Chapter 13 – Transpersonal Social Psychology

Chapter 13

TRANSPERSONAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Chapter Outline

I. The Modern Human Cultural World

A. The Phenomenology of the Human Social World
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   2. The work-a-day-work of everyday life (Mitwelt)
   3. The social world of our predecessors (Vorwelt)
   4. The social world of our successors (Folgewelt)
   5. The social worlds of time Past, time Present, and time Future.

B. The Inhumane Human Cultural World
   1. The Orthodox Western Creed of Modern Psychology
      a. Is the orthodox "Western Creed" a statement of established scientific facts or socially useful fictions?
      b. The consequences of the orthodox "Western Creed" for the modern human cultural world.
      c. New metaphysical foundations of a modern social psychology.
      d. A transpersonal "Western Creed."

C. Humanizing an Inhumane World
   1. Transpersonal humanism.
      a. The worth of the individual.
      b. The species' basic good intent
      c. The importance of individual action.
      d. The responsibility to be oneself.
      e. The constructive nature of impulses
      f. The creativity of being.
      g. The purpose and meaning of life
   2. Practical idealism.
      a. Practice one's ideals in every day life as they exist in one's own impulses, feelings and abilities
      b. Idealism in reverse.
      c. The "means" must be worthy of the ideal "ends" one hopes to achieve.

II. A New and Critical Time in Human History

A. Global Crises
   1. Global, evolutionary crises
      b. Depletion of natural resources.
      c. Destabilization and destruction of the environment.
      d. Massive military budgets and weapons of mass destruction.
      e. Psychological alienation.
      f. War and violence
g.  World poverty, hunger, and disease.

h.  Social injustices.

i.  Economic inequalities.

j.  Homelessness

k.  Third World debt

l.  Oppressions based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species.

2.  Fundamental reasons for the emergence of the present global, evolutionary crises.

B.  Technocratic-Industrial Worldview

1.  What is the dominant worldview of patriarchal technocratic-industrial societies toward Nature, and why is it insufficient?

   a.  As a species, we have become gluttonous and greedy.

   b.  The technological-industrial worldview is carrying Darwin's concept of "survival of the species" forward regardless of the consequences.

   c.  Loss of identification with nature can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution.

   d.  Our sciences have promoted the idea that in order to understand a reality we must destroy it.

   e.  In cutting ourselves off from Nature, we at the same time cut ourselves off from ourselves.

C.  What Lessons is the Present Global Crisis Meant to Teach Us?

1.  Sacredness of the individual and relationship with other forms of consciousness.

2.  Recognition of the potential for consciousness evolution.

3.  Acknowledgement of the spiritual and cosmic dimensions of life, mind, and consciousness.

D.  What Fundamental Solutions are Required to Solve Our Global Crises?

1.  Understanding of the psychological and social forces that led to the situation.

2.  The undertaking of an inner "Manhattan Project."

3.  Self-realization and ecological "Ethics" that guide our behavior.

4.  Solving the problems of our global crises in a balanced way.

5.  Development of "a sense of universal responsibility."

E.  Emerging Trends and Promising Human Options

1.  Transpersonal media and the Internet

2.  Creative work and "deep economies"

3.  The species' good intent

   a.  Spiritual altruism

   b.  The cooperative impulse

   c.  Capacity for compassion, conscious love, and inner peace.
4. Emergence of a social psychology that is transpersonal
   a. Psychological and spiritual solutions, not technological ones, are needed to solve global problems of social relations and social influence.
   b. Individual transformation is a pre-requisite of social transformation.
   c. Cross-cultural psychology provides an important perspective from which to view the "spiritual" nature of our global social and cultural crises.
   d. Bridge psychological science with transpersonal spirit to more adequately deal with the spiritual dimension of human social experience and behavior.
   e. Encourage individuals to always distinguish what they experience about life and what they have been told life is.
5. Re-sacralization of everyday life
6. Renewed interest in voluntary simplicity
7. Emergence of a transpersonal ecology
   a. What is the basic idea of a "transpersonal" ecology?
   b. How is deep ecology related to the themes of social transpersonal psychology?
   c. What does social transpersonal psychology have to offer the "deep ecology" movement?
8. Renewed interest in spirituality
   a. Renewal of interest in things "spiritual" in contemporary life.
   b. Planetary spiritual emergence.
9. Shift in values toward service and a greater reverence for life
10. Religion's changing attitude toward Nature
    a. How does ecology relate to humanity's religious sentiment?
    b. The world's religions align with the basic principles of deep ecology.
    c. Native American worldview.

III. Transpersonal Nature of Animals

A. Animals and Human Society

1. The role of animals in human society
   a. Animals have played a significant role in the evolution of human culture and civilization,
   b. Most spiritual psychologies assume the sacred nature of life in the universe, including animal life
   c. There is the special connection between spirituality and ethics and transpersonal psychology’s vision of humankind’s necessary intellectual and moral evolution to a more aware and compassionate view of life

2. Unanswered questions and unquestioned answered.
   a. How widely are transpersonal phenomena distributed in nature?
b. Are transpersonal characteristics and abilities unique elements of human personality, or are transpersonal attributes also found in nonhuman animals?
c. If nonhuman animals possess a transpersonal nature, then how similar is it to that of humans?
d. Is the transpersonal nature of human animals different in kind from the transpersonal nature of nonhuman animals, or only different in degree?

B. The Continuity of Psychic Life.
   1. Logically, there is no a priori reason for excluding animals from having a transpersonal nature.
   2. Behavioral, physiological, etiological, and other evidence.
   3. Spiritual and psychological attributes of psychic life.
      a. Consciousness
      b. Relationship with nature
      c. Emotions
      d. Cognition
      e. Free will
      f. Self-consciousness
      g. Imagination in learning, dreams, and play
      h. The dignity of a spiritual life
   4. Implications for animal care and use in psychology.

IV. A Sacred Story

A. In the Beginning
   1. What my college courses taught me.
      a. Darwinian theory.
      b. Freudian psychology.
      c. Religious studies.
      d. Existential philosophy.
      e. Natural science.
   2. Becoming the self I was told I was.
      a. The Western Creed encountered.
      b. Doubts
c. Soul sickness.

B. Personal Transformation and Epiphany
1. The kite as a symbol of my transformation.
2. Epiphany

C. Aftermath
1. Aftermath
2. Expanding the circle of compassion.
Chapter 13

TRANSPERSONAL SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the phenomenology of the social world, as depicted by German phenomenologist Arthur Schultz.
2. Describe the phenomenology of each individual's personal self-world (Umwelt or Eigenwelt).
3. Describe the phenomenology of the social world of contemporaries (Metwelt).
4. Describe the phenomenology of the social world of predecessors and ancestors (Vorwelt).
5. Describe the phenomenology of the social world of successors and progenitors (Folgewelt).
6. Write an account one's intuitional impressions of the concepts of time Past, time Present, and time Future and their past, present, and future aspects as they relate to the phenomenology of the social worlds of Umwelt, Metwelt, Vorwelt, and Folgewelt.
7. Define culture.
8. Evaluate and judge the value of "The Western Creed" for depicting the prevailing beliefs of the human cultural world in general, and of psychology in particular.
9. Explain why the ideas, beliefs, and assumptions of "The Western Creed" are called a "Creed."
10. Discuss the consequences of the Western Creed for the modern human cultural world.
11. Explain why new metaphysical foundations of modern social psychology are needed and describe what form some of these new epistemological and ontological assumptions might take.
12. Describe transpersonal humanism and tell how it can facilitate the process of changing the human cultural world for the better.
14. Explain what can happen if one's idealism remains abstract and high-flying and not tied to any practical methods for their actualization in the events of one's own private life.
15. Identify the unfortunate belief that is the cause of most of the social and political troubles current in the world today.
16. Explain why the means or methods chosen must be worthy of the ideal end one hopes to achieve in order to effectively humanize an inhumane world.
17. Identify nine global, evolutionary crises that face our species today.
18. Tell why today is a new and critical time in our history?
19. Identify and discuss the fundamental reasons why our present global, evolutionary crises emerge.
20. Describe what prevents us from eliminating most diseases, combat poverty and starvation, and preventing pollution when we have all the knowledge, resources, capital, means and technological know-how to do so.
21. Describe the dominant worldview of technocratic-industrial societies toward Nature, and tell why it is insufficient.
22. Explain how technological-industrial worldview is carrying Darwin's concept of "survival of the species" forward regardless of the consequences.
23. Explain why the Industrial Revolution marked the beginning of the species' loss of identification with nature.
24. Describe how sciences have promoted the idea that in order to understand a reality we must destroy it.
25. Explain how in cutting ourselves off from Nature, we at the same time cut ourselves off from ourselves.
26. Identify and discuss the three lessons that the present global crises are intended to teach us.
27. Tell why it is important that we address the problems dealing with the sacredness of the individual, and the individual's relationship with other human beings and with all other forms of consciousness.
28. Describe the potential for consciousness evolution that the present global crises provide us as a species.
29. Tell why it is important to acknowledge the spiritual and cosmic dimensions of life, mind, and consciousness at this time in our history as a species.
30. Identify and discuss five fundamental solutions that are required to solve our global crises.
31. Tell why it is important to understand the psychological and social forces that led to the current global evolutionary crises in the world today.
32. Describe what a psychological equivalent of the "Manhattan Project" would involve.
33. Describe a Self-realization and ecological "ethics" that guides behavior.
34. Explain why it is important to solve the problems of our global crises in a balanced way.
35. Explain why the 14th Dali Lama asserts that we have no choice than to develop what he calls "a sense of universal responsibility?"
36. Identify and discuss ten emerging trends and promising human options that have great promise for addressing the world global crises.
37. Describe how the media and the Internet provide are vehicles for bringing transpersonal awareness to many people in a shared manner.
38. Explain how creative work and deep economies can address our global, evolutionary crises.
39. Describe how the species' spiritual altruism, cooperative impulse, and capacities for compassion, conscious love, and inner peace can help us address the current global crises that confront us today.
40. Define *transpersonal social psychology* and identify four principles or assumptions that underlie its approach to the social and cultural troubles current in our world today (e.g., overpopulation, pollution, resource depletion, and environmental degradation).
41. Explain why psychological and spiritual solutions, not technological ones, are needed to solve global problems.
42. Explain why individual transformation is a pre-requisite of social transformation.
43. Distinguish two fundamental cultural attributes -- *collectivism* and *individualism*.
44. Describe how collectivism and individualism can significantly influence one's attitudes toward the current global crises, the values that lead individuals to form particular views on a variety of social problems, and social interaction in a wide variety of situations.
45. Describe how cross-cultural psychology provides an important perspective from which to view the "spiritual" nature of our global social and cultural crises.
46. Describe how a social psychology that is transpersonal can help regain a lost perspective in mainstream psychology to more adequately deal with the spiritual dimension of human social experience and behavior.
47. Explain why it is important to distinguish what one experiences about life and what one has been told life is.
48. Describe how one may discover the sacred in everyday life.
49. Define *voluntary simplicity* and compare it to the techocratic-industrial worldview of modern Western society.
50. Describe the basic idea of a "transpersonal ecology."
51. Tell how deep ecology is related to the themes of transpersonal social psychology.
52. Identify what transpersonal social psychology has to offer the "deep ecology" movement.
53. Describe how contemporary interest in things "spiritual" and global spiritual emergence are two emerging trends that have great promise for addressing the world global crises.
54. Describe how a shift in values toward service a greater reverence for life can help address current global crises.
55. Describe how ecology relates to humanity's religious sentiment.
56. Describe how the world's religions align with the basic principles of deep ecology.
57. Summarize the logical and empirical behavioral, physiological, and ethological evidence that suggests the continuity of psychic life in human and nonhuman animals.
58. Evaluate and judge the value of evidence for consciousness in animals and humans.
59. Compare human and non-human animals’ relationship with nature.
60. Evaluate and judge the value of evidence for emotions in animals and humans.
61. Evaluate and judge the value of evidence for cognition in animals and humans.
62. Discuss the issue of free-will in human and non-human animals.
63. Evaluate and judge the value of evidence for self-consciousness in animals and humans.
64. Evaluate and judge the value of evidence for imagination in animals and humans.
65. Evaluate and judge the evidence for continuity in the transpersonal nature of human and nonhuman animals and the dignity of a spiritual life.
66. Discuss the implication of the transpersonal nature of animals for the care and use of animals in psychology.
67. Summarize the key ideas contained in the case study describing one individual's life-transforming encounter with his Transpersonal Self which led to his discovery of the spiritual and cosmic dimensions of the human psyche and its potential for consciousness evolution.
Chapter 13 Summary

This chapter examines social psychology in light of the concepts and theories of transpersonal psychology. The chapter begins with a description of the phenomenology of the social world -- the personal self-world (Umwelt or eigenwelt), the work-a-day world of others and everyday life (Mitwelt), the social world of our predecessors or ancestors (Vorwelt) and the social world of our successors (Folgewelt). Our understanding of the social world is expanded in light of its many temporal dimensions -- present, past, and future. The social world of everyday life (Mitwelt) is then examined in depth, particularly in terms of the ideas and beliefs of orthodox, Western psychology ("The Western Creed") that have given rise to the problems and conditions that are less than ideal in our world today, with an eye toward their solutions. The consequences of the Western Creed for the modern human cultural world are described and the need to bring to light and explore new ways of thinking about a social psychology that is transpersonally oriented is proposed. The project of humanizing an inhumane world is explored in light of seven themes of a "transpersonal humanism" provides a basic, firm foundation for the development of a social psychology that is transpersonal: (a) the worth of the individual, (b) the species' basic good intent, (c) the importance of individual action, (d) the responsibility to be oneself, (e) the constructive nature of impulses, (f) the creativity of being, and (g) the purpose and meaning of life. In order to make it a better world, transpersonal humanism recognizes the need for each individual to practice one's ideals in everyday life as they exist in one's own impulses, feelings and ability. It acknowledges that in doing so, the means used must be worthy of the ideal ends one hopes to achieve.

We live in a new and critical time in human history in which global, evolutionary crises -- population explosion, depletion of natural resources, destabilization and destruction of the environment, massive military budgets and weapons of mass destruction, psychological alienation, war and violence, world poverty, hunger, and disease, social injustices, and economic inequalities -- that are of our own making threaten not only the survival of the species but of the world. The fundamental reasons for the emergence of our present global crises are identified and discussed, especially the consequences of the technocratic-industrial worldview. It is argued that the present global crisis is mean to teach us four important lessons dealing with the sacredness of the individual, our relationship with Nature and other forms of consciousness, the potential for consciousness evolution, and the spiritual and cosmic dimensions of life, mind, and consciousness -- all lessons that a social transpersonal psychology is oriented to address. Five fundamental solutions are proposed to solve our global, evolutionary crises: (a) understanding of the psychological and social forces that led to the situation, (b) the undertaking of an inner "Manhattan Project," (c) a self-realization and ecological "Ethics" that guide our behavior, (d) solving the problems of our global crises in a balanced way, and (e) development of "a sense of universal responsibility."

