 90% of the wealth in The United States.

5) Following from #4, the country has trended toward oligarchy – rule by the rich – as money is able to determine more and more who gets elected to office and what judges are appointed to the courts. And the resulting market government favors the "self" interests of the moneyed class and business enterprises.

6) Republicans have greatly increased the level of the federal inheritance tax exclusion [now $11,180,000 per person] – protecting and perpetuating at the generational level the resources of wealthy families – the top 1% benefit again.

7) The market government is in the "business" of protecting the short term economic interests of all business enterprises. There are many unfortunate consequences: a) corporations have been allowed to exceed logical anti-trust limits, to suppress competition, and to truly become "too big to fail," b) the financial and real estate assets of average citizens have been put at unnecessary and unknown risk in many different ways by the development of complex legal instruments by corporations and the financial "industry," c) protections for citizens from potentially harmful or bogus products and services have been reduced, d) public investment in public infrastructure and basic research has been curtailed, e) support for public services of all kinds has been under attack, and f) environmental degradation from virtually all enterprises has been "overlooked," denied or minimized. The most flagrant example of this last issue is the failure to properly regulate and limit the fossil fuel industry in spite of the overwhelming evidence that the burning of these fuels is the major cause of global warming. We reach the astonishing point where it is possible for climate change to be characterized by our President as a hoax perpetuated by China, and a considerable percentage of the population does not object! In this context, America leads in promoting the weak and slow global response to this serious ecological challenge which invites collective consequences for complex society that can be catastrophic.

8) The global market economy as supported by market governments can only survive if it is constantly expanding. Commercial and financial enterprises accept debt to finance their ventures, and they plan on outgrowing the impact of this debt due to the effects of inflation and increasing demand. Increasing demand requires an ever increasing population and/or standard of living. And this entire system necessitates access to more and more energy and greater and greater demand on natural resources. But energy resources are presently either limited [green sources], risky for a number of reasons [nuclear], or the major cause of climate change [fossil fuels]. And other natural resources are limited, and drawing them

down to dangerous levels invites negative environmental and ecological – and ultimately – economic consequences. Native/aboriginal bands and tribes learned that to survive for the long term they had to manage their societies in terms of a sustainable "economic" approach to their natural resources and the surrounding ecology. The market society with its commitment to an ever expanding economy is just a very new experiment at the very end of the modern development of complex culture, and it is highly questionable whether it is sustainable in the long term. Unfortunately, a combined global economic and ecological collapse with devastating consequences to complex society seems likely if humanity continues to purse the present course of societal imbalance favoring a competitive, self-interested perspective and associated activities.

Actions Necessary to Reestablish Balance in Modern Complex Society

If we want to get serious about addressing the fundamental situation of imbalance that now threatens American and most other modern complex societies, there are many constructive moves we can make:

1) Change the legal definitions of corporations and partnerships to require them to serve the economic interests of their shareholders but also to respect the interests and concerns of their employees, their clients/consumers, the surrounding community, the public at large, and the environment.

2) Make the executives and boards of directors of all corporations legally and criminally responsible if they do not abide by the revised definition of a business enterprise described in #1. No more getting away with just paying huge fines.

3) Make the intent of the law as declared in the Report that accompanies all laws – and not just the "word" of the law – what all entities – including corporations – must respect. Stop the constant search by business enterprises for loopholes to get around the word of the law.

4) Rescind the Citizens United decision of the Supreme Court to declare that no economic enterprise can be regarded as a person with all the obligations, rights and privileges of a person. At a minimum, real "persons" have to balance competitive and cooperative orientations and all the actions that follow from them in their lives. Business enterprises are guided by a pretty exclusively competitive and self-interested orientation.

5) Eliminate all off shoring of assets by corporations and the wealthy in order to hide these assets and avoid paying taxes. White collar crime must be taken seriously and prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

6) Fund all federal business oversight agencies/departments at a level that supports regular audits/reviews/inspections of business enterprises and the pursuit of fines and prosecutions where warranted.

7) Revitalize/recommit the bureaucracies of all federal regulatory departments/ agencies to pursue their missions. No more passivity or undue accommodation of the interests of any enterprise.