Ten emerging trends and promising human options to address the contemporary global crisis are identified and discussed: (a) transpersonal media and the Internet, (b) creative work and deep economies, (c) the species' good intent, particular as displays in its altruism, cooperative impulses, and capacity for compassion, conscious love, and inner peace, (d) the emergence of a social psychology that is transpersonal, (e) the re-sacralization of everyday life, (f) renewed interest in voluntary simplicity, (g) emergence of a transpersonal ecology, (h) renewed interest in spirituality, (i) a shift in values toward service and a greater reverence for life, (j) and religion's changing relationship to nature. The themes of a social psychology that is transpersonal are also identified and discussed: (a) Psychological and spiritual solutions, not technological ones, are needed to solve global problems of social relations and social influence, (b) individual transformation is a pre-requisite of social transformation, (c) cross-cultural psychology provides an important perspective from which to view the "spiritual" nature of our global social and cultural crises, (d) bridge psychological science with transpersonal spirit to more adequately deal with the spiritual dimension of human social experience and behavior, (e) encourage individuals to always distinguish what they experience about life and what they have been told life is.
Beyond the Umwelt or Eigenwelt (self-world), the Mitwelt (social world of present contemporaries), the Vorwelt (social world of past ancestors), and the Folgewelt (social world of future progeny), we may add a fourth aspect to our social world -- the Life-World of nature, earth, world and all of its flora and fauna -- the *Leibenswelt* which ultimately surrounds, supports, sustains, and couches all aspects of the human social world. How widely are transpersonal phenomena distributed in nature? Are transpersonal characteristics and abilities unique elements of human personality, or are transpersonal attributes also found in nonhuman animals? If nonhuman animals possess a transpersonal nature, then how similar is it to that of humans? Is the transpersonal nature of human animals different in kind from the transpersonal nature of nonhuman animals, or only different in degree? Possible answers to these questions about the continuity of the transpersonal nature of human and nonhuman animals are discussed in light of logical argument, empirical behavioral, ethological, and other evidence. Eight aspects of psychic life are examined: (a) consciousness, (b) relationship with nature, (c) emotions, (d) cognition, (e) free will, (f) self-consciousness, (g) imagination, and (h) dignity of a spiritual life. Each of these aspects of psychic life is a spiritual as well as a psychological attribute, a link between individual being and spiritual Reality, and a means by which the continuity in the transpersonal nature of human and nonhuman animals and the dignity of a spiritual life is revealed. The implications for animal care and use in psychology are explored.

The chapter concludes with a case-study account of this author's (PFC) life-transforming encounter with the existence and "presence" of his inner, Transpersonal Self, and which led to his discovery of the spirituality of our species' biological heritage and his recognition of the transpersonal nature of animals. The progression that unfolded in a series of stages over the course of an academic year while he was an undergraduate student in college is described that eventually led to the activation and expression of what he describes as "the unification of the consciousness of a personal self with that of my inner, Transpersonal Self and unification of that Transpersonal Self with the Universal Self of All That Is."
Chapter 13

Transpersonal Social Psychology

I. The Human Cultural World

The Phenomenology of the Social World

German phenomenologist and philosopher Alfred Schultz (1967) provides a useful framework for describing the key aspects or dimensions of the human cultural and social world. Our experience of the social world consists of three encircling aspects, like the layers of an onion, that grow out of or build upon each individual's personal self-world (or Umwelt). Closest to the personal self-world is the social world of our contemporaries (or Metwelt). The next layer outward is the social world of our predecessors and ancestors (or Vorwelt). The next layer is the social world of our successors and progenitors (or Folgewelt). Beyond this we may add a fourth aspect to our social world -- the Life-World of nature, earth, world and all of its flora and fauna -- the Lebenswelt which ultimately surrounds, supports, sustains, and couches all aspects of the human social world.

The personal self-world (Umwelt). A distinction can be made between the personal self-world (or Umwelt, also called Eigenwelt) and the work-a-day world of others and everyday reality (or Mitwelt) (von Uexküll, 1957). The concept of Umwelt is illustrated by von Uexküll's (1957) tree in the forest as seen from the point of view of a lumberjack, a child, a fox, an ant, an owl, and a bark-boring beetle. The point of the illustration is that we all live in our own self-worlds. We each have our own body and our own consciousness, and we experience ourselves as the center of experience. In our Umwelt or Eigenwelt, each of us privately experiences this same present moment, this same present NOW, existing within it together, sharing this time and space. To get a sense of the living, vivid nature of the Umwelt, "experience the moment as you know it as fully as you can as it exists physically within this room. And then imagine the experience that is present in one moment of time all over the globe. Then try to appreciate the subjective experience of your own that exists in the moment. . . . and this multiplied by each living individual" (Roberts, 1972, p. 414). Although the time and space is the same, however, the "worlds" we live in are different for each of us. Each of us brings to this moment different past experiences, a different level of development and learning, different expectations and anticipations of the future. For that matter, no two people perceive the "same" object or event from precisely the same point of view in space. We are actually much more different than similar to each other. One person's interpretation need not look like another's. Each person interprets the events of life through his or her own beliefs and characteristics, and thus will reflect a different segment of a perceived object or event as indicating something of value. All of our interpretations taken together suggest the larger picture of the event's meaning by pointing out a peculiar aspect that would otherwise go unnoticed.

The work-a-day world of others and everyday life (Mitwelt). The Mitwelt is the shared world. It is the public world governed by the social rules of behavior, called norms. How one behaves alone is different than how you behave with others. You affect others by your very presence among them, and they affect you. The Mitwelt is intimately connected to the Unwelt. Transpersonal writer and channel Seth/Jane Roberts put it this way:

You cannot disconnect one area of life from another. En mass, your private beliefs form your cultural reality. Your society is not a thing in itself apart from you, but the result of the individual beliefs of each person in it. There is no stratum of society that you do not in one way or another affect. . . . Your private beliefs merge with those of others, and form your cultural reality. . . . You do not understand or perceive the ways in which your reality contributes to the foundation of the mass-world reality that you experience. Unconsciously, each individual participates in forming
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that world. . . Each person forms his or her reality, and yet that personal reality must also be shared with others, and must be affected by the reality of others. (Roberts, 1981b, pp. 59-60, 75, 93, 174)

The *Mitwelt* is the anonymous world of our contemporaries -- those others who share the Life-World (*Leibenswelt*) with you and me. *You are my contemporaries,* just as I am yours. Right now, *they* are a *they,* when one is not in a face-to-face encounter them. When they come into the temporal stream of one's "meaningful lived experience" in the here-and-now, *they* become a *Thou.* It is in this encounter that intimate interpersonal and intergroup relationships with other human beings provide the opportunity for personal and social transformation (Stensrud & Stensrud, 1979; Welwood, 1990b). We experience the social world directly, intensely, intimately, and vividly in the experience of the face-to-face encounter with others. When we leave our face-to-face encounter, we each go off into that anonymous world of "contemporaries."

**The social world of our predecessors (Vorwelt).** The *Vorwelt* is the world of our predecessors. The world of our ancestors influences our present social reality just as each individual now alive influences our present social reality, but in a way that is less present, less vivid, less intense, less direct, less intimate than in the "lived through shared temporal flow of experience" of the face-to-face encounter of the social world of our contemporaries. The size of the *Vorwelt* was estimated by science fiction writer Arthur C. Clark in the 1970's to number one hundred billion: "Behind every man and woman now alive stand thirty ghosts, for that is the ratio by which the dead outnumber the living. Since the dawn of time, roughly a hundred billion human beings have walked the planet Earth." It is difficult to appreciate the differences in our present subjective attitudes and in the quality, as well as kind of social intercourse that existed even 500 years ago. Can you imagine what kinds of experiences and dreams of people who lived 500 years ago? No television, airplanes, telephones. Lives were ruled by the overall authority of the Roman Catholic Church. Only one framework of belief and sons followed in the footsteps of their fathers. People's dreams were likely different in those times as well -- more filled with angels and demons.

**The social world of our successors (Folgewelt).** The *Folgewelt* is the world of our successors. It is the most indeterminate of all social worlds because it is the world of the unborn and of future generations. This world is gained access to only by imagination. We use "ideal types" to imagine what the future human social and cultural world will be like. What type of social world will exist in the year 2075? What type of interpersonal understanding or social interaction will be appropriate in the distant future? Can we validly simply project present conditions into the future? What probable future can you imagine for yourself? For the species?

**The social worlds of time Past, time Present, and time Future.** With a stretch of creative imagination and the application of intuitional comprehension, Being-Cognition, and vision-logic, one's understanding of each of these three kinds of social worlds -- *Mitwelt* of the present, *Vorwelt* of the past, and *Folgewelt* of the future -- can be imaginatively expanded within the larger context of a Spacious Present in which all time occurs in the NOW. Pretend for moment that each of the three kinds of human social worlds -- the *Mitwelt* of time Present, *Vorwelt* of time Past, and *Folgewelt* of time Future -- are understood as each having an additional past, present, and future aspects of their own, as illustrated in **Figure 1** (Roberts, 1995b, pp. 200-201).

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*Insert Figure 13-1 here*
All nine temporal aspects of Past time, Present time, and Future time are appearances of one inexpressible experience of all three human social worlds -- Vorwelt, Mitwelt, Folgewelt -- happening simultaneously in the spacious present of NOW.

The Inhumane Human Cultural World

The orthodox Western Creed of modern psychology. The individual's personal self-world (Umwelt or Eigenwelt) and the work-a-day world of others and everyday reality (Mitwelt) are made up of many different and sometimes contradictory attitudes, behaviors and symbols that the person has received and accepted from one's society and culture. Culture is defined as

- a set of attitudes, behaviors, and symbols shared by a large group of people and usually communicated from one generation to the next. Attitudes include beliefs (political, ideological, religious, moral, etc.), values, general knowledge (empirical and theoretical), opinions, superstitions, and stereotypes. Behaviors include a variety of norms, roles, customs, traditions, habits, practices, and fashions. Symbols represent things or ideas, the meaning of which is bestowed on them by people. A symbol may have the form of a material object, a color, a sound, a slogan, a building, or anything else. People attach specific meaning to specific symbols and pass them to the next generation, thus producing cultural symbols. (Shiraev & Levy, 2010, pp. 3-4)

The attitudes, behaviors, and symbols of modern Western culture to a large extent have been shaped by the communications received from mainstream scientific psychology. These communications frequently take the form of what transpersonal psychologist Charles T. Tart (1975/1992, chap. 2; 1997) calls the "Western Creed." The Western Creed is presented in Figure 13-2

Insert Figure 13-2 here

By experimentally believing this creed and reciting it aloud (preferably with a group of friends) and then discussing how it makes you feel and what it reveals about your deeper beliefs, much can be learned. This experiment is designed to help individuals realize how much of the prevailing beliefs of the human cultural world that they have implicitly and unconsciously accepted, in spite of what they believe to be their own conscious beliefs to the contrary. A more extended list of some assumptions that characterize modern Western psychology are presented in Figure 13-3.

Insert Figure 13-3 here

Is the orthodox "Western Creed" a statement of established scientific facts or socially useful fictions? These ideas, beliefs, and assumptions are called a "Creed" because they represent a belief system or statement of assumptions about the nature of reality, life, the world, and human beings that are often considered as established facts of existence rather than beliefs about existence. They are generally claimed to be accurate representations of scientific fact, and not just a belief system. If they are facts, then we must accept them whether or not we like them. The question is: Are they indeed facts, or are they simply socially accepted fictions believed for a time because they "work" by organizing and help make sense of our world for us or a time, to be later change when more knowledge becomes available to us? As long as these assumptions remain implicit and are not recognized and questioned, then people have no opportunity to escape from their controlling influence. By making them explicit, individuals are better able to see their consequences and question them. It was once a "fact" held to be an indisputable truth by
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the most esteemed and highly regarded scientists of the time (e.g., Lavoissoir) that "rocks cannot fall from the sky." This seemingly unalterable "fact" would be changed when the existence of meteorites was "discovered." Or consider the facts established by physics that iron being of a heavier molecular density than water must sink, and wood being heavier than air must therefore fall automatically to the ground because of gravity. People were so entranced by this sensory observation that they firmly believed that ships made of iron could not float and vehicles made of wood could not fly, and so boats made of iron and airplanes made of wood were not invented. It was only with insight of shape that the building of boats made of iron and birds made of wood came into being. Once people believed the world was flat, even though it was actually round. Their belief did not change the earth's roundness. But people believed and thus behaved as if the world were flat. People related to the world as if it were fact and much evidence (the same evidence) came to be interpreted in its own ways in support of the different beliefs. One's beliefs about oneself, about the world, and about other people behave in the same way -- selectively structuring one's experience of one's self so that one's experience ends up providing the selective "evidence" that in turn is used to justify or support those beliefs.

The consequences of the orthodox Western Creed for the modern human cultural world. Having long been conditioned and programmed by the Western Creed of orthodox psychology, the species must deal with beliefs and feelings often so ambiguous and distorted that individuals do not know how to react and no clear line of action seems possible that would change many of the unfortunate conditions that are less than ideal in our society today. The Western Creed has helped create an inhumane world by stressing a sense of meaninglessness, purposelessness, powerlessness, unworthiness, danger and impending doom. They have come to characterize much of the modern secular world, have practical consequences on the human spirit and block progress to the formation of a saner, more humane world. Such distorted ideas and beliefs are not merely thrust upon the individual, however. Each individual forms a part of the world's reality. One's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, while being one's own, combine and intermingle with those of others to become a part of the mental atmosphere of the nation and the world, in which there is always a give-and-take. Given this pervasive screen of intertwining ideas and beliefs through which people organize and interpret their private experience and public lives, and upon which our societies, governments, legal and educational systems are firmly built, it is difficult for an individual to perceive purpose or meaning in one's existence, worth in one's self, good intent in one's motives, personal safety in day-to-day affairs, the biological integrity of one's body, or the spiritual comprehension that could humanized our world.

New metaphysical foundations of modern social psychology. It is ironic that the basis of the scientific method and the framework behind all our organized structures of psychological science rests upon a subjective reality that is not considered valid by the very psychological sciences that were formed through its auspices. Subjectivity, emotions, individual differences, and creativity are considered a source of irrationality, bias, uncontrolled variation, and error as far as the objective unemotional scientific logical mind is concerned. Such a stance toward subjective reality closes mainstream psychology off from much otherwise quite-available knowledge concerning human social behavior and influence -- knowledge that would serve to answer many questions usually asked about the reasons for suffering, for example, and what happens to us at the time of death. A belief system that denies emotional truth or denies the validity of subjective experience is one-sided and reveals only a half or maybe a third of the true facts that are available to us. It is also a sign that the metaphysical (ontological and epistemological) foundations of modern psychological science require reassessment (Harman & Clark, 1994). They were adapted to and fashioned by a particular cultural outlook at a particular time in history. It is now time to bring to light and explore new ways of thinking which include an expanded transpersonal model of the human being, the human social and cultural worlds, and the larger natural world within which all have their existence.
A transpersonal "Western Creed." The fields of science, medicine, religion, and psychology and the beliefs they represent would be meaningless without individuals who believed in them. The fields themselves will expand and change, as individual scientists, physicians, theologians, and psychologists expand their definitions of reality, reevaluate their ideals, and the methods that are worthy of them in a way that reflects the definitions, ideals, and methods of transpersonal psychology discussed in this book. A transpersonal "Western Creed" would bring to light and explore new epistemological and ontological assumptions:

- The end does not justify the means.
- The activity of the brain does not come from the brain, but at each moment comes into the brain.
- The interior psychological environment is as real as the exterior physical one.
- Vast cooperative, not competitive, processes of nature gave rise to physical life and connect each species with every other.
- All energy contains consciousness.
- Consciousness is not limited or bound by time or space and is not imprisoned by matter but forms it.
- Human and nonhuman animals possess a rich, vital dimension of inside psychological depth.
- There exists an inner-ordered spiritual Reality that can be directly known through a broad range of focuses of consciousness).

Humanizing an Inhumane World

Transpersonal humanism. To humanize an inhumane world, individuals must begin by changing their own their thoughts, expectations, and beliefs. If each person reading this book were to disregard and ignore authoritative beliefs, no matter what their source, about the species' "accidental origins," "killer instincts," "unsavory unconscious," "disease-prone body," and "sinful self," tomorrow the world would have changed for the better, because the invisible but effective psychological atmosphere of the world would have been affected by the changed beliefs, even though not one new commandment, law, or regulation had been written. Humanistic psychology and transpersonal psychology (or a "transpersonal humanism") can facilitate this process of changing the world for the better by helping individuals unlearn the negative, hampering beliefs that stress the existence of danger, minimize the purpose of the species or any member of it, strain the individual's sense of biological integrity, and shrink the area of psychological safety that contribute to the ongoing creation of an inhumane world. By concentrating upon those inbred, positive attitudes, feelings, and beliefs that constantly improve one's sense of well-being, strength, and fulfillment -- the worth of the individual, the species' basic good intent, the importance of individual action, the responsibility to be oneself, the constructive nature of impulses, the creativity of being, the purpose and meaning of life-- transpersonal humanism "balances the equation." By opening up avenues of expression that increase their sense of worth and power, individuals become more likely to take steps in their own lives to express their ideals in whatever way is given them. They become better able to assess their abilities clearly so as to be consciously wise enough to choose from the myriad of probable futures the most promising actions and events that will add to individual fulfillment and to the development of society. There are many promising actions that could be taken to facilitate the formation of a more humane world, but one in particular underlies all others: Practice one's ideals in every day life as they exist in one's own impulses, feelings and abilities To humanize an inhumane world, individuals must become "practicing idealists" who strive to practice their idealism -- their understanding of excellent performance -- in the acts of their daily life (Roberts, 1981a, p. 293).

Practical idealism. A humane world may seem like a remote ideal, impossible to achieve through the actions of a single individual. But change in the world begins with the individual. Individual action then becomes enlarged and magnified through the action of other individuals to create our collective social
world. We may want immediate results and desire that the world change overnight. And yet time is an 
ingredient in all things. It took time for the unfortunate conditions in the world to develop and it will take 
time for them to become undone. We must start where we are, "think globally, act locally," be patient, 
and take small practical steps even though we may prefer to take large ones. "The journey of 1,000 miles 
begins with a single step," as the saying goes. What matters is that one does act, does move in the 
direction of one's ideals whatever they may be by taking some sort of action in one's daily life to 
physically actualize them (e.g., helping another person in any small way, without expecting thanks, three 
times a week). As Gandhi once said somewhere:

It's the action, not the fruit of the action that's important. You have to do the right thing. It may 
not be in your power, may not be in your time that there will be any fruit, but that doesn't mean 
you stop doing the right thing. You may never know what results come from your action, but if 
you do nothing there will be no result.

**Idealism in reverse.** However, if one's idealism remains abstract and high-flying and not tied to any 
practical methods for their actualization in the events of one's own private life, then the collective social, 
cultural, economic, and political structures that support an inhumane world will likely continue, and 
personal difficulties will begin to arise. The ideal that seems to exist so far out in the future may begin to 
appear unreachable. Focusing solely upon the unfortunate conditions that are less than ideal in our society 
today and on the gap between the present reality and the future ideal, we can become pessimistic and 
despondent as we magnify the problems involved by our concentration upon them, so that they are 
eventually all that can be seen. Frustrated by a perceived lack of progress, our unfulfilled idealism can 
then become inverted. No longer motivated by a sense of satisfaction, patience, trust, and optimism, but 
by a sense of personal disappointment, anger, cynicism, and despair, the individual risks becoming "an 
idealist in reverse" - a fanatic who self-righteously justifies the use of almost any method at his or her 
disposal to achieve his or her ideal, no matter what the cost or risk to self or others, for the sake of the 
greater "good" (Roberts, 1981b, p. 294). If private feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, 
worthlessness, frustration, and exasperation deepen, the individual becomes motivated to act in drastic 
unideal ways that he or she might not have otherwise performed -- acts of violence, for example. The 
person may begin to imagine the downfall of the species by some natural catastrophe or self-destructive 
act, plot to bring about some disaster or tragedy to a group of people or nation, or assassinate an 
individual whom the fanatic feels have fallen so far beneath his or her expected ideals. Most of the social 
and political troubles current in the world today are the result of the unfortunate belief that any means is 
justified in the pursuit of one's ideals. "Man has killed for the sake of his ideals at least as much as he has 
ever killed for greed, lust, or even the pursuit of power on its own merits" (Roberts, 1981b, p. 215). Many 
reprehensible atrocities have been committed by fanatical idealists who will sacrifice other people's lives 
as well as their own, and then justify and condone those acts as regrettable but necessary actions on the 
grounds that they were a means toward a "good" end and committed for the sake of the greater good (e.g., 
the Crusades, Inquisition, Salem witch hunts, Lincoln's assassination, Hiroshima's destructive bomb, 
Hitler's Germany, Iraq's suicide bombers).

The "means" must be worthy of the ideal "ends" one hopes to achieve. As individuals, we each have 
the power to form a better kind of world. In order for this to happen, however, we must evaluate what our 
ideal humane world is believed to consist of, and the means we plan to use to accomplish that end. For 
not just any means will do -- the means or methods chosen must be worthy of the ideal end we hope to 
achieve. We cannot kill or wage war, for example, in the name of peace, or sacrifice other forms of life to 
preserve the sacredness of human life, otherwise our methods will automatically betray, undermine, and 
unravel at its very core the ideal we are seeking to achieve. To humanize an inhumane world we must see 
it that each step we take is ideally suited to the world we hope to achieve. If our ideal humane world 
involves being kind to one another, then we must be tolerant of opposing ideas in the pursuit of that ideal. 
If our ideal humane world involves looking for humanity's basic good intent behind all of its actions, then
one step will involve discovering our own basic good intent that has always been there all along. If our ideal humane world involves improving the quality of human life, then our pursuit of that ideal will not involve destroying the quality of other kinds of life. If we trust our impulses and explore their meanings, practice our idealism in the acts of our daily life, and insist that each step we take is worthy of the ideal that we pursue, then a sense of meaning and purpose, power and creative excitement will be provided in our lives and these characteristics will be reflected outward in the humanized social, cultural, economic, and political structures that will indeed follow.

II. A New and Critical Time in Human History

Global, Evolutionary Crises

Why is today a new and critical time in human history? The 21st century is a new and critical time in human history. It is a time that may decide the fate of our planet, our species, and countless other species, as we possess unprecedented powers and face unparalleled possibilities, and extraordinary dangers and suffering on a world-wide scale. We are the first generation that will decide whether we create a sustaining and sustainable society or leave a plundered, polluted, radioactive, overpopulated planet. Everyone knows we face dangers -- unmatched ecological disruption, for instance, as a result of consuming planetary resources faster than they can be replaced and an overpopulated planet that no longer has the "carrying capacity" to sustain us -- yet few appreciate just how awesome and urgent they are (Ehrlich & Ehrlich, 1990, pp. 38-40; McKibbin, 1989; Russell, 1998; Walsh, 1984, part 1). The global crises we face today are unique in their scope, complexity, and urgency, and every one of them is caused by humans -- the population explosion, depletion of natural resources, destabilization and destruction of the environment, massive military budgets and weapons of mass destruction, homelessness, Third World debt, war and violence, social injustice, economic inequalities, Global warming, and oppressions based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species.

Fundamental reasons why our present global, evolutionary crises emerged. Our present global, evolutionary crises emerged for a number of reasons: (a) one-sided ego development at the expense of our spiritual nature, (b) cultural conditioning by the dominant technocratic-industrial worldview, (c) loss of identification with Nature in all of its forms.

One-sided ego development. One reason for our current global crisis is that there has been a lack of evolution of our inner psychological ego commensurate with our external material evolution. This failure to recognize that "internal" growth is central to human evolutionary processes has led to one-side, ego-bound development of the species at the expense of our spiritual nature. This unbalance has led to a gross disparity between the relatively underdeveloped internal faculties of our species and the extremely powerful external technologies at our disposal.

Patriarchal technocratic-industrial worldview. A second reason for our current global crisis is that our cultural conditioning and the dominant worldview of technocratic-industrial societies toward Nature has rendered us perceptually deaf to our own higher human possibilities, even though Western culture provides a more fertile ground for exploring these potentials than any in history. The problems we are facing are not merely economic, political, or technological in nature. The problems we face are all reflections of the emotional, moral, and spiritual state of contemporary humanity. The communications from society and culture that undermine the integrity of the individual are the forces that are responsible for the waste of war, social injustices, economic inequalities, ecological crisis, oppressions, and human insanities that plague our world. The destructive and self-destructive elements in the present human condition directly reflect the self/other dualism of a patriarchal world view or ideology characteristic of technocratic-industrial societies, and alienation of modern humanity from itself and from spiritual life and humanistic values.
Loss of identification with Nature in all of its forms. A third important source of our global crises is the fact that our species has lost its identification with the planet Earth, the land, the seas, the forests, and the seasons of the Earth, and all of its creatures and forms of life. We hoped that our technology and industry might give us insight to life, but has in the end given us even less knowledge and has not helped us understand the Earth, or even use it effectively, much less fully. In fact, the abuse that the species has done to the environment in the name of economic, political, and scientific progress and human "benefit" has had such an unprecedented effect on the planet that it is no longer inconceivable that our progeny (Foglewelt) will see the "end of nature" that our ancestors (Vorwelt) knew (McKibbin, 1989).

Patriarchal Technocratic-Industrial Worldview

What is the patriarchal worldview of technocratic-industrial societies toward Nature, and why is it insufficient? In the patriarchal worldview of technocratic-industrial societies, human beings are regarded as isolated and fundamentally separated from the rest of Nature, and all that is associated with nature (e.g., what is "feminine," "animal," and "not self"). Human beings as a species, especially the males of the species, are regarded by themselves as superior to, and in charge of, the rest of creation. It is a worldview obsessed with the idea of power and dominance over, in which humans must dominate and have power over nonhuman Nature, masculine over feminine, wealthy over the poor, Western cultures over non-Western cultures (Gaard, 1993). It is a power-based morality, masculine-oriented ideology, dualistic self/other worldview consisting of a narrowly materialistic scientific understanding of reality. It is no longer proper to judge the technocratic-industrial worldview only in terms of its enormous success in achieving an unparalleled level of material abundance for a "majority" of people. Because we have acted with only partial awareness, some ecologists believe that we have upset the equilibrium and have torn a hole in the fabric of the universe, which now returns to exact its ecological reparation (Devall & Sessions, 1985). Environmental degradation, psychological alienation, urban decay, and social unrest are all mirrors of the shortness of our vision. The outer world reflects our inner conditions and both are in poor condition. The arrogance of an anthropocentric and androcentric perspective has brought us to the edge of disaster as we confront the possibilities of nuclear holocaust, world famine, an exploding human population outstripping our natural resources, and global environmental poisoning.

As a species, we have become gluttonous and greedy. If there is one commandment that the species has yet to learn and that is not written in the Ten Commandments of old it is this: Thou shalt not violate against nature, life, or the earth. As a species, we have become gluttonous and greedy in our struggle to survival at all costs. We have yet to understand the spiritual truth that physical life on this planet, while striving for survival and longing for life, while abundant and rambunctious with the vitality of the life force, is not inherently gluttonous. It follows the unconscious order that we as a species have ignored and denied, the relationship and limits that we as a species have overgrown. We have become like a cell that has become omnivorous that may destroy the life of the body (the Earth) unless we change our ways.

The technological-industrial worldview is carrying Darwin's concept of "survival of the species" forward regardless of the consequences. As a species, we have generally considered ourselves as apart from nature throughout our recorded history. Darwin was right when he identified "survival" as a main concern of the species. It was because of concern for our own survival, that we tended to consider all other species only in terms of their use as a means to our own survival. We purposefully blotted out from our awareness as a species any conception of the great sacredness of all life, nor of the species' relationship within nature's framework. We lost our grasp of those great truths in our pursuit of survival at all costs, regardless of the consequences. In our modern world today, the technological-industrial worldview and the conception of a one-dimensional mechanical, deterministic, materialistic reality is carrying this idea forward -- survival of the species regardless of the consequences and changing the
environment to suit one's own purposes. This has led the species to a disregard of spiritual truths that social transpersonal psychology is attempting to bring to light again.

**Loss of identification with nature can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution.** This lost of identification with nature and all its life forms can be traced back directly to the Industrial Revolution (around 1760) where the technological-industrial worldview first was formulated and took hold of the collective consciousness of the species, as an overreaction to the previous religious concepts in which it was believed that humanity could affect the world with his thoughts. This worldview expressed the viewpoint that there was little connection between the individual and the events and objects in the world. The elements of Nature and the Earth itself lost its living quality in humanity's eyes and became objects to be named, categorized, dissected and examined. The species lost its love of nature and life forms at that point. One would not kill and dissect a beloved companion animals -- whether a cat, a dog, a hamster, ferret, or rat -- and so when our species turned its scientific back on nature and began to dissect the universe, it was an indication and reflection that our species had already lost its sense of love and identification with it. It became a dead object, without a soul for us. Only when we could put consciousness, awareness, emotion, free will, and the dignity of a spirited life out of the "object" -- whether animal or plant -- could we kill, dissect, and examine it (and even consume it as mere food stuffs) without qualm and without being aware of the living voice that protested (M. A. Fox, 1999). In our great fascination for understand what made things work and curiosity to understand the heredity of a pea, and the neurological and chemical workings of the nervous system of an animal, its anatomy and physiology, we forgot what we could learn by studying all these things in their natural habitat and during their life course. And so we examined "dead nature" in order to find out what made it live. And in order to discover life's reality, we thought that we had to *kill* it. To some extent, the species denied its heritage and no longer recognized that spirit is born into physical matter.

**Our sciences have promoted the idea that in order to understand a reality we must destroy it.** Our sciences, unfortunately reflect this kind of thinking and promote and maintain it in our culture and society, reflecting it, especially the strange idea that one can understand a reality by destroying it and perceive and understand the life mechanism of an animal by killing it, and that a phenomenon can best be studied by separating oneself from it. Each such attempt puts our species more out of context with ourselves and our environment and other species. While we accumulate so-called "facts", we are driven ever further away from any great knowledge about the meaning or purpose of life or understanding of the uniqueness of consciousness. It is wrong-thinking to believe that we can learning one iota about the inner reality of life or awareness when our methods lead us to destroy it. This act points to our fundamental misunderstanding of life to begin with.

**In cutting ourselves off from Nature, we at the same time cut ourselves off from ourselves.** Because basically we are a part of nature and not a part from nature, one consequence of this separation from Nature was a correlative separation from our own nature. Our thoughts no longer seemed to have any effect upon nature of upon our personal reality. Chance became the operative force and became a key explanatory concept in understanding our experience. In our minds, the species saw itself as a part form nature which assumed an adversarial relationship and became something which the species had to control. In cutting himself off from nature, we now felt its power and saw ourselves as being at its mercy. In cutting ourselves off from nature, we at the same time cut ourselves off from using many of our own abilities as well. It was at this point that divisions that had occurred between the species and nature, were introjected and portions of the self became divided, one from the other, and the smooth communication that had once occurred between all portions of the self became disrupted. The very nature of the conscious mind became changed and those unrecognized or denied powers of identification and connectedness were assigned to unconscious portions of the self by the various schools of psychology that subsequently arose. Very natural functions of the conscious mind (e.g., emotional understanding, intuition, imagination, identification, compassion, empathy) were assigned to the "underground" and cut off from normal use.
The way in which women and nature have been conceptualized historically in the Western intellectual tradition has resulted in devaluing whatever is associated with women, emotion, animals, nature, and the body, while simultaneously elevating in value those things associated with men, reason, human culture, and the mind" (Gaard, 1993, p. 5).

Today, one's emotions, intuitions, empathy, subjectivity, and other so-called "feminine," "animalistic," "natural" qualities and attributes are regarded as problematic, unreliable, and sources of error or bias to the conscious egoistic reasoning mind because they bring knowledge or information that does not fit in with its beliefs of what it should be or what its normal functions ought to be. The insights of ecologists, sociologists, animal liberationists, and feminists have shown that the same patriarchal technocratic-industrial worldview that sanctioned the detachment from and oppression of nature, is the same ideology that authorized devaluation and oppression based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species (Adams, 1990; Collard & Contrucci, 1989, Gaard, 1993).

What Lessons is the Present Global Crisis Meant to Teach Us?