8) Require that federal agencies and departments be led by experts with relevant knowledge in the area to be managed/regulated and without ties to the economic or other interests of the related enterprises. The only goal of cabinet, agency and department leaders, as well as lower level functionaries, must be to see their areas of management run with integrity and efficiency. Forbid all administrative rulings and personnel assignments to these federal regulatory agencies/departments with the intent to diminish the regulatory effectiveness of these organizations.

9) Limit the executive branch of government to its constitutionally designated functions: to execute fairly and efficiently the laws of the congressional branch of government and to lead all national efforts to keep the country secure. The executive branch must not be allowed to decide what laws it wants to enforce, to conduct foreign affairs independent of legislative approval, and to use administrative rulings to shift allocated funds or advance or diminish the missions of selected agencies or departments. The modern trend toward a more and more powerful unitary executive, which allows it to assume more of the functions of the legislative branch, must be reversed. If this reversal does not occur, the overall effect will be that the trend toward a market government will be magnified by the allied trend toward an authoritarian executive. Both of these trends are manifestations of the anti-egalitarian and competitive perspective in what is supposed to be the cooperative/public benefit oriented government.

10) Include formulas in local, state and international trade relations and agreements that factor in the true comparative costs of producing products and services in alternative locations. These formulas must include more than just the base costs of labor and materials. Decisions to move – outsource – a business enterprise must be publicly justified by including an assessment of the relative costs: a) of providing safe working conditions for employees, b) of protecting the environment from the local to the global level, and c) of offering subsides of all

kinds by governments at all levels. The costs of conducting business in communities, states and countries that require more comprehensive responsibility from business enterprises can not be disadvantaged by competition from locations that are less responsible. Requiring business to conduct this public evaluation before “moving” is a critically important action to create a level playing field especially for labor in all locations. The consequence is likely to be that the jobs and wages of the middle class in more responsible locations will be much more fairly treated.

11) Greatly restrict use of the “revolving door” between participation in government and both management positions in business enterprises and the lobbying of elected and appointed government officials.

12) Reestablish the Glass-Steagall Act, or its equivalent, to permanently separate basic banking functions from investment activities. The financial assets of citizens, including the value they hold in real property, can not be put at undue risk by the financial industry's desire to use these funds in excessively complicated, high risk, casino like, activities.

13) Enforce the anti-trust laws to break up corporations and financial entities that are stifling competition or pose too big a risk to the public if they fail. Take the “too big to fail” issue seriously for all business enterprises.

14) Require all investments in all publicly traded stocks and bonds to be held for a minimum of two weeks. Playing buy/sell “games” by both individuals and financial enterprises to artificially benefit from very short term timing manipulations in this market must end.

15) Create an entity that is fully independent and representative to complete comprehensive individual and corporate tax reform – including all forms of public assistance/subsidies as well as income and inheritance taxes. Special individual and corporate benefits of all kinds must be restricted to assisting entities in transition and must pass the test of contributing to the public good. Assigning permanent disability benefits to individuals is as potentially problematic as allowing permanent subsidies for corporations. Except in truly extreme cases, public assistance of all kinds to all individual private entities must be limited and temporary. Corporate and individual federal income taxes must be fair and equal, and they must be graduated to greatly reduce excessive wealth flowing to the few individuals or corporate executives at the top. The value of all benefits and stock options for corporate employees and executives must be declared and assessed as income. To reduce excessive wealth being transferred at the death of

individuals, inheritance taxes must a) greatly limit the extent of the wealth allowed to be transferred without federal taxation, and b) greatly increase the percentage of tax to be paid on the balance. The wealth returning to individuals or corporations as a result of their economic success must be fairly shared with the public to support the egalitarian/cooperative principle in society.

16) Develop and implement a comprehensive set of reforms to greatly restrict the influence of money in politics. These reforms must: a) limit the time period of federal campaigns, b) limit campaign monetary expenditures to the amount that is federally assigned for both primaries and main elections, c) restrict and require full accounting of all secondary donations of products and services to all campaigns, d) restrict any connection between PACs and the campaigns of candidates in both primaries and elections, e) limit the input of PACs and all other similar organizations in campaign periods to support for issues/policies/ programs and not to support for specific candidates, f) require all lobbyists to be registered and all of their activities/proposals to be announced to, recorded for, and made available to the public.