Sacredness of the individual and relationship with other forms of consciousness. In our modern society in the 21st century, we are seeing the results in terms global crises. There are several things that the present crises are meant to teach us. There are several things that the species must learn if we are to survival (Roberts, 1972, 1974). In the main, the species both collectively and individually, is working on two main problems: the sacredness of the individual, and the individual's relationship with other human beings and with all other forms of consciousness- animals, plants, and the very elements of Earth itself. The ecological crisis will sooner or later teach the species that when we destroy the environment and other forms of life that basically we will end up killing ourselves, that if our species does not have a loving concern for the environment in which we dwell, then the environment will no longer sustain us. This lesson is also being taught to us by the results of our actions in the creation of an inhumane human cultural world, including the problem of war and overpopulation. The Earth will destroy us, because we will not be worthy of it. The species has set the problem up for itself. Unfortunately it has taken this crisis to make us understand the problems we have created. We seem to be a think-headed and stubborn species, whose ego will not understand its part within the framework of nature until it actually sees itself in danger of tearing it apart. For if the problems are not solved, then the bees and the flowers, the grains and animals will fade from our experience. The ecological and social crises that we have brought upon ourselves are to be regarded as a kind of therapy, a teaching method that we have set up for ourselves because we need it NOW, before our species begins other journeys. We must learn our lessons now in our own backyard, so to speak, before we travel to others worlds, for example. We have brought the global crises upon ourselves for that purpose and we will learn. This is the purpose of our generation -- to perfect inner knowledge, and to materialize it as faithfully as possible outward into the world. Transpersonal social psychology's aim to help this come about during this time in our history.

Recognition of the potential for consciousness evolution. It has been said that "Human nature cannot change" and that "Evolution is finished." Not so. Human nature is not a finished product, but the sort of consciousness meant to change, evolve and develop. It is now in a state of transition, one of many (Bourne, 2008-2009; Institute of Noetic Sciences, 2007, 2008). As a species we are now poised upon a threshold from which the species can go many ways. We have come to a tipping-point as well as a turning point in the evolution of our species. Certain beliefs that were adopted in order to develop the unique kind of ego consciousness that is presently our own must now be dispensed with and new ones adopted, if we are to return a wiser, saner species to a more humane world. Historically, our species chose a certain line of development in which our consciousness specialized along certain lines, focusing on sharp particulars of experience. Inherent in that line of development, in that ego consciousness both psychologically and biologically there has been the possibility of a change in that pattern and an alteration that would
effectively lift the species to a new state of consciousness. That evolution of spirit, mind, and body is now at a stage where such development is not only possible, but feasible and even necessary if the species is to achieve its greatest fulfillment. Ego consciousness must now dissolve the boundaries that separate it from the inner portions of the self, heal the split, so to speak, and re-familiarize itself with its roots. The signs of the times point to the fact that humanity's so-called unconscious is becoming more and come **consciously** apparent. Ego consciousness is now experiencing an expanding and enlightened awareness that can organize heretofore neglected knowledge, directing its reasoning abilities to include within itself both intuitions and imagination as it plots our course to the future. The only alternative is a return to superstition, chaos, and an unnecessary war between reason and intuitive knowledge. Ego consciousness with its directing conscious mind, intellect, and reasoning abilities is meant to expand, to accept unconscious intuitions and knowledge and organize these deeply creative principles into new structures of society and cultural patterns. Transpersonal writer and channel Seth/Jane Roberts put it this way:

In a manner of speaking, the ego can be compared to the nationalistic state of nations, necessary indeed for man's development, but already growing passé, and perhaps even mitigating against the survival of the species, where once it aided that survival. The worldwide view of man as a species, worldwide brotherhood in no way hampers or endangers the individual man, and in no way endangers nations, but will represent one of the main hopes of mankind, without which no nations will endure. In like manner, when the ego concept is discarded as a concept, as the concept of nationalism will be discarded, so the individual self will not lose but gain. The individual self will expand, as the individual man will be capable of expanding when the old idea of nationalism is finally overthrown, and he can be benefited through learning of, and cooperation with, other men as brothers upon your planet. But as it is not wise to dispense with the idea of nationalism without gradual growths of understanding and preparation, and while the idea of nationalism cannot suddenly be dispensed with, so also the ego cannot be, and will not be, overthrown overnight; and even when it is finally left behind, it will still be used as a handy reference point; and through all this the self will not lose but gain, for all expansion outward, and expansion **inward** is a gain, and all boundaries, whether inward or outward, are hampering and limiting. (Roberts, 1998a, pp. 306-307)

**Acknowledgement of the spiritual and cosmic dimensions of life, mind, and consciousness.** There are potentials within mind and body that are not yet being used because we refuse to even grant them an existence. Developed, they can immeasurably enrich the species, and bring it to levels of spiritual and psychological and physical fulfillment that is pointed to by transpersonal social psychology. The individual needs now to become far more consciously aware of far more reality and allow its recognition of identity to expand so that it includes previously unconscious knowledge. To do this, our species must move beyond notions of one self, one world, one body, and one life. There is one self, world, body, and life, in one time, but within that self, world, body, and life are many selves, many worlds, many bodies, and many lives at other times as well. For if some change is not made, and made soon, then the species as it is now will not endure. Unless our species identifies itself with the Earth and with the other kinds of life with which we share this world, no industry or technology or inventions or scientific or medical advancements will ever help us understand our experience, our purpose, or our place in the world.

**What Fundamental Solutions are Required to Solve our Global Crises?**

**Understanding of the psychological and social forces that led to the situation.** Political, economic, and military interventions alone are insufficient to change the dominant world view of technocratic-industrial societies or solve our global crises. Truly effective long-term cures requires responses at all levels -- political, economic, social, psychological, and cultural. We need not only to feed the starving and reduce nuclear stockpiles, but also to understand and correct the psychological and social forces that led to the situation in the first place (Harman, 1998). We need to emphasize the importance of inner and outer work
to change both the inner psyche and the outer world. Our current crises can be solved only by balanced development of outer scientific and inner psychological capacities (Berry, 1988; Dalai Lama, 1989).

The undertaking of an inner "Manhattan Project." Peter Russell (1993) argues that the most urgent task facing today's generation is to undertake "an inner Manhattan Project" that devotes our best human and technological resources to the task of forging a psychological understanding and response adequate to the enormity of our global crises (p. 252). The psychological equivalent of the "Manhattan Project" would involve

- a recognition that there are enormous untapped potentials within human consciousness,
- an acknowledgement that if the untapped potentials within human consciousness could be released, then our species could begin to solve its problems more wisely,
- a commitment to put resources into projects to explore the transpersonal psyche and how to facilitate the release of our untapped potential, and
- an awareness that the root of our environmental crisis is an ignorance of the inner psychic realm and that any lasting remedy to our global problems must seek to find the underlying cause of the malady.

In addition, we must

- right the imbalance of our present era by fostering a degree of interior human growth and maturation that is at least commensurate with and supported by our enormous exterior technological growth.
- assume a co-creative role in evolutionary processes with awareness, care, and intention by recognizing that the evolution of our consciousness and supportive social structures and processes must be of central importance to our human agenda.
- acknowledge some degree of shared agreement as to the nature of "reality" within which we collectively exist that recognizes the validity and significance of cultural differences while simultaneously transcending them.

Self-realization and ecological "Ethics" that guide our behavior. If we are to restore the balance between our technological power and our spiritual evolution and move toward personal and social transformation, then new "ethics" that guide our behavior must arise. A Self-Realization ethic would assert that each person's proper goal is the evolutionary development of human potential and would oblige us to do no less than realize our greatest possibilities as a species (Fox, 1990b). An Ecological Ethic would accept our earth as limited and recognize the underlying unity of the species as an integral part of the natural environment (Berry, 1999). An Integral Ethic would recognize a need to emphasize both the nonmaterial dimension of an evolving human consciousness that builds upon and includes our technological and economic achievements rather than denies them (McKibbin, 2007).

Solving the problems of our global crises in a balanced way. It is important to solve the problems of our global crises in a balanced way that takes different aspects into consideration because all problems and their solutions are interrelated at all levels. War, famine, poverty, economic injustice, lack of moral and spiritual values, destruction of nature, global warming, and violation of human rights are not isolated phenomena that can be analyzed and tackled independently of one another. They are all of a piece. Material development without spiritual development without economic development without political development can cause serious problems and must be developed side by side so as to achieve a good balance among them (McKibben, 2007). Otherwise, it is of little benefit to try to solve one problem if doing so creates an equally serious one. This is why it is so important to develop a sense of universal responsibility with respect to the different issues that confront our planet today. Because of the increasing
interconnection and interdependence in the world, our sense of responsibility and compassion must encompass our entire planet and all people (Dalai Lama, 1989).

**Development of "a sense of universal responsibility."** The 14th Dali Lama in his 1989 Nobel Peace Prize lecture asserted that we have no choice than to develop what he calls "a sense of universal responsibility" (Dalai Lama, 1989). Why? Because we all share this small planet Earth together and, as a result have become increasingly interdependent upon one another. We are truly a global family -- the family of humanity -- and what happens in one part of the world may affect us all. Furthermore, we are all members of the same species -- homo sapiens -- regardless of race, creed, religion, sex, nationality, religion, sexual orientation who seek happiness and try to avoid suffering. If we each selfishly pursue only what we believe to be in our own interest, without caring about the needs of others, we not only may end up harming others but also ourselves. We also understand that to wage any sort of nuclear war today would result in mutually assured destruction -- a form of suicide. To pollute the air and oceans in order to achieve some short-term benefit or for the sake human convenience would be to destroy the very basis of our survival and survival of all life on earth.

**Emerging Trends and Promising Human Options**

1. **Transpersonal Media and Internet**

Beyond the individual, social transpersonal psychology focuses on agents of change in society-at-large, such as the media, the internet, and even video game play that are important critical catalysts in bringing to fruition the image of humankind and worldview supported, studied, and actualized by transpersonal psychology (Charles, 2005; Gackenbach, 2007, 2008; Gaylinn, 2005; Kaplan, 2005). Media, for example, is a vehicle for bringing transpersonal elements and awareness into the lives of the mass populace. Provide a vehicle for mass meditations on a particular topic or idea, mass media can be a powerful force in bringing transpersonal awareness to many people in a shared manner. When transpersonal in content, form, or purpose, a film or television show or webcast can catalyze and guide society and the human species toward planetary consciousness. The internet is another "transpersonal" (defined as "beyond the personal") agent-of-change with a host of web sites that provide another vehicle for bringing transpersonal awareness to many people in a shared manner (e.g., www.gaiamind.com; www.lucistrust.org/ www.unlimitedloveinstitute.org; www.socialartistrydegrees.org; www.parabola.org; www.AGNT.org. www.atp.org

2. **Creative Work and "Deep Economy"**

Business is recognized as an important component of the global ecology, given the linkage between the economic consumption and the complex global problems of environmental degradation, toxic chemical concentrations, species extinction, soil depletion, deforestation, desertification, and "greenhouse effect." Transpersonal social psychology recognizes, however, that there is no basic reason to assume that a envisioning of how we think about economic "development" cannot lead to good socially responsible decisions (McKibbin, 2007). The world of work and the way of doing business can provide us opportunities for meaningful and fulfilling personal and social transformation that is driven by the building up of new goals and deeper values, and that can result in a society in process of healing itself. The social impact that money has upon each of our individual lives and on the world as a whole -- the way in which we use money for good or for ill -- has shown us that our personal financial harmony is intimately connected to worldwide financial harmony (Hoffman, 1994). How we perceive money and our pursuit of prosperity has a direct impact on our ability to "nurture the essential humanity of our economy" and translate that harmony into larger worldwide issues of security, peace, war, repression, and freedom (McKibbin, 2007). Our changing world and uncertain times affords us the perfect environment for visionary thinking, wise solutions and powerful insights to map out the future of business (Harman &
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Hormann, 1990). Transforming business and giving firm to vision requires flashed of inspiration, practical tools and seeing how others have succeeded when they ask and act on the difficult questions of our economic times.

Conferences such as the International Conference on Business and Consciousness and newsletters such as The Inner Edge reflect the increasing business interest in values such as integrity, authenticity, balance, sustainability, purpose, creativity, and leadership, along with profit, of course. At many companies, human capital has overtaken the bricks-and-mortar assets as the biggest driver of profits. Employers are problem solving what kinds of investments in the human factor pay off (e.g., reduced quit rates, reduced sick time, more satisfied employees, higher customer satisfaction). People throughout the world are taking steps to integrate their spirituality with their work. They are looking for community, connection, and meaning in their jobs, and seeking opportunities to expand their own capacities for "spirited" or "inspired" performance. In doing so, they are successfully revolutionizing business practice -- practicing in ways that bring idealism and humanity into workplace life. They want to build better communities, have better relationships with their coworkers, be more deeply fulfilled by their work, and express their talents in a way that makes a difference in the world. And they find that the more they bring their whole selves to work, the more successful they and their organizations become.

3. The Species’ Good Intent

Spiritual altruism. The good intent of our species is apparent everywhere in everyday life. It is obvious in the cooperative ventures that unite the mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms, the relationship of bee to flower, humanity's own cooperative nature, our innate desire for fellowship, our natural bent for taking care of others, and altruistic behavior. Altruism, for example, does not only have evolutionary or social benefits as the sociobiologists say, but has spiritual underpinnings and is exhibited by individuals inspired and moved to act selflessly by ethical and spiritual motives, such as compassion, empathy, and social good -- a "spiritual altruism" (Menon, 2007, p. 137). "In every community there are people who care. Some feed the hungry, help the homeless, work with children or families at risk. Others reveal their genius in everyday acts of kindness and compassion. Their work, however great or small, and their presence are healing” (Thomas J. Hurley, quoted in Luck, 1989, p. 29). Altruistic behavior is normal behavior for our species and can be counted as one example of how the sacred operates in daily life. Our fellow human beings may sometimes seem like unfeeling monsters, spiritual idiots, ignorant of any heritage of love or truth or even graceful creaturehood, and it may seem that the species is doomed. Hundreds of compelling studies in psychology, sociology, economics, and biology, however, demonstrate that we are a more caring species than we give ourselves credit for, and that our generosity cannot be reduced to mere self-interest or evolutionary benefits (Flescher & Worthen, 2005; Kohn, 1990; Oord, 2006). Altruism and empathy is just as real and just as natural a part of "human nature" as competition is, and much less destructive and inefficient (Kohn, 1991).

The cooperative impulse. Conflict, it seems, cannot be avoided in our lives. They will be people who raise disagreement, open up controversy, argue a point of view that is different from one's own. This in not necessarily unhealthy because it is always good to be exposed to other points of view other than one's own. It has been said that "It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it" and "to have a good grasp of one's own viewpoint it is necessary to understand the arguments of those with whom one disagrees. Those who do not completely understand their adversary's point of view do not fully understand their own." The question is whether the debate, disagreement, and conflict occurs in a cooperative context -- where everyone is trying to educate one another, conduct productive discussions, and find common ground in order to arrive at a consensus (Fisher & Ury, 1981) -- or whether the conflict occurs in a competitive context -- where discussion is destructive and counterproductive, people are being disagreeable and argue just to hear themselves talk or show how clever they are, and the situation is set up so that only one person can win at the expense of other people's
failure (Kohn, 1986). Competitive conflict has drawbacks that cooperative conflict does not (Kohn, 1991). Whereas cooperation reduces anxiety and elicits positive emotions, competition causes anxiety and elicits negative emotions, especially if you are on the losing side. Whereas cooperation allows people to share their skills and resources, competition pits an individual's skills and resources against those of others. Whereas cooperation supports the idea of success and excellence and encourages intrinsic motivation, competition tends to support the idea of "victory" or beating other people and undermine intrinsic motivation and curiosity in favor of extrinsic motivation and external rewards, such as fame, attention, money, status (Kohn, 1993). Competitive conflict diminishes self-esteem of the "losers" and disrupts one's relationships with others. The common assertion that competition is an inevitable part of "human nature" is not supported by observations of so-called "primitive" cultures which do not have any observable forms of competition in their society, and by behavioral and ethological studies of cooperative and altruistic behavior in animals, even in situations where animals would not naturally band together (Dugatkin, 1997, 1999). Nor is the idea that competitive conflict is a part of our nature justified by our observations of those exciting nature documentaries we see on television, for the simple reason that what we see in nature is actually a reflection of "our understanding about our own social interaction, which we project unto nature, and then read it back from nature to justify our own cultural practices" (Kohn, 1991, p. 91). Transpersonal social psychology encourages us to look at the deeper social, economic, political, cultural, and psychological communications that cause competitive conflict every day of our lives, and its more destructive aspects that undermine the integrity of the individual.