17) Develop a fully independent agency of the federal government to evaluate the truth value/factual basis for all information passing in the news media and on social media platforms. The distinction must be made between a) outright fabrication /fiction/fake news, b) opinions expressed without reference to any facts, c) opinions expressed referencing only selected facts, d) opinions expressed by relevant, recognized experts who are arguing for the importance of many of the relevant facts, e) reports by independent investigators and individual experts that make an effort to reference and objectively evaluate most of the known facts, and f) professional, documented reports that have undergone review for their integrity by secondary experts and that make an effort to assess the full relevant factual inventory on the focal topic. Using sophisticated and constantly updated information review algorithms, all information submissions that become available to the public can be very rapidly assigned to one of these six evaluation categories, thereby assisting the public in recognizing the extent to which they should rely on the information provided. In the modern – instantly and globally available – context of virtually all information, the instruments/processes must be in place to identify fake news and the relative reliability of all other information offerings to the public. This is especially important when it comes to protecting the integrity of federal elections, but it is also important for restraining the development of extremism of all kinds. The fair evaluation of the factual basis of public speech does not limit free speech itself; it merely protects the public from the negative effects of being exposed to false, partial, or incomplete information in modern media sources.

18) Require all boundaries of federal legislative districts in all states to be created by fair and politically independent entities operating under the supervision of the federal courts. All adjustments to these districts must accurately reflect the most recent census data in a timely manner.

19) By one means or another, eliminate the Electoral College and allow the president and vice president to be elected by popular vote. This action merely affirms the basic egalitarian principle in government at the highest level.

20) Amend the Constitution to designate the number of senators from each state to be determined by the following two criteria: a) two senators for a base state population up to ten million permanent residents, b) an additional senator for each ten million citizens over a base population of ten million permanent residents. This action retains the privileged representation for small population states but recognizes that states with large populations are currently significantly under represented in the Senate. This action supports the egalitarian principle in the federal government which in turn supports cooperation.

21) Voting in all federal elections by registered voters must be supervised and overseen through the federal courts in a federally determined and implemented voting system. This system must provide individual access for all voters to basic public information on all candidates and all issues up for a vote, and citizens must be encouraged to educate themselves on the candidates and issues and to vote. Employers must accommodate their employees' efforts to vote and encourage them to do so. No separate municipal, county and state voting processes in federal elections. Registration to vote must be free of all impediments, voting locations must be equally accessible and adequate to accommodate the expected numbers of voters, and the voting process and its tabulation must be conducted with every voter receiving a copy of his or her ballot and with the ability to secure and confirm all votes of all voters after the election. Citizens must have every reason to believe that their votes count.

22) Promote the sense of togetherness – community – at all social levels from family to village to city to region to state to nation to global humanity. Togetherness requires the view of others as at least acquaintances – even friends; the view of other individuals, groups, villages.....nations as entities that we can respect and that we can approach with the expectation/assumption we will be able to cooperate. We must convert impersonal relations, which are cautious/defensive and are the overwhelming norm in modern complex society, into personal relations, which are inviting/welcoming and where individuals know one another well – in many different ways/roles and over time. The view of others as strangers

has to become the view of others as at least potential friends if humans are to release their competitiveness and cooperate at the level that is necessary to address all of the challenges that humans face at all levels – especially at the national and global levels. We must encourage real, interactive face-to-face experiences among neighbors and communities to overcome the isolation that has become pervasive since broadcast media entered our lives and has got us fixated on information flowing on the audio-visual devices inside our cars and homes and in our hands. We need to implement neighborhood and community celebrations that bring citizens together to just dwell in knowing one another and in sharing food, drink and public space – not for some alternative, more specific purpose.