Capacity for compassion, conscious love, and inner peace. One means by which personal and social transformation occurs is through the development of the two most valued inner capacities and transpersonal emotions that take us beyond ourselves -- compassion, conscious love, and inner peace -- and to foster our sense of responsibility for and connectedness with other people, the entire planet, and all its life forms (Dalai Lama & Cutler, 1998, chap. 5; Dass & Gorman, 1985; Welwood, 1990). The great emotion of love has been thus far poorly used, sometimes even being looked upon as a weakness, even so far as being told by our religions to love God but that to love ourselves is a sin. Love represents a biological impulse of all being (Darwin, 1872/1889, chap. 8; Balcomb, chap. 8; Masson & McCarthy, 1995, chap. 4).

4. Emergence of a Social Psychology that is Transpersonal

Psychological and spiritual solutions, not technological ones, are needed to solve global problems. Transpersonal social psychology and the movement it has inspired is intended to provide individuals with a more hopeful, healthier perspective toward the future state of our world and its possibilities. Such a perspective is needed, especially at this time in the history of the species. As transpersonal psychiatrist Roger Walsh (1993) observed:

The crucial factors that will decide the fate of our species and our planet are not so much technological as they are psychological and spiritual. For the first time in human history nearly all our global problems are human-caused. Problems such as overpopulation, pollution, resource depletion, and environmental degradation all stem from human behavior and therefore reflect the psychological forces within us and between us (Elgin, 1981; Walsh, 1984). The state of the world now mirrors the state of our individual and collective minds, and what we call global problems are actually global symptoms (p. 133).

The solutions to our problems as a species, in other words, lie within. Those solutions can be brought into awareness by the practice of transpersonal practices and disciplines that reveal our interconnections and unity with all humankind and all of life itself. Transpersonal practices can awaken us up to our basic interdependence and fundamental unity with our planet and its flora and fauna. The recognition of our need to awaken ecological concern and compassionate action in our work-a-day lives is the basis of deep
ecology and the field of transpersonal ecology (Devall & Sessions, 1985; Fox, 1990a). The question is: “Will we wake up in time?” (Russell, 1998).

**Individual transformation is a pre-requisite of social transformation.** Change of the outer world begins with the change of one's outer self -- the self one knows. Governments, societies, cultures, and social systems of all kinds are made up of individuals. If individuals did not exist, then neither would society. Once individual scientists, physicians, theologians, politicians, and so forth re-evaluate the goals and the means that are worthy of them in their pursuit of the "Good" for humankind, then the world would have changed for the better because the effective psychological atmosphere within which their behavior occurs, is directed, and energized would have been changed for the better. Transpersonal scholar Ralph Metzer (1986) supports this assumption regarding the complex question of social or collective transformation.

Individual transformation is an essential aspect of -- even a prerequisite to -- changes at the familial, organizational, societal, and global levels. While it is important to work on all these [system] levels simultaneously, preliminary observation suggests to me that positive transformation in groups, organizations, societies, and on the whole planet, is a function of the number of individuals who are consciously attempting to evolve and transform themselves. It appears natural for individuals, after having liberated their own minds to some degree, to want to share their insights with others, and apply them in social relationships. (p. x)

**Cross-cultural psychology provides an important perspective from which to view the "spiritual" nature of our global social and cultural crises.** Transpersonal social psychology recognizes that our understanding of social relations and social influence can be expanded by studying the social constructions of other cultures and societies around the world, especially as they relate to the spiritual side of our nature as a species (Hastings, Balasubrahmanyam, Beaird, Ferguson, Kanga, & Raley, 2001). Two fundamental cultural attributes -- collectivism and individualism, for example -- significantly influence one's attitudes toward the current global crises, and the values with their underlying assumptions that lead individuals to form particular views on a variety of social problems (e.g., the nature of human beings is selfish [Freud and Marx], scarcity is a primary condition of nature [Darwin], progress means growth, complexity, competition, and freedom [Weber]. The assumptions that underlie fundamental Western values of work, achievement, striving for efficiency, consumption of material goods may no longer be adaptive (though they may have been at one time), have outlived their historical usefulness and ought to be adjusted to include non-Western concepts and values of cooperation, harmony, and inner accord (Clark, 1995; Huntington, 1993; Shiraev & Levy, 2010, p. 259).

Collectivism and individualism, as fundamental cultural attributes, may significantly influence interaction in a wide variety of situations. . . . Individualistic cultures, people usually care primarily for themselves and their individual family, whereas in collectivist cultures, people are expected to first look after their in-groups and then themselves. In individualist cultures, the importance of achievement and the individual's initiative is stressed during socialization. In collectivist societies, the emphasis is placed on belonging to groups. (Shiraev & Levy, 2010, p. 279)

Orthodox scientific psychology has ruled out our species' spiritual nature, by and large, but the cost of this attempted suppression is enormous, particularly in our understanding of the issues surrounding the question of terrorism, violence and peace that a transpersonal perspective can provide (Puhakka, 2002; Roy, 2002; Teixeira, 1987; Walsh, 2002). If we want to find ourselves -- our spiritual side -- and understand "how things got so screwed up," it can be of value for us to look at non-Western cultures, and study how they address (a) issues of transcendence (Asante, 1984), (b) the loss of embodied spirituality in the modern world (Berman, 2000), and (c) the cultural construction of psychiatry itself (Gaines, 1992). The aim of transpersonal social psychology is to see how what we learn about the spiritual side of
ourselves that other cultures reveal can coexist and even integrate with our heritage of Western science, culture, and society (Tart, 1990).

Transpersonal social psychology does not propose that we believe everything that is labeled "spiritual" in other cultures (Peters, 1997), for there is admittedly a lot of nonsense and superstition that should be sorted out and rejected -- but not everything. We do not have to be ignorant or unscientific in order to argue reasonably that the technological-industrial world view is far from complete or that the position of mainstream scientific psychology provides an insufficient set of reasons for rejecting the actuality of the spiritual and the role it plays in personal and social transformation. Religions across cultures have played a key role in shaping the precepts of both ancient and modern civilizations that have guided the evolution and development of our species (Armstrong, 1993; Shapiro, 1989). They are not to be dismissed out-of-hand simply because they do not fit what "we already believe to be so." The research and theory of transpersonal psychology demonstrates why religion matters (Huston, 2001). The aim of such research and theory is to bring many of conventional, mainstream psychology's taken-for-granted beliefs about non-spiritual nature of the human social and cultural world into question, so that we will look at Life with new eyes.

Bridge psychological science with transpersonal spirit to more adequately deal with the spiritual dimension of human social experience and behavior. Orthodox, Western social psychology has dealt very poorly with the spiritual side of our nature, choosing to ignore its existence as an intervening variable in social behavior or social influence. Priests and rabbis tend to avoid attributing psychological characteristics to the soul, while psychologists refuse to grant it any existence at all. Much of our contemporary social problems stem not only from an "existential vacuum" resulting from a lack of purpose and meaning, but from a "spiritual vacuum" resulting from a lack of joy and vitality, sense of worthiness and powerlessness in our work-a-day lives. Henry David Thoreau once characterized our modern times in the following way: "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." Transpersonal social psychology represents an attempt on the part of psychologist's to make psychology a science of consciousness again that is studied from the inside-out rather than from the outside-in as is done by conventional psychology. Transpersonal social psychology's aim is to help regain a lost perspective in mainstream psychology, and to more adequately deal with that realm of human experience we call spiritual -- that "vast realm of human potential dealing with ultimate purposes, with higher entities, with God, with love, with forgiveness, with purpose" (Tart, 1975/1992, p. 4).

Encourage individuals to always distinguish what they experience about life and what they have been told life is. Transpersonal social psychology encourages individuals to distinguish beliefs that one has accepted from others and beliefs one knows from one's own experience. The reason is that one's beliefs play a large part in creating experience of personal and social reality. What individuals need to do is to start distinguishing between one's personal beliefs and observations and those that they have simply accepted from one's culture, without examination. We need to distinguish what we experience about life and what we have been told life is.

The emergence of a social psychology that is transpersonal. Transpersonal social psychology highlights the importance of shifting our perception to recognize the intrinsic worth and integrity of the individual and each individual's interconnection with all creatures and nature. It emphasizes that our true (transpersonal) identity is one which, while private, individual, and unique, is everlastingly a part of a natural world without which it could not physically exist for a moment. Like the "deep ecology" movement, transpersonal social psychology advocates a shift in identity from anthropocentric to biocentric, from egocentric to ecocentric (Devall & Sessions, 1985, chap. 5). The development and initial validation of psychometric measures to assess the extent to which individuals identify with nature represents a promising step forward in operationalizing this human-nature connection and stimulating research in this important area of transpersonal social psychology (St. John & MacDonald, 2007).
Transpersonal social psychology represents an ever deepening commitment on the part of individuals, communities, and nations to ask the more profound questions that need to be asked about the direction of the future evolution of humankind and our species' optimal relationship with nature and Nature's source. It is a perspective that does not perceive humans as superior, separate, and dominant over nature and other creature, walking as a conqueror upon the earth demanding all other species to bow down before it. Nor does it see human beings as the most important part of the universe but as one member of a community of species each contributing cooperatively to the welfare of the whole. This also means less consumerism, greater voluntary simplicity, less wish to impose one's will on others, and more interest in harmonizing with nature in an ecological manner (Elgin, 1993).

5. Re-Sacralization Everyday Life

Spirituality is not simply something that individual persons do in solitude, but if it is to be effective and truly life transforming then it must somehow enter into how one lives, thinks, feels, works, related to others in everyday life. As one Buddhist teacher and meditation master put the matter, "After the ecstasy, the laundry" (Kornfield, 2000). Enlightenment does exist. But even after achieving such realization we are face with the day-to-day task of putting into action in the acts of our daily lives the freedom, joy, and oneness with All That Is we have found. As we navigate the lived world with its personal problems, difficulties of family and community relationships, the ups-and-downs of domestic life, earning a living at work, the emotional pain of guilt and suffering and sickness and death, we continually strive to maintain and grow with the peace, compassion, wholeness, and inner happiness that accompanies the lifelong path of inner transformation and to live a voluntarily simple life (Brussat & Brussat, 1996; Harman & Horman, 1990; Moore, 1992; 1996; Peck, 1993; Remen, 1996; Sinetar, 1986; Spangler, 1996).

6. Voluntary Simplicity

**What is "voluntary simplicity"?** Voluntary simplicity (Elgin, 1981) refers to an alternative lifestyle that is "outwardly simple, inwardly rich." It is voluntarily simplifying the external material aspects of one's life in such a way that it significantly contributes to the enrichment and satisfaction of internal nonmaterial aspects of life. Voluntary simplicity restrains attachment to the material aspect of life to help the individual explore more fully the nonmaterial dimensions of human existence. It means the avoidance of exterior clutter and of the many possessions irrelevant to the chief goals and purposes of one's life. A comparison between the technological-industrial worldview and the worldview of "voluntary simplicity" is presented in Figure 13-4.

7. Emergence of a Transpersonal Ecology

**What is the basic idea of a "transpersonal ecology"?** The basic idea of a "transpersonal" ecology lies in its assumption of the possibility of an experience of oneself in which the sense of personal self extends beyond (or trans) an narrowly delimited biographical or egoic sense of self or an inner, transpersonal more basic self (Fox 1990b). It involves the realization of a sense of self in which our identification broadens and deepens beyond our body, our thoughts, our emotions -- beyond a relatively atomistic, narrow, shallow, isolated, one-dimensional sense of self -- to a wider, greater, larger, expansive, participatory one (Cohen, 1993). Transpersonal ecology or "ecopsychology" is based on the idea that we are all capable of identifying far more widely and deeply with the world around us than is commonly recognized (Roszak, 1992). Although not all transpersonalists believe that an expansive sense of self will lead the individual to be naturally inclined to care for the Earth (Stavely & McNamara, 1992), many
believe that this broadened identification with what is seemingly "not-self" has the potential to lead many individuals to appreciate and defend the integrity of the world around us and into action to do the "Great Work" (Berry, 1999). Transpersonal ecology is the recognition, acknowledgement, and acceptance that conventional mainstream psychology needs an ecological dimension, just as conventional mainstream nature and physical science needs a transpersonal dimension (Fox, 1990a).

**How is deep ecology related to the themes of social transpersonal psychology?** Two deep ecology ultimate norms arrived at through a meditative deep questioning process by Arne Naess, who formulated the influential philosophy of ecology, or ecosophy, are (a) self-realization and (b) biocentric equality (Devall & Sessions, 1985, Appendix A). Self-realization is meant "in the sense of universal self as described in the perennial philosophy" (p. 227) and transpersonal psychology. These principles are ultimately experiential and not derivable from logically cause-and-effect, deterministic, reductionistic, materialistic principles and cannot be validated by the methodology of modern science that relies upon the physical senses. For deep ecology, the study of our place in Nature includes the study of ourselves as an integral part of the natural, biological, chemical, electrical, and physical worlds (Becker & Selden, 1985; Capra, 1996). Going beyond a narrowly technocratic-industrial worldview and materialistic-scientific understand of psychological and physical realities, deep ecology recognizes that the spiritual-psycho and the material-physical aspects of basic reality are two interweaving processes of an organic whole (Rockefeller & Elder, 1992; Sheldrake, 1990). Deep ecology recognizes that the search for deep ecological consciousness is the search for a more "objective" consciousness and state of being beyond petty egocentric concerns through an active, meditative, deep questioning of the meaning and purpose of life (Watson, 1976, 1979).

**What does social transpersonal psychology have to offer the "deep ecology" movement?** Deep ecologists could benefit from the greater psychological sophistication offered by transpersonal psychology, just as deep ecologists can help transpersonal psychologists develop greater ecological sensitivity and concern (Roszak, 1992). Deep ecologists could benefit from the "vertical" expansion of identity that encompasses other realms of psyche and consciousness, just as deep ecologists can help transpersonal psychologists benefit from the "horizontal" expansion of transpersonality that includes all living creatures. Deep ecologists could benefit from a balance between inner and outer work ("Nothing can be changed until we change ourselves"), just as deep ecologists can help transpersonal psychologists imagine new social, political, economic structures that are needed to solve the problems of our global crises in a balanced way.

### 8. Renewed Interest in Spirituality in Contemporary Life

**Renewal of interest in "things spiritual."** Our contemporary crisis has been compared to the mystical ordeal known as the "Dark Night of the Soul" that precedes a global initiation to a new state of consciousness and new stage of species-wide psychosocial development (Bache, 2000). One hopeful and encouraging develop in the world today that has great promise for the future of the world is the renaissance of interest in ancient spiritual traditions and the mystical quest. People who have had powerful transformative experiences, such as spontaneous mystical experiences, and have succeeded in applying them in their everyday lives show very distinct changes in their values (Miller & C’de Baca, 2001). Growing interest in spirituality and the high incidence of spontaneous mystical experiences herald a shift in the consciousness of humanity that will help to reverse our current self-destructive course (Harper, 2005; Hay, 2006).

**Planetary spiritual emergence.** People involved in the process of spiritual emergence, for instance, represent a movement away from destructive and self-destructive personality characteristics and an emergence of those personality characteristics that foster individual and collective survival (Bragdon, 1990; Grof & Grof, 1989; Miller & Cook-Greuter, 2000). People who are involved in the process of
spiritual emergence tend to develop a new appreciation and reverence for all forms of life and a new understanding of the unity of all things. They tend to develop strong ecological concerns and a greater tolerance toward other human beings. Consideration of all humanity, compassion for all of life, and thinking in terms of the entire planet take priority over the narrow interests of individuals, families, political parties, nations, and creeds. That which connects us all and that which we have in common become as important as our differences.