Conclusion

Humans are genetically predisposed to being both competitive and cooperative. When applied appropriately, both of these tendencies contribute to the human species biological and social survival. Over the many millennia of the evolution of the "simpler" human societies of bands and tribes, the groups that survived learned to balance the expression of these basic human "instincts" at the individual, social, and ecological levels so that their societies were sustainable in the very long term. The advent of complex society some 10,000 years ago is very recent in the history of humanity, and it remains in an experimental phase awaiting a determination as to whether it will develop to a form that is sustainable in the long term. Early forms of complex society made very significant progress in many ways, but their commitment to stratified, authoritarian social structures sacrificed the egalitarian, cooperative principle in social relations that was a very important component in the success of bands and tribes. This imbalance resulted in these early complex societies only proving to be sustainable for relatively short periods before they collapsed for a variety of reasons.

In a limited form, the egalitarian, cooperative principle in social relations and social institutions in complex society was first re-instituted in Greece. It reappeared in the 18th century in American and European nations in the form of representative democratic governments that guaranteed individual human rights and the rule of law as created by the congressional representatives of the people, laws that were to be implemented by an independent executive, and assured by an independent judiciary. This constituted a monumental transformation of complex society so as to assure balance in social relations by implementing governmental institutions that supported egalitarian values and the cooperative perspective.

Modern, "democratic" complex societies have experienced very significant pressure/influence on their egalitarian oriented governments coming from their

associated competitive, capitalistic economies. The result has been a decided trend toward a market government which serves the "self" interests of business enterprises as much or more than it supports the common good of the citizens. In this setting, the egalitarian, cooperative perspective takes a significant hit and a condition of imbalance arises in the society at large. This state of imbalance has had many negative consequences, some of which are potentially dire and which collectively threaten the long term viability of complex society as well a the survivability of humans in the civilized state.

Modern complex society has enormous potential, but in its current imbalanced form it is as unsustainable in the long term as a result of the negative impacts of its out of control economy as it was unsustainable in its early period due to excessive social stratification and authoritarian rule. Long term sustainability of complex society depends on achieving balance throughout the scales of social relations and within and among the major institutions of society. And as a global society emerges, more and more this same balance must be realized at the level of interconnected national societies.

To realize where modern humans must go, we humans must know where we have been and what the basic underlying polar human proclivities are that define who we are at the individual and social levels and how these proclivities must be managed and expressed at the institutional level to support long term sustainability. Currently, this awareness is unfortunately very limited. For all its glorious potential, the modern complex society experiment is under threat of relatively imminent failure.

Fixing this problem of embedded imbalance is a daunting task because the problem is systemic. In the main, we know all the primary actions that we need to take and why in order to tilt the table of government away from a competitive market orientation and back in the direction of achieving true balance. Accomplishing this will stop the more general shift in the direction of an overall market society. The only question is whether we have the collective will in America and among the nations of the world to make these moves before the entrenched market trend is fulfilled and complex society and the promise of civilization proceed over the cliff and into oblivion.

Ultimately IT is ALL an experiment. But unlike most species, humans have the capacity to evaluate their situation and initiate changes that foster conditions that favor fulfilling their maximal potential and their long term viability. Complex society and the civilized state offer an attractive platform for humans to achieve this goal; but the current global state of fundamental imbalance in our institutions together

with our tendency to assume that one way or another the future will take care of itself dictate against this transpiring. We will have to “exceed” our usual selves to keep the door open to our really spectacular future.

#36 “Global Society Monetized,” 2022.

The World Trade Organization and Financial Industry Liberate Corporations
To Pursue Free Enterprise Capitalism In the Global Economy.

Money Is Allowed to Buy Political and Judicial Servitude
Encouraging Autocracy.

Commercial Algorithms Assign Internet Information Exposure.

Mega Billionaires and 1%ers Subvert the Middle Class.

Quarterly Report Expectations Preclude Social Responsibility
And Ecological Sustainability.

Competition and Individual Values
Overwhelm Cooperation and Promote Extremism.

Getting Supplants Giving.

Celebrity Substitutes for Substance.

Success Gets Divorced from Integrity.

Sensationalism Undermines Veracity.

Extremism Negates Civility.

Disinformation Obscures Truth.

Momentary Benefit Ignores Established Principle.

Mega Money Fundamentalist Churches Usurp Religion.

Flag Waving, Weapons Brandishing Becomes Patriotism.

Inequality Undercuts Unity and Sponsors Conflict.

FULLY RELEASED,
THE DOLLAR DEVIL CORRUPTS THE ENTIRE FABRIC OF SOCIETY

#37 "Economic Inequality in America and the Slide Into Plutocracy," 2019.

It should come as no surprise to anyone that in America today gross economic inequality exists among the citizenry and that an overall shift in the direction of authoritarian plutocracy has emerged. America has seen this situation before at the end of the 19th century with the rise of the "robber barons" and their efforts to control government, law enforcement, and the courts. It took implementation of government regulations first in the anti-trust movement and then in the New Deal after the Great Depression to curtail the excesses of the "barons" and to bring the capitalistic economy and democratic polity into greater balance. The result was that from the 1950s through the mid 1970s all citizens shared rather evenly in the benefits resulting from the growth of the national economy.

However, since the later 1970s, the pendulum has swung back again in the opposite direction with the wealthy, corporations, and the financial industry becoming more and more powerful – pouring more and more money into the political realm in order to gain more and more control over the political and judicial domains. The "robber barons" are back, having purged the Republican Party of its moderates in favor of conservative economic and social extremists. Under the guise of their revamped Republican Party and with the aid of their associated wealthy PACs, the new "robber barons" have taken advantage of an unregulated social media to conduct disinformation campaigns in what have become successful efforts to attract a frustrated middle class while deflecting attention from their actual plutocratic goals.

Trump and his divisive tactics are but an absurd, inconsistent, and incompetent expression of this "robber baron" perspective and process: promoting anti-immigrant/refugee, anti-Muslim, anti-mainstream media sentiments in the public while hiding deregulation for the financial industry, huge tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy, courts stuffed with conservative judges, and personal financial gain for the Trump organization and Trump's international coterie of fellow authoritarian plutocrats.

There are many changes that need to be implemented to address the imbalance that currently exists between the forces of the American capitalistic

economy and the forces of its representative democracy. I discuss many of the variables that are involved and the changes that must be made to address the issues that apply in a companion essay, "Should Capitalism Be Abandoned By Modern Complex Societies?" This companion essay is available under the "Economy" topic on my website: http://www.dynamic-humanism.com . In the remainder of this essay, I will attend to the economic inequality issue and in particular the role that the disparity in income and wealth distribution plays in this matter.

Here is the key question that is at the center of this discussion: What is the appropriate annual income and overall wealth differential among a society's citizens that can be permitted if a modern democratic complex society is to be sustainable for the long term?

Many current economists who focus on compensation within corporations contend that salary differentials begin to promote dysfunction in corporations and oligarchy in societies when the income of the head of an enterprise exceeds 20 times the income of the average employee. Indeed, in America in 1965, this 20 times CEO compensation figure was the average, and this was an economic boom period. Yet, in 2017 among the top 350 American corporations CEO pay averaged 300 times the pay of the average worker. And this figure does not include the value of all the perks, benefits and share options that have become customary in CEO compensation packages! So, the real number may be a differential more like 500. As mentioned earlier, this situation has emerged with increasing pace over the last 40+ years in the context of a complacent/complicit government and the combined rise of the global economy, mega corporations, a relatively independent global financial industry, and the worldwide Internet.

Annual income for everyone should be a direct reflection of the value of the actual contribution an individual makes to the benefit of society. Compensation should not merely reflect the maximum personal gain that the "market" will bare. In this regard, here is an extreme example: what is the actual value of the contribution to society of entertainer "Judge Judy" who currently earns $47,000,000/year in "salary," plus approximately $20,000/show for the sale of the show's rights to CBS?

The time has come for less economically privileged Americans to stop fantasizing that they will magically become mega lottery rich and set both an upper and a lower limit on the annual income received by anyone, anywhere, in any occupation. No American citizen who honestly works full time should live in

or near poverty – currently below $20,000/year [@ $10/hour x 40hrs/week x 50 weeks/year]. Correspondingly, no American should receive a total annual income [including all benefits and unearned income] greater than $2,000,000 [@ $1,000/hr x 40hrs/week x 50 weeks/year]. In economic terms, is anyone's contribution to society who works full time really greater than 100 times the value of anyone else's contribution? And this allowed upper income limit corresponds to a very generous income differential figure – five times the recommended 20 times maximum!