9. **Shift in Values Toward Service and a Greater Reverence for Life**

*Shift in values toward service and a greater reverence for life.* Many people who have had powerful transpersonal experiences find that their values shift automatically toward service and a greater reverence for all life (Grof & Grof, 1989; Wynne-Tyson, 1989). The expanded awareness beyond (trans) ego that transpersonal experiences can bring is reflected in fewer egocentric desires and a quality of life that harmony with nature, both inner and outer, rather than domination over it (Scully, 2002). While the use and misuse of animals, for example, is linked to the larger fabric of materialistic technocratic-industrial society, the humane movement has expanded (M. Fox, 1990). The possibility of combining both deep ecology and transpersonal humanism in a mutually enriching synthesis brings forth both a transpersonal social psychology that enriches both our dealings with our fellow human being and our dealings with nature and all other forms of life (Fox, 1991). There is now a growing evidence that biodiversity is fundamentally linked to human well-being and to the human sociocultural and psychological condition (Kellert, 1997)

10. **Religion's Changing Attitude Toward Nature**

*How does ecology relate to humanity's religious sentiment?* The world's religions have sometimes held contradictory attitudes toward the world of nature and provided different answers to the question of the place of the human species in the created order -- sometimes holding Nature in a positive light as in the so-called "nature" religions in which the species was viewed as an embedded part of Nature, while at other times holding Nature at arm's length as something to dominate and viewing the species as apart from Nature and at the center of the Universe (Lindsey & Regan, 1990; Pinches & McDaniel, 1993). The attitude of all world religions toward the environmental movement and animals, however, is changing (M. W. Fox, 1996; McFague, 1993).

Evangelicals recognize the conversion experience as central to spirituality, an example of what our race itself must undergo in relation to the earth; the Jewish theology of Sabbat, implying a regular halt in excessive human activity, takes on new relevance in the face of an overheated planet.; the Orthodox emphasis on Christ's role as redeemer of all creation, not just the human species, is more to the point than ever; Catholicism's traditional vision of justice for the human person is properly and easily expanded into a vision of justice for the cosmos itself; Protestant individualism can take the form of a personal commitment to care for creation as an expression of intimacy with the Creator. (Carroll, 1994, p. 23)

A new language is emerging for understanding how Christianity fits in an ecological context, and for understanding how we ought to behave toward the Earth. Catholic writers such as Thomas Berry (1988, 1999) and Matthew Fox (1988) have developed what is known as "creation spirituality" that critiques the careless attitude toward the Earth that has characterized many of the beliefs and symbols of Christianity over the centuries (e.g., focus on heaven and the afterlife that tends to underemphasize the importance of the concerns of daily living on earth; humans depicted as the pinnacle of creation given "dominion" over the rest of the Earth). The new ecological theology envisions the universe as God's body -- a new metaphor for our understanding the role of the divine in nature -- and that the Creator is involved in a
complex web of continuously unfolding relationships with all that is (McFague, 1993). Modern Catholic social justice teachings treat the environment as an important dimension of social-justice issues.

*The world's religions align with the basic principles of deep ecology.* Many of the different spiritual traditions of the world's great religions -- Christianity, Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Native American -- agree with the basic principles of deep ecology (M. Fox, 1988). Many individuals who have explored the further reaches of human awareness agree that behind the apparent disarray of random events, there is a deeper harmony and pattern that connects all that is, a stillpoint of equilibrium and balance, a patterned flow of reality as symbolic whole that in China is called the Tao (Goleman, 1988). The essence of wisdom is to act in harmony with the Tao, or natural rhythm of the universe. Actions that abuse our conscious, co-creative role in the evolutionary flow of the webwork of life will rebound and obtain their ecological retribution from persons and societies that have disrupted the equilibrium. Ultimately, what one does to others, one does to oneself.

**Native American worldview.** The Native American worldview, for instance, is one good path to follow in helping an individual rediscover his or her connective roots with Nature in all of her forms. The path begins by understanding one's utter, absolute, and complete dependence upon the Earth and that Great Creative Power (Forbes, 1992). The path begins by finding a less divisive and more inclusive language to speak about the "Wholeness of Things" and about ourselves as a part of and not apart from the wholeness of All That Is (Spencer, 1990). The path continues by participating in American Indian ceremonies and rituals to "know something of that real world of the Spirit" (Hibbard, 2007, p. 68). "Peace. . . . comes within the souls of [persons] when they realize their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize that this center is everywhere, it is within each of us" (Black Elk, quoted in Brown, 1964, p. 302).

### III. Transpersonal Nature of Animals

Beyond the Umwelt or Eigenwelt (self-world), the Mitwelt (social world of present contemporaries), the Vorwelt (social world of past ancestors), and the Folgewelt (social world of future progeny), we may add a fourth aspect to our social world -- the Life-World of nature, earth, world and all of its flora and fauna -- the *Leibenswelt* which ultimately surrounds, supports, sustains, and couches all aspects of the human social world.

**Unanswered questions and unquestioned answers.** How widely are transpersonal phenomena distributed in nature? Are transpersonal characteristics and abilities unique elements of human personality, or are transpersonal attributes also found in nonhuman animals? If nonhuman animals possess a transpersonal nature, then how similar is it to that of humans? Is the transpersonal nature of human animals different in kind from the transpersonal nature of nonhuman animals, or only different in degree? Answers to these questions about the continuity of the transpersonal nature of human and nonhuman animals would seem to provide a fuller understanding of the social nature of life, mind, and consciousness, and make the study of the transpersonal nature of the *human* animal more complete. Animals have played a significant role in the evolution of human culture and civilization, including literature and art, religion and science, mythology and folklore, work systems and global economics, recreation and advertising, socialization and family structure, law and politics, medicine and environmental issues, and human spirituality (Bryant, 1993; DeMares & Krycha, 1998; Dregson, 1980; Gallegos, 1983; Plous, 1993; Wilber, 1981)). Most spiritual psychologies assume the sacred nature of life in the universe, including animal life (Tart, 1975/1992). There is also the special connection between spirituality and ethics and transpersonal psychology’s vision of humankind’s necessary intellectual and moral evolution to a more aware and compassionate view of life (Randour, 1997; Walsh & Vaughan, 1993a, section 10). An open-minded and open-hearted approach that hypothesizes the possibility of latent and incipient transpersonal abilities and
characteristics in nonhuman animals would seem to have the potential to produce a more complete understanding of those great forces within yet beyond nature that gave birth to human consciousness.

Continuity of Psychic Life

Logically, there is no a priori reason for excluding animals from having a transpersonal nature. Just as there appears to be no clear morally relevant difference between human and nonhuman animals that would exclude animals from the moral domain (Rollin, 1985), there is no clear spiritually relevant difference between human and nonhuman animals that would exclude animals from the transpersonal domain. If “all human beings (and all creatures and creation) partake of…spiritual reality” (Cortright, 1997, p. 9), then a discussion of the transpersonal nature of animals and its implications for human-animal interactions would seem to be a legitimate and valid endeavor.

Behavioral, physiological, etiological, and other evidence. One way to begin discussion of the transpersonal nature of animals is by extending the logic of transpersonal concepts from human to nonhuman animals within the context of behavioral, physiological, and ethological evidence for the continuity of psychic life. (For an ample review, see Bekoff & Jamison, 1996; Boakes, 1984; Byrne & Whitten, 1988; Cheney & Seyfarth, 1990; Dawkins, 1995; Gould & Gould, 1994; Parker, Boccia, & Mitchell, 1994; Pearce, 1987; Rollin, 1989; Tomasello & Call, 1997; Vauclair, 1996). Behavioral data gives information about communication by animals such as bees, apes, dolphins, lions, and birds that appear to convey their preferences, desires, intents, and purposes to members of their own species (Barber, 1993; Hauser, 1999; Pepperberg, 2000; W. Roberts, 1998; Savage-Rumbaugh & Lewin, 1994; Skutch, 1996; Walker, 1983). For example, research into memory capacity in non-human animals -- a capacity in humans without which there would be no learning or sense of self -- shows that animals form representations (i.e., symbols) of things they perceive in the environment (W. Roberts, 1998).

There is now evidence that animals form memories for serial lists, show a bowed serial-position curve, precisely keep track of intervals of time, have numerical competence, and form conceptual categories (p. 22)….Animals form representations about the environment and then process information. (W. Roberts, 1998, p. 17)

Physiological data supplies information that correlates brain activity with purposeful behavior (Allen & Bekoff, 1997; Moss & Shettleworth, 1996). Ethological data provides information about animals’ versatile adaptability in behavior when coping with novel and unpredictable challenges in simple but apparently rational ways as when, for example, seeking food, avoiding predators, and constructing tools (Griffin, 1992). For the first time in many decades, the issue of consciousness, emotions, cognition, volition, self-consciousness, imagination, and intentionality, is now being addressed systemically, largely precipitated by ethologist Donald Griffin’s initiation of a new field called cognitive ethology in 1984.

As Marian Dawkins (1993) of Oxford University has said, if consciousness has a function, it should affect the behavior of individuals who have it. That is, by observing their behavior we should be able to detect signs indicating whether they are conscious, we though we might not be able to measure consciousness itself. This approach provides a starting point for us. Consciousness might be manifested in a range of behaviors and we might be able to find patterns of behavior that indicate consciousness. This way a single definition of consciousness is not needed before we start the search for signs of consciousness. (Rogers, 1997, pp. 4-5)

This approach provides a starting point of our search for the transpersonal nature of animals as well. Given the widely accepted continuity of phylogenetic characteristic across related species, it seems reasonable to hypothesize an evolutionary continuity for consciousness as well (Darwin, 1889/1998). A full comprehension of the implications of the logical arguments and empirical data supporting the
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hypothesis of a continuity of psychic life in human and nonhuman animals cannot be complete if the relevance of transpersonal psychology for understanding the life, mind, and consciousness of nonhuman animals is ignored, denied, or overlooked. As transpersonal writer and channel Seth/Jane Roberts (1974) put it:

You cannot appreciate your spirituality unless you appreciate your creaturehood. It is not a matter of rising above your [animal] nature, but of evolving from the full understanding of it. There is a difference….Your humanness did not emerge by refusing your animal heritage, but upon an extension of what it is. (Roberts, 1974, p. 237)

Spiritual and Psychological Attributes of Psychic Life

To convey an appreciation of the transpersonal nature of the psyche – its human and nonhuman expression – eight aspects of psychic life are examined: (a) consciousness, (b) relationship with nature, (c) emotions, (d) cognition, (e) free will, (f) self-consciousness, (g) imagination, and (h) dignity of a spiritual life -- in light of available behavioral and ethological scientific evidence and the transpersonal (beyond ego) perspective of transpersonal writer and channel Seth/Jane Roberts. Each of the above-mentioned aspects of psychic life is considered to be a spiritual as well as a psychological attribute by transpersonal psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli (1968, 1973, 1991). Each aspect then represents a hypothesized link between individual being and spiritual Reality, and a means by which the continuity in the transpersonal nature of human and nonhuman animals and the dignity of a spiritual life may be revealed.

Consciousness

Consciousness (i.e., the quality of action being aware) is an important concept in most definitions of transpersonal psychology (Lajoie & Shapiro, 1992; Walsh & Vaughan, 1993b). Historically, both psychology and religion have tended to grant consciousness to our own species while denying it in others. Psychologists are still reluctant to grant other creatures much subjective dimension or rich psychological activity for fear of being accused of “anthropomorphism” (Kennedy, 1992; Mitchell, Thompson, and Miles, 1997). Behavioral and ethological evidence demonstrates a behavioral diversity in animals and a kind of consciousness (awareness) that permits them to respond appropriately and creatively to environmental stimuli and supports capacities for attention, perception, memory, learning, and cognition (e.g., Allen & Bekoff, 1997; Bekoff, 2002; Boakes, 1984; Burghardt, 1985; Moss & Shettleworth, 1996; Rogers, 1997; Vauclair, 1996). A young chick, for instance, recognizes and approaches its cagemate behind a transparent panel, but does not approach a stranger behind an adjacent panel (Vallortigara & Andrew, 1991). It is difficult to imagine any of the above-mentioned cognitive functions occurring in the absence of awareness unless, of course, one still chooses to tenaciously hold onto the outdated notion of animals as mere electrochemical machines and mindless zombies. Biologists and animal behaviorists who work in the area of cognitive ethology would agree with the position that animals lead conscious lives, while remaining unsure how complex and sophisticated it is. (e.g., see Bekoff & Jamison, 1996).

Findings demonstrate that nonhuman primates [for example] do indeed have some understanding of the psychological functioning of other animate beings, both humans and conspecifics. This is most clearly true for chimpanzees, and especially with regard to their understanding of the visual perception of others. . . . There is no longer the luxury of saying that nonhuman primates either do or do not have a theory of mind, but we must now attempt to specify precisely what kinds of psychological phenomena they do and do not understand. (Call & Tomasello, 2003, p. 236)
The transpersonal perspective of Seth/Jane Roberts (1972) is in agreement with modern evidence, and goes further to state that the consciousness that exists within animals is as valid and eternal as our own.

The great creativity of consciousness is your heritage. It does not belong to mankind alone, however. Each living being possesses it (Roberts, 1974, p. 3). . . . You are not separated from the animals and the rest of existence by virtue of possessing an eternal inner consciousness. Such a consciousness is present within all living beings, and in all forms" (Roberts, 1972, p. 432).

If nonhuman animals possess consciousness, then how similar is it to that of humans? Are the mechanics of consciousness in human animals different in kind from that of nonhuman animals, or only different in degree? According to Seth/Jane Roberts,

The mechanics of consciousness remain the same. They do not change for animals and men (Roberts, 1972, p. 365). . . . There is no such thing as cat consciousness, basically speaking, or a bird consciousness. In those terms, there are instead simply consciousnesses that choose to take certain focuses. . . . If there is no consciousness ‘tailored’ to be a cat’s or a dog’s, then there is no prepackaged, predestined, particular consciousness that is meant to be human, either. . . . The quality of identity is far more mysterious than you understand. (Roberts, 1981b, pp. 186-187)

On this view, although the mechanics of consciousness are the same for human and nonhuman animals, it is the different focuses that consciousnesses may choose to take that results in different qualities of conscious experience, different ways of perceiving reality, and different kinds of interior life among species (Roberts, 1977a, 1979a). There are as many luxuriant and diverse focuses of consciousness as there are physical species. The varieties of consciousness are so different from ours that we can only approximately grasp the meaning inherent in some of them. Animals are not simply humans dressed up differently. Animals are poor models for humans for the same reason that humans are poor models for animals -- species variation in the focuses of consciousness. Humans possess a kind of consciousness that is unique in the large number, range and variety of wants and desires – physical, moral, aesthetic, and intellectual. “Human consciousness normally experiences wide sweeps of rhythms, varying states of awareness, and its amazing flexibility is partially dependent upon its lack of rigidity, its own spontaneous inclinations, and its capacity for curiosity, wonder, discovery, and emotion” (Roberts, 1997a, p. 287). Animal consciousness is a more selective, focused, present-oriented consciousness. Animals, both domestic and wild, are alert to everything in their environment, focus their attention in very specific directions, react in a certain fashion, do not dwell upon the past, nor worry about the future in the way that humans do (Roberts, 1981b). Although nonhuman animals may possess a kind of consciousness that does not allow them as many freedoms as our own, at the same time, they are not hampered in its use by certain characteristics that often impede the practical potential of human consciousness.

Relationship with nature

From the transpersonal perspective of Seth/Jane Roberts (1977a, 1979a), our species adopted a predominant line of consciousness in the course of evolution that found it necessary to isolate itself to some extent from its environment and from other creatures and to a certain degree was bent on dominating nature. This kind of consciousness was considered masculine in essence while the feminine principle became connected with the earth and all those elements of life over which the species hoped to gain control. Spirit and nature, male and female, human and nonhuman animals, reason and emotion, mind and body became divided in Western civilization so that we now encounter events in our lives largely in that context. This "boundaried" consciousness (Wilber, 1979) creates a framework of highly limited, conflicting beliefs that serves to limit our comprehension and distort our perception of the physical environment, and foster feelings of insecurity, dissatisfaction, and self-condemnation, such that it often seems that we are working at cross-purposes with ourselves. The human reasoning mind becomes
forced to operate by itself, psychologically isolated from the self’s other faculties and divorced from other subjective portions of the personality (e.g. emotions, dreams, and intuitions) that are meant to bring the intellect additional information that it does not possess. We feel divorced from our own bodies and end up studying biological processes as if we somehow stand apart from them and as if the dynamics of human health and disease can be understood from a biological standpoint alone (Engel, 1977; Rosenzweig, Leiman, & Breedlove, 1999). We feel divorced from the events of nature and end up trying to control the behavior of organisms in a natural environment with which we have lost rapport (Mason, 1997; Sheldrake, 1990). Nature seems like an adversary that must be conquered, dominated, and controlled. We end up with a human world that, in the words of Ken Wilber (1997), has “gone slightly mad.” Animals, on the other hand, instinctively realize their relationship with the great forces of nature and do not separate themselves from nature as much as humans do.