Gross economic inequality within the American citizenry results when this now long term condition of income disparity gets coupled with 1) special tax benefits and subsidies for corporations, 2) tax breaks and deregulation for the financial industry, and 3) tax breaks and enormous inheritance tax exclusions for the wealthy. When this set of conditions comes together, an overall societal shift toward plutocracy is virtually inevitable. And so it is that at the present time, over 40% of the wealth in America is owned by less than 1% of the population. The bottom 80% of the population owns just 12% of the national wealth. And the three richest Americans [Jeff Bezos – Amazon, Bill Gates – Microsoft, Warren Buffet - Berkshire Hathaway] possess more wealth than the lower 50% of the population combined – that is 164,892,350 citizens! These are staggering wealth inequality figures. The hoarding that these figures suggest could warrant the super wealthy being shunned. But instead, ever increasing power flows to the wealthy, and the extravagant lifestyles of super wealthy individuals and families are celebrated in American popular culture and highlighted in the tabloid press.

Conclusion

If Americans want their complex society to survive long term, they need to repair the current gross imbalance that exists between the inputs of their highly influential capitalistic economy on the one hand and their nominally influential democratic polity on the other hand. Essential in achieving this repair will be to implement the changes that will bring both income and wealth among America's citizens into much greater equity. Many highly qualified experts are mostly in agreement as to what these changes need to be. In particular I suggest: Joseph E. Stiglitz, People, Power and Politics, N.Y., 2019 and Elizabeth Warren, This Fight is Our Fight, N.Y., 2017. Between these two books and their plethora of references, anyone can rapidly become educated on the economic inequality challenge in America and what can be done to address it. If Americans insist that their Congressional representatives make the core changes that this literature identifies, they will significantly reduce economic

inequality in America, and they will also put the brakes on the current march in the country toward authoritarian plutocracy.

There is no long term future for America as a viable representative democracy if the current conditions persist! The time has arrived for Americans and the citizens of other developed countries to more fairly "share the wealth" – both nationally and globally!!

#38 "The Budgetary Elephant in the Room," 2012.

Will some real adult American in a position of authority please stand up and identify the federal budgetary elephant in the room!! In this time of recession with the level of spending and the national debt being real issues and not just politically trumped up spin, the elephant roams free and unrestrained, rendering all other aspects of the budget susceptible to undue pressure to be reduced. And the main programs that most of the elephant's favorite tenders target are the ones that relate to the social safety net. What a great idea; let's further crush the Middle Class, and let's unleash the Tea Party and get the Middle Class to vote to do it to themselves! And still, the elephant roams free!

So, what is this elephant? It is the mostly unrestrained monetary commitment to the U.S. military and to the military industrial complex that feeds it. Most Americans are not aware that 60% of the discretionary federal budget goes to support some one or other aspect of the military. At the same time the total expenditures for education are 6%.

Are these kinds of proportions appropriate? Let's look at some facts. The U.S spends on its military and its assertive adventures around the world as much as the next 20 developed and developing countries COMBINED. These 20 countries include in the West – Russia, Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Brazil, Argentina, and Canada, and in the Middle East – Turkey, Israel, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, and in the Near East – India and Pakistan, and in the East – China, South Korea, and Japan. [See Wikipedia, "List of Countries by Military Expenditures"]

Now, what does this enormous expenditure on the military buy America? Security? If we balance out the gains we may enjoy in security with the fact that our military adventures make us the target of all kinds of attacks from those who resent our intrusions, the gain is nominal at best. We pay to police the world in the name of democracy [hiding the fact that it is really to support capitalism],

and what we earn is a bulls-eye on our backs for a whole host of reasons from a wide variety of resentful populations. As foolish as this situation seems even on the face of it, the huge investment America makes in the military has one of the lowest returns in advancing the U.S. economy. Yes, all this funding supports a lot of jobs, which the military industrial complex has strategically located in virtually every congressional district, but for the most part the buck stops there, promoting very little innovation to contribute to sustaining the rest of the economy. It is a well-recognized fact among economists that military expenditures are one of the poorest ways to support a domestic economy.