Nature in all of its varieties is so richly encountered by the animals that it becomes their equivalent of your structures of culture and civilization. They respond to its rich nuances in ways impossible to describe, so that their 'civilizations' are built up through the interweavings of sense data that you cannot possibly perceive. They know, the animals, in a way that you cannot, that their private existences have a direct impact upon the nature of reality. (Roberts, 1981b, p. 162)

Because animals do not divorce themselves from nature, they are better able to understand its manifestations than humans do. For instance, animals know of weather conditions ahead of time and will migrate if necessary to seek conditions more auspicious (Grosvenor, 1972). They are aware of approaching natural disasters and when possible will leave such areas.

**Emotions**

Western orthodox psychology has denied the existence of emotions in animals ever since Descartes declared that only humans are dignified by emotional feelings. Modern behavioral, physiological, and ethological evidence supports Darwin's original contention of the existence of emotions in animals and that animals lead emotional lives (Balcombe, 2006; Darwin, 1872/1998; Masson & McCarthy, 1995). From the transpersonal standpoint of Seth/Jane Roberts (1997a), however, "all aspects of life experience not only sensations but emotional feelings… Even the smallest of creatures shares with you the emotional experience of life’s triumphs and vulnerabilities" (p. 206). Each species is endowed with emotional feelings that are as valid and significant as our own. The world of affect may be invisible, yet it activates all living systems. The emotion of love, for instance, is a biological as well as a spiritual characteristic and is not the prerogative of one species alone. Traditionally, any instances of love among nonhuman animals are assigned to “blind” instinct so that one female will do as well as another. Even animals, however, understand without words or language the importance of their sexual behavior and individuality matters. We take it for granted that individual differences do not apply in species different from our own, yet from the transpersonal perspective of Seth/Jane Roberts (1979b):

Animals, as any [companion animal] owner knows, have their own personalities and characteristics, and individual ways of perceiving the reality available to them….Their consciousness can be immeasurably quickened by contact with friendly humans, and emotional involvement with life is strongly developed. (Roberts, 1972, p. 365)

Love and cooperation, loyalty and tenderness are basic needs that are biologically pertinent and show themselves in many ways in animal behavior (see for example, Masson & McCarthy, 1995). The depth and range of feelings is now well documented in a variety of animals (Balcombe, 2006; Bekoff, 2002) In the wild, for instance, many animals protect and provide for wounded and disabled members. Even in animal groups, individuals are not only concerned with personal survival but with the survival of family members (Masson, 1999) as anyone who has seen the nature film, March of the Penguins, has observed.
“The wisdom that comes with age is indeed appreciated even in the animal kingdom” (Roberts, 1997a, p. 162).

**Cognition**

We like to think of ourselves as the reasoning animal and automatically assume that only reasoning species are capable of understanding life’s values. Behavioral and ethological evidence indicates that a wide range of animal species display what can be called cognition (e.g., Bekoff & Byers, 1998; Cheney & Seyfarth, 1990; Gould & Gould, 1994; Griffin, 1992; W. Roberts, 1998; Tomasello & Call, 1997; Walker, 1983). We know that animals display curiosity, but do they reason? Can they understand cause and effect? According to Seth-Jane Roberts (1977a)

> Animals do reason. They do not reason in the same areas as you do. In those areas in which they do reason, they understand cause and effect quite well. Their reasoning is applied, however, to levels of activity to which your own reasoning is not applied. Therefore, animal reasoning is often not apparent to you. Animals are curious. Their curiosity is applied to areas in which you seldom apply your own. (p. 61)

Unfortunately, we have become so specialized in our use of the reasoning mind and so prejudiced in its favor, that it seems there is only one narrow kind of rationality – human rationality. Our tendency as a species has been to examine all other kinds of consciousness using the human reasoning mind as the only yardstick by which to judge intelligent life and to see the value of life only as that life conforms to our own standards. Why might this be so?

Man is so highly verbal that he finds it difficult to understand that other species work with idea-complexes…of a different kind, in which of course thought as you consider it is not involved. But an equivalent exists; using an analogy, it is as if ideas were built up not through sentence structure reinforced by inner images, but by 'mental' patterns structured through touch and scent – in other words, thinking, but within a framework entirely different and alien to you. (Roberts, 1974, p. 278)

Animal reasoning is thinking that exists within the self-regulating, precise, safe, and yet limiting framework of instinct (Tinbergen, 1951). Human thinking is largely structured through verbal patterns. Yet Kanzi, a pigmy chimpanzee, who has been taught to point at symbols in order to communicate, also has a demonstrated ability to understand spoken English (Savage-Rumbaugh & Lewin, 1994). Examples such as Kanzi in the language-in-apes controversy suggests that the ability to comprehend speech may have preceded the ability to speak language, and in Kanzi's case no longer “blindly” follows instinctual impulses in this regard but extrudes from outside of that framework. On this view, human reasoning mind is a psychological system that is simply one of innumerable methods of organizing data available to consciousness.

**Free will**

The difference between human and nonhuman thinking has important implications for understanding the nature of free will (volition) in animals. Biological psychology tends to reduce human volition to erratic activity of generalized neurological brain processes (Damasio, 1994; Kalet, 1998; Rosenweig, Leiman, & Breedlove, 1999). To the contrary, Darwin (1872/1998) deduced the existence of attention and will to animals from his observation of their performance and repression of voluntary acts and the expression of emotions through facial muscles (pp. 107, 188-194, 349-352). Behavioral and ethological data suggest that animals do engage in intentional (volitional) acts of planning ahead and anticipating the future, and are known to even engage in acts of deception (e.g., the "broken-wing" display of the ground-nesting
plover) (for other examples, see Hauser, 2000, chap. 7; Griffin, 1992, chap. 10). Animals are observed making choices when hiding and foraging for food (Griffin, 1992, chap. 2). From the framework of Seth-Jane Roberts (1981b), free will is neither an illusory epiphenomenon of neural firings, nor the exclusive property of humans alone.

Man has free will within the framework of his existence, and all other species do also within the frameworks of their existences. The chicken cannot read a book. It cannot choose to read. The plant cannot choose to walk down the street. The chicken and the plant can choose to live or die, however – rather important issues in the existence of any entity. They can choose to like or dislike their environment, and to change it according to their individual circumstances. (p. 262)

Animal behavior patterns are more limited than humans’, in a way freer and more automatically expressed, but narrower in that the events an animal encounters in his world are not as extensive as our own. Human behavior patterns require a finer discrimination because we are directly faced with a far more complex social and cultural environment than other animals, dealing particularly with symbols and concepts reflected in one's religious sentiments and philosophical beliefs, political frameworks and economic realities that cannot be isolated from the psychological and biological status of the individual.

**Self-consciousness**

Do animals possess self-consciousness (i.e., the quality of action being aware of itself)? Do nonhuman animals have an awareness of "self"? Do animals recognize that it is they themselves who act when they are acting? Or is a human-type intellect required for self-consciousness? Behavioral and ethological evidence indicates that some animal species do possess a form of self-consciousness, even though it may be different from our own (e.g., Parker, Boccia, Mitchell, 1994; Rogers, 1997). Chimpanzees, for example, recognize their own image in a mirror (Povinelli & Preuss, 1995). From the transpersonal perspective of Seth/Jane Roberts,

With animals, there are varying degrees of division between the self who acts and the action involved (Roberts, 1974, p. 174). Animals have varying degrees of self-consciousness, as indeed people do. The consciousness within them is as valid and eternal as your own, however. (Roberts, 1972, p. 364)

One does not necessarily need a human intellect, in other words, in order to be aware of one’s identity. Phenomenologically, people’s experience of their own intellect does not ordinarily contain their identity (Valle & Halling, 1989). Logically, a sense of identity need not inevitably be coupled with the intellect exclusively. If animals do not reflect upon the nature of their own identities as humans do, it is because animals intuitively comprehend that nature in a way that human self-consciousness does not.

**Imagination**

The existence of imagination can be inferred from observations of learning and memory, dreaming and play activity in animals (Bekoff & Byers, 1998; Cambell & Tobler, 1984; Fagen, 1981; Rogers, 1997; Siegel, 1995). Pavlov's dogs, for instance, demonstrated that animals could learn through classical conditioning to anticipate events such as being fed. Thorndike’s cats demonstrated problem-solving ability. Tolman’s rats showed the capacity to acquire cognitive maps and knowledge of the location of reinforcers in a maze. Skinner’s rats revealed an ability to repeat actions that bring desired results and to avoid actions that bring punishment. Cook and Mineka (1990) found that through modeling, monkeys could develop a fear of snakes from watching a video of monkeys behaving fearfully in the presence of artificial snakes. A pigeon has an excellent ability to recognize symbols rotated at different angles (Delius, 1985). Woodpecker finches from the Galapagos Islands use sticks as tools to probe for
mealworms in the free state and in captivity observed to pull up a hanging string with a meal worm tied at the end (Millikan & Bowman, 1967).

Is such learning, memory, and tool use possible without imagination? Can animals imagine an event that has never happened to them, or is their imagination limited to the products of past experience? How do the imaginative abilities of human and nonhuman animals differ in this regard? According to Seth-Jane Roberts (1981b),

> It is fashionable to believe that animals do not possess imagination, but this is a quite erroneous belief. They anticipate mating, for example, before its time. They all learn through experience, and despite all of your concepts, learning is impossible without imagination at any level. In your terms, the imagination of animals is limited. Theirs is not merely confined to the elements of previous experience, however. They can imagine events that never happened to them. Man’s abilities in this respect are far more complicated, for in his imagination he deals with probabilities. In any given period of time...he can anticipate or perform an infinitely vaster number of events – each one remaining probable until he activates it. (pp. 48-49)

Because we can conceive of probable events and manipulate them in our imagination, humans inevitably show a wider variety and range of biological and behavioral reactions than nonhuman animals do to the same stimuli. From the transpersonal perspective of Seth/Jane Roberts,

> The animals do have imagination, regardless of your current thought. Yet man is so gifted that he directs his experience and forms his civilization largely through the use of his imaginative abilities. You do not understand this point clearly at all, but your social organization, your governments – these are based upon imaginative principles. The basis of your most intimate experience, the framework behind all of your organized structures, rests upon a reality that is not considered valid by the very institutions that are formed through its auspices. (Roberts, 1981b, p. 141)

The existence of imagination in animals can also be inferred from observations of animals’ dream and play activity. The link between rapid eye movement (REM) sleep and dreaming in humans, coupled with the observation that nearly all birds and mammals display REM sleep (Campbell & Tobler, 1984; Siegel, 1995), raises the question of whether animal dream states and dreaming consciousness is the same as ours. From the transpersonal perspective of Seth/Jane Roberts (1981b),

> It is the nature of your dreams that makes you so different from other species.... The creativity of the species is also the result of your particular kind of dream specialization....Animals, as a rule are less physically-oriented in their dreaming states. They do dream of physical reality, but much more briefly than you. Otherwise, they immerse themselves in dreams in different kinds of dreaming consciousness. (p. 270)

Human and nonhuman animals also engage in imaginative play activity or as Balcombe (2006, p. 67) "fun for its own sake" (Bekoff & Byers, 1998; Fagen, 1981). What motivates play activity? What function does play serve in the development of individual and social animal behavior? According to Seth/Jane Roberts (1977a),

> Children play naturally, and so do animals. For that matter, insects, birds, fish, and all kinds of life play. Even ants and honeybees play. Their sociability is not just a matter of constant work within a hive or an ant mound. This playful activity is, in fact, the basis for their organized behavior, and they ‘play’ at adult behavior before they assume their own duties. Creatures play because the activity is joyful, and spontaneous and beneficial, because it activates all portions of
the organism – and again, in play youngsters imitate adult patterns of operations that lead finally to their own mature activity. (p. 172)

Human and nonhuman animals learn, dream, and play. All of these activities are impossible without imagination. Humans, however, are a species that specializes in the use of imagination. The applied use of the imagination is one of the most distinguishing marks of our species.

**The dignity of a spiritual life**

Abraham Maslow (1971, chap. 23, pp. 324-325) recognized the existence of a powerful drive within the human species when he talked about self-actualization and Being-values. The most basic need of all, far more important than what humanistic psychology calls the satisfaction of basic needs, is the need to fulfill spiritual and emotional Being-values. If men or women do not find these Being-values in their everyday life, then metapathology results. The so-called basic drives toward food and shelter will not sustain such individuals, for they will have neither the energy to seek it nor trust their desire to do so.

The value-life (spiritual, religious, philosophical, axiological, etc.) is an aspect of human biology and is on the same continuum with the "lower" animal life (rather than being in separated, dichotomized, or mutually exclusive realms). . . . What all of this means is that the so-called spiritual or value-life, or "higher" life, is on the same continuum (is the same kind or quality of thing) with the life of the flesh, or of the body, i.e., animal life, the material life, the "lower" life. That is, the spiritual life is part of our biological life. It is the "highest" part, but yet part of it. (Maslow, 1971, pp. 324-325).

From the transpersonal perspective of Seth/Jane Roberts (1981b), the impulse toward self-actualization and the fulfillment of Being-values do not pertain to the human species alone (as, for example, in Frankl, 2000) but exist within all species.

Each being experiences life as if it were at life’s center. This applies to a spider in a closet as well as to any man or woman. This principle applies to each atom as well. Each manifestation of consciousness comes into being feeling secure at life’s center – *experiencing life through itself*, aware of life through its own nature. It comes into being with an inner impetus toward value fulfillment...It is given the impetus toward growth and action, and filled with the desire to impress its world. (Roberts, 1981b, p. 256)

On this view, every animal, from the lowly cockroach to the most sublime human being, is understood to be a unique manifestation of consciousness, endowed with inner ideals and values that seek fulfillment, and that comes into existence with an inner impetus to fulfill and actualize its “self.”

Each creature, and each plant, or natural entity, has its own sense of value fulfillment, seeking the greatest possible fulfillment and extension of its own innate abilities. This sense of value fulfillment...benefits not only the individual, but also its species and all other species. (Roberts, 1997a, pp. 174-175)

This is the dignity of a spiritual life that is revealed through an act of Being-cognition to characterize all physical creaturehood (see Kowalski, 1991; Randour, 2000).

The dignity of a spiritual life, moreover, demands that a certain quality of experience be maintained. It is not simply survival that is important, but survival of life with meaning that energizes and directs our behavior (Frankl, 1946/1985). Survival, in other words, is a means, not the goal of life. According to Seth/Jane Roberts (1981b),
Survival, of course, is important, but it is not the prime purpose of a species, in that it is a necessary means by which that species can attain its main goals. Of course [a species] must survive to do so, but it will, however, purposefully avoid survival if the conditions are not practically favorable to maintain the quality of life or existence that is considered basic. (p. 53)

Each species is not only concerned with physical survival, in other words, but also with the quality of its life and experience, with fulfilling those particular qualities that are characteristic of it, and with intensifying those qualities in order to actualize its own interior system of value fulfillment.