So, in a time of economic difficulty for America, who is willing to address the military elephant in the room? Clearly, neither of our major parties. And yet here are the Democrats, trying to preserve investment in the social safety net, and less interested in world hegemony than the Republicans, but still silent about this elephant. It seems that the Democrats are as captured as the Republicans by the military industrial complex and the huge financial consortium that supports it and that funds elections. Yet, the Democrats have the most to gain by exposing the elephant. It seems that they are afraid to do so presumably because this would open the door to Republican political claims of Democrats being soft on national security. When is this nonsensical claim going to be put to rest? Democratic presidents guided us through most of the major international conflicts of the 20th century, and presently Obama is trying to clean up the mess left by the unwise, trillion dollar military adventures of Republican President Bush in the 21st century. Who will clean up the mess Romney will leave if he lets his testosterone loose and leads America into a conflict with Iran and stirs the entire complex of the terrorist hornet's nest that is the Islamic Middle East and East?

Eventually, exposing the excessively well-armed elephant and bringing him under sane control is the only way to achieve balance in our U.S. economy, recession or not. The other developed nations of the world have achieved a better balance in proportioning domestic and military expenditures, and most of their economies are doing better than our own. In spite of many of these Western nations having evolved to mostly sustaining rather than expanding economies, they have found a way to sufficiently ensure their security without excessive military expenditures or unnecessarily angering other nations. And they are able to provide for the domestic social and infrastructure needs of their citizens at a level considerably beyond that of America. In large measure these nations, which once sponsored colonial empires, have accomplished this goal by limiting military spending and not trying to police and control the world in behalf of their self-interests. America would do well to learn the same lesson.

The current Republican call for cuts to social and entitlement programs in America in order to address the national debt can only be countered adequately by someone brave enough to identify the cavern size military elephant in the center of the Capital rotunda! Leaving this elephant loose, in the present recession especially, is allowing him to literally eat us out of house and home. And forget the billionaire contributors, this elephant and his entourage are de facto the single greatest supporters of the Tea Party [now Republican] agenda.

Emotion

#39 "Continuum of Emotions: Chart and Statement," 2010.

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 fro 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 OF 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 Chart Follows}
{Further Discussion Follows the Chart}

CONTINUUM OF EMOTIONS CHART

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

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

THE 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 continuua. 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 violet 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.

#40 “On Love,” 2023.

For adult humans, love is an intense positive feeling of connection with something outside one’s self. This connection is a feeling so intense that there is a sense of sharing identity with that “something else.”

That “something else” can be almost anything so long as the “something else” is able to be receptive because love is a shared feeling of intense connection.

Love is inherent in the relationship of the gestating fetus and the mother where both share the most fundamental connection and identity with one another. The difficult birth process disconnects this formative love relationship, and a major goal in subsequent life is to reclaim it first through parental nurture and care, then in friendship, and finally in romantic love.

Love is not appreciation, admiration, adoration, or lust because these manifestations of intense feeling of connection are not necessarily shared.

Love can be achieved with many different “something elses,” and love is expressed in different ways with these different “something elses.” But, to meet the requirement of being shared, love must be expressed appropriately.

Love is the pinnacle positive feeling for humans, the most valuable experience that humans can have. Enduring love is the supreme privilege in life.

In spirituality, through the intuitive mental process, love can expand to be more and more inclusive of “something elses” until synthesis achieves unification with everything, which is the condition of enlightenment. This is the ultimate love experience – self as intensely connected to/sharing identity in All. Expressive culture [play, music, story, dance, ritual, etc.] initiate intuitive mental functioning and provide access to the unification experience and spiritual perspective.

True love between two adults is a microcosm expression of the love potential in the spiritual macrocosm. It retrieves the unification condition of the fetus.

Love of God and God's love for "you" together with whatever intermediaries the belief system requires – gurus, prophets, saviors, priests – is an attempt by institutionalized religion to provide supernatural based agency to substitute for what otherwise can be independently experienced as spiritually based macrocosm love, free from the elaborate trappings of dogma.

#41 "Love As Unification," 2025.

Love is connecting and uniting as one positive being with other components of reality. Love can embrace a very narrow or wide domain of reality. The ultimate love includes all of reality in the condition known as full enlightenment – Self as All and All as Self, total unification.

Love is expressed in consistent behavior of unqualified respect, responsibility, caring, and promoting the "other" as one's self. Aspiring to a love connection is infatuation – not love. Love occurs when the connection is successfully accomplished. And, most importantly, love that is completed and reciprocated is by far the most satisfying. Then, when such love endures over time, it becomes the most gratifying.

Love of God is an expression of the desire to experience being connected to the All – the Oneness of reality. God as a separate, individual super entity is a misconception – an attempt to concretize the All and give it independent agency. Unfortunately, this is a common and major error in many religious belief systems. Love of truth or beauty refers to positive qualities that are implicit in the unified condition of love itself. Love of person, pet, or country is love that is restricted in scope within the All.

Love is the experience of unification with anything at any level of inclusiveness. But love restricted to individual parts of reality can be risky since it is possible to feel a deep connection to people, countries, values, animals, ideas, plants etc. that is misconstrued as love. In this regard, it is entirely possible for culture, subculture, or sect to 1) isolate populations, 2) impose dogmatic interpretations of what the unification experience is and how it is to be understood, and 3) thereby claim aberrant versions of intense

connections as love. Because culture can celebrate and promote false “love,” it is critically important to seek universal love. As the true unification experience expands to become universal, any aberrant “loves” will be exposed and discarded. True love of individual “persons, places, things” is wonderful, and it will be confirmed at the universal level of connection and understanding.

Culture can support universal love or convert the desire for it to its own purposes. So, we need to be aware of the potential disrupting influence of culture. Unification/love always positively joins the components of reality together, never serving to provide a basis for separating from or rejecting “the other.” At the universal level, love is absolute – totally positive and inclusive.

#42 “HOPE: Tomorrow’s Best Friend,” 2020.

Being the Plus Side of the Possible,
Surviving Yesterday’s Rip to Roar,
Banishing the Verbal Storm Sewer.

Discovering Beauty in a Darned Sock,
Thawing Delight from Frozen Hiding,
Adopting History’s Mountain View.

Grabbing the Edges of the Middle Way,
Loading Feathers in the Despot’s Rifle,
Basking in the Skylight of Opportunity.

Dancing to Life’s Recovery Jig,
Blossoming Within Rip Tide’s Temper,
Bringing Cool Cloths to Fever Nights.

Celebrating Anxiety’s Total Demise,
Clasping Joy In an Infant’s Smile,
Capturing Rainbows in Teardrops.

Tearing Down the Bridge to Nowhere,
Tuning In To Reciting Tree Frogs,
Withdrawing Battalions of Resentment.

Apologizing for Yesterday’s Retreat,
Alighting on Love’s Sunflower,
Dancing in the Mind of Metaphor.

Welcoming a Warm Chocolate Breeze,
Biting the Coiling Serpent’s Tongue,
Baking Biscuits For Whispered Dawns.

Saluting Days Beyond Pickling Pain,
Making Hay From Love’s Leftovers,
Creating Rain on the Sands of Maybe.

Honoring Mothers In Always Mirrors,
Holding Today's Trouble Trump Card,
Loosing Laughter in Piles of Pillows.

Giving the Precious Gift of Could Be,
Sending Greeting Cards of Evermore,
Smiling Through Drizzle's Wake.

Collecting Umbrellas of Yes Memories,
Claiming the Inside of Paradise,
Freeing the Spider Webbed Butterfly.

Sleeping On Comfort's Down Couch,
Flying Above the Tortured Blizzard,
Gliding Atop the Misted Avalanche.

Becoming the Radiant Super Moon,
Escaping the Prison of Prior Abuse,
Laughing at the Farce of Tragedy.

Hearing the Sapphire's Blue Hum,
Bypassing the Lung Cancer Express,
Seeing Bliss in a Rippling Campfire.

Burying Double Doomsday Drums,
Composing the Sunrise of Time,
Imbibing the Ravishing Euphoria.

Obliterating the Chair of Despair