The term 'value fulfillment' is very difficult to explain, but it is very important. Obviously it deals with the development of values—not moral values, however, but values for which you really have no adequate words. Quite simply, these values have to do with increasing the quality of whatever life the being feels at its center. The quality of that life is not simply to be handed down or experienced, for example, but is to be creatively added to, multiplied a way that has nothing to do with quantity....and if the quality of their lives disintegrates beyond a certain point, the species dwindles. We are not speaking of survival of the fittest, but the survival of life with meaning. Life is meaning for animals. The two are indistinguishable. (Roberts, 1981b, p. 256)

On this view, the quality of life that makes survival “worthwhile” is important above all (Roberts, 1997a, p. 285). If physical or environmental conditions are vastly lacking to support the value fulfillment of animals, so distorting the nature of life as to almost make a mockery of it--as in the genetic engineering of animals with deformed limbs or missing heads, or without thymus glands to have little bodily resistance to disease--such that survival would bring about vast suffering, or the animals cannot use their full abilities, or relationships with their own species are no longer in balance, or they are shunted aside unwanted and unloved, then the desire to live decreases (Roberts 1981b, pp. 34-35; Rollin, 1989, 1995). According to Seth/Jane Roberts, even in the face of such adversity, however, there always remains an exquisite optimism at the heart of life that is not learned but is inbred and innate and that acts as a creative, rejuvenating, compensatory force that maintains and supports life. This sense of optimism is an inborn physical and psychological faith that triggers the proper bodily responses required for health and growth. It leads all forms of life to express their abilities. It is an inner predisposition meant to motivate all of nature’s species in the proper directions, engendering a sense of safety, assurance, and a feeling of promise that needs will be satisfied, abilities actualized, and desires fulfilled. This fine optimism is an intrinsic value of being that is “instinctoid” in nature (i.e., biologically necessary to avoid illness and achieve growth) (Maslow, 1971, p. 316) and is evident in those conditions of the body and mind that promote feelings of physical health and psychological vitality, peace and joy.

**Implications for animal care and use in psychology.** All animals -- human and nonhuman -- can be appropriately described as having transpersonal natures. Transpersonal phenomena appears to be widely distributed throughout nature. Transpersonal characteristics and abilities are not unique elements of human personality, but are incipient and latent in nonhuman animals. The transpersonal nature of nonhuman animals is similar in kind to the transpersonal nature of human animals, creatively manifesting itself in different qualities of conscious experience, different ways of perceiving reality, and different kinds of interior life among species. Several important practical consequences result from an acknowledgement, recognition, and acceptance of the transpersonal nature of animals. By far, the most important consequence is for the animal research establishment. Acknowledgement of the transpersonal nature of animals requires a different way of relating to animals that goes beyond egotistical assumptions and anthropocentric reasoning of a psychology that tends to impose human goals and values upon other life forms (Orlans, 1993; Orlans, Beauchamp, Dresser, Morton, & Gluck, 1998; Overmier & Burke, 1992; Rowan, 1984). Recognition of animals' transpersonal natures calls attention to possibilities of human-animal relationships beyond instrumental and utilitarian approaches that assume the highest value of
animals is epitomized in their service to human beings. Most importantly, acceptance of the transpersonal nature of animals supports an alternate, more expansive framework for the synthesis of behavioral science and transpersonal spirit whereby each individual being is viewed as

A vital, conscious portion of the universe [that], simply by being, fits into the universe and into universal purposes in a way no one else can. Each being is an individualized segment of the universe; a beloved individual, formed with infinite care and love, uniquely gifted with a life like no other. (Roberts, 1997a, pp. 147-148)

Certainly the acknowledgement of animals as possessors of living consciousness and the recognition that the overall consciousness of animals has its own purposes and intents will require some unique understanding, intellectually and emotionally. It will require an openness to seriously question several widely held assumptions and unexamined implications that underlie animal research and the declared benefits of animal use (Carroll & Overmeier, 2001; Domjan & Purdy, 1995; Miller, 1985; Paton, 1993). It will have to change its methods of dealing with problems and achieving goals in light of the serious scientific objections concerning the internal and external validity of laboratory animal experiments in general (Cunningham, 2005; Greek & Greek, 2000, 2002; LaFollette & Shanks, 1996; Shapiro, 1998) and the knowledge and different values that transpersonal psychology can bring. Such a change is not only feasible but also necessary. A first step in this direction is to rediscover the spirituality of our biological heritage and to acknowledge the transpersonal nature of animals.

VII. A Sacred Story

The following "Sacred Story" describes this author's (PFC) life-transforming encounter with the existence and "presence" of his inner, Transpersonal Self, which led to his discovery of the spirituality of our species' biological heritage and his recognition of the transpersonal nature of animals. It involved the activation of what transpersonal psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli calls the Transpersonal Will, its unification with the my personal will, and the harmonization and integration of various levels of my personality into a higher synthesis. It was an illuminating progression that unfolded in a series of stages over the course of an academic year while he was an undergraduate student in college and that eventually led to the activation and expression of what he describes as the unification of the consciousness of a personal self with that of the Transpersonal Self and unification of that Transpersonal Self with the Universal Self of All That Is.

In the Beginning

It began during the spring semester of my junior year at Our Lady of Providence Seminary in Warwick, Rhode Island. I was 20 years old at the time and studying to become a Roman Catholic diocesan priest. I was taking a full load of five courses that year (as I did every year) and was deep in my study of Darwinian anthropology, Freudian psychology, Biblical religions, existential philosophy, and natural science. Ever since I can remember I have had a burning desire to understand the true nature of human personality and humanity’s proper relationship to spiritual reality and to the rest of creation. I thought I had discovered those Truths (capital T) in my college courses that year of 1970. I learned in my anthropology course about Charles Darwin who spent over half his life proving the validity of his theory of evolution. Generations of scientists since have viewed the natural world through its light, taking Darwinian theories for granted as being a literal interpretation of the origins of species, and attempting to make human nature conform to the picture of evolution as Darwin conceived it. Certainly Darwin’s considerable achievement in classifying the different species and in describing their struggle for survival is an entirely true and objective representation of the natural world and the creatures who dwell upon it. I learned in my psychology course about Sigmund Freud who invented such a comprehensive system of
psychology that it seemed to explain everything about human experience and behavior. Such an all-inclusive and internally consistent theory must be true, I thought, because it possessed such sweeping explanatory power. I learned in my religion course about the Old Testament God Jehovah and about Jesus Christ, the Son of the only God, who declared that His was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The Holy Scriptures and the theological doctrines and dogmas of His Church must certainly be divinely true if His Holy Spirit inspired them. I learned in my philosophy course about existential thinkers such as John Paul Sartre and Albert Camus who were committed to engaging the painful realities of aloneness and death exactly as they are and refused to gloss over suffering or arbitrarily pretend that life is inherently meaningful. Such a demand for authenticity, freedom, and autonomy must certainly be true and the correct defense against delusion and self-deception. I learned in my natural science course that science, too, seemed committed to engaging reality exactly as it is. Objective, empirical science must certainly be the final arbiter of what is true and real. When I attempted to integrate these diverse beliefs and ways of thinking into a single coherent framework, however, I became filled with feelings of tension and conflict, stress and strain, for how could they all be true? As I examined in more detail the assumptions and implications of the course material that I was learning, I gradually began to lose a sense of my own worth and purpose.

What My College Courses Taught Me

My college course in Darwinian theory revealed our species to be a creature pitted against itself (as ego is pitted against id) and whose nature is amoral (there are no standards of right or wrong as anything goes for survival sake). In the Darwinian world, nature cares little for the individual, only for the species. The attainment of adulthood has little purpose except to insure the further existence of the species through procreation. The species itself appears to have no reason except a mindless determination to exist. Tainted with brutish and destructive impulses, I was the member of a greedy and predatory species, a murderer at heart and nature’s despoiler, a blight upon the planet, and the victim of an indifferent Nature that brought meaningless death. I became separate from nature and in competition with all other creatures in an endless struggle for survival. There is no possibility of spiritual survival as far as evolutionary theory is concerned, because evolutionary Darwinian man and woman are not created with a soul. All psychological activity is scaled down in between life and death. Death becomes an affront to life and comes to imply a certain kind of weakness, for is it not said that only the strong survive?

My college course in Freudian psychology taught me to believe that my unconscious self was certainly devious, capable of the most insidious subconscious fraud, and filled with savage rage and infantile impulses that I could not trust, no matter what I told myself. The unconscious was understood to be a garbage heap of undesirable impulses, long ago discarded by civilization. Slips of the tongue and dreams betrayed the self’s hidden nefarious true desires. The spontaneous self, the impulsive portion of my nature, became most suspect, since in my spontaneous acts I could unwittingly reveal not my basic goodness, but the hidden shoddiness of my motives. Programmed and conditioned from childhood to fail or succeed, the heights and depths of each person’s experience were seen to be the result of infantile behavior patterns that rigidly controlled us for a lifetime.

Darwinian and Freudian concepts were also reflected in my religious studies. Given the earth as living grounds by a capricious and vengeful God, who would one day destroy the world, I came to believe that our species was bound for ultimate tragedy and extinction. Born blighted by original sin, created imperfect by a perfect God who then punished me for my imperfections, and who would send me to hell if I did not adore Him, I came to see myself as an innately flawed and sinful self, a creature bound to do wrong regardless of any strong good intent. Being the member of a species of sinners, contaminated by original sin even before birth, innately driven by evil, and sometimes demonic, forces that must be kept in check by good work, prayer, and penance, I came to distrust my inner self and to fear my own spontaneity. How could I be “good” when my self was “bad”? The conditions of life and illness were
seen as punishment sent by God upon his erring creatures, or as a trial sent by God, to be borne stoically. Life was indeed a valley of sorrows.

My college course in existential philosophy was simply a variation upon the theme. It convinced me that life was an unpleasant and inherently meaningless condition of existence from which release was welcomed sought and that the end justifies the means, especially if that end is Man. Life was replete with guilt, pain, suffering, and death, and in the words of Woody Allen, “was over much too quickly.” One is born alone and dies alone. There is no escape from this condition of isolation for the self who perceives the universe and everyone else as “not-self” and “other” (“Hell is other people”). Jean Paul Sartre’s novels, Nausea and No Exit, persuaded me that I was born without reason (because “existence precedes essence” and no a priori meaning or purpose could be assigned to my being since nothing is pre-given but must be created), that I prolong myself out of weakness (because I do not have the courage to commit suicide), and that I will die by chance in an ultimately meaningless universe. Belief in God, in the existence of spiritual realities, and in an afterlife may serve as a consolation to the ego faced with the threat of nonexistence, but I must not deceive myself. The separate self is eventually overcome by death. The skull always grins at the banquet of life. Everyone must die; everything gained must eventually be relinquished. Nothing lasts; everything changes. Eventually I must confront the threat of my own extinction and refuse to pretend that things can get better. Try as I may to create meaning through my individual actions, even the most heroic actions cannot overcome feelings of existential dread and ontological anxiety. Like a character in one of Pirandello’s novels, I was a personality in search of an author. Like an actor in one of Beckett’s plays, I was waiting for a Godot who would never arrive. Even love itself seemed only a romantic illusion.

My natural science course had the most impact of all. Science led me to suppose that my exquisite self-consciousness and all of life itself was nothing more than an accidental by-product of inert atoms and molecules and the chance conglomeration of lifeless chemical elements, mindlessly coming together into an existence that was bound to end in a godless, uncaring, and mechanical universe that was itself accidentally created. The emotions of love and joy, the virtues of kindness and generosity, all thoughts and wisdom, religious sentiments and consciousness itself were merely epiphenomena of the erratic activity of neural firings, hormones, and neurotransmitters. Consciousness was the result of a brain that was itself nothing but a highly complicated mechanism that only happened to come into existence, and had no reality outside of that structure. The self was simply the accidental personification of the body’s biological mechanisms. Feelings of conscious choice were only reflections of brain state activity at any given time. The great creative, individual thrust of life within each person became assigned to a common source in past conditioning or to the accidental nature of genes or reduced to a generalized mass of electrochemical impulses and neurological processes.

Projecting these ideas upon nature at large, the natural world appeared equally explainable, dangerous, and threatening, especially the non-human animal world. Given to humans to do with as we wished by our specieistic God, animals were in a “natural” subordinate position in the Great Chain of Being. Lifted up above the beasts at the pinnacle end of a great evolutionary scale, only humans possessed consciousness and self-consciousness, intellect and imagination, emotion and free will, and the dignity of a spiritual life. Only humans were to be granted souls or a rich psychological life. Animals were mere electrochemical machines that operated solely by the mechanism of instinct. Being creatures literally without a center of meaning, animals were to be regarded simply as physical objects, like rocks and stars, blind alike to pain or desire and without intrinsic worth or value. An individual animal’s existence could have no higher meaning or purpose than to be a resource for human use or consumed as mere foodstuff in a daily tooth-and-claw struggle for survival that was everywhere beset by the threat of illness, disaster, and death. The sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of animals in experiments that would be unethical if performed on human beings became justified in the pursuit of knowledge if it was a means toward the
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goal of protecting the sacredness of human life and the survival of the human species, regardless of the consequences.

**Becoming the Self I Was Told I Was**

**The "Western Creed" encountered.** Unknown to me at the time, my academic course work was indoctrinating me into what transpersonal psychologist Charles Tart (1975/1992, Chapter 2) calls the “Western Creed” – a set of implicit assumptions about the nature of the psyche and the nature of reality that have come to characterize much of the modern secular world, that have practical consequences on the human spirit, and that block progress in understanding the spiritual side of ourselves. Operating for the most part outside of my conscious awareness, these psychologically invisible beliefs programmed my experience to such an extent that they took on the appearance of fact. Interpreting the private events of my life in light of these assumptions about the nature of physical reality and human personality, I unconsciously put together my perceptions so that they seemed to bear out those beliefs. My beliefs selectively structured my experience so that experience came to fit the beliefs I had about it. Perceptions and beliefs became mutually and selectively reinforcing. What I believed to be true became true in my experience. Imagination and emotion, following the contours of my beliefs, not only colored and intangibly structured my subjective experience, but also conditioned me to act in certain ways in accordance with those beliefs. Believed in fervently enough, they came to act like powerful hypnotic suggestions that triggered specific actions strongly implied by the beliefs. The end result was a set of unexamined structured beliefs that were automatically acted upon. I created events that more or less conformed to those beliefs, and thus became the self that I thought I was.

**Doubts.** There always remained lingering doubts, however, about what I had come to believe. I found it ironic that the basis of the scientific empirical method and the framework behind all of our organized structures of science, rested upon a subjective reality that was not considered valid by the very scientific institutions that were formed through its auspices. How could such a vital consciousness as my own even suppose itself to be the end product of the chance meeting of inert elements that were themselves lifeless, but somehow managed to combine in such a way that our species attained culture, technology, philosophy, science, medicine, literature, and space travel? Science almost made me believe in magic! What a cosmic joke that the atomic and chemical composition of my own brain was somehow intelligent enough to understand the irony of its own meaninglessness. Certainly a brain that could conceive of purpose, meaning, and creativity somehow had to emerge from a greater purpose, meaning, and creativity. Certainly it was not purposelessness that gave us the design of nature, the well-ordered genetic activity, or the elegant sequences of molecular structures that support the creation of amino acids and proteins that sustain physical life. Certainly it was not meaninglessness that gave rise to the creative drama of our dreams. Certainly it was not genetic chance that is responsible for the precision with which we grow spontaneously, without knowing how, from a fetus to an adult. Certainly it was not environmental necessity that caused the existence of heroic themes and ideals that pervade human life. Surely all of these give evidence of a greater meaning, purpose, and context in which we have our being. While referring to the Big Bang theory or to the theory of evolution, my teachers seemed to accept them as facts about existence. It appeared almost heretical to express any skepticism that threatened the given wisdom of those theories that served to provide our culture’s “official” version of events.

**Unanswered questions and questioned answers.** A multitude of questions then came flooding unbidden into my mind with a force that bowled me over, stunning me with the implications of what they were asking. How can we expect to feel that life has meaning or purpose when the physical sciences state quite clearly its belief that all life is nothing more than an accidental creation of inert atoms and molecules and the chance conglomeration of lifeless chemical elements, that mindlessly came together following some "Big Bang" 5 billion years ago which just happened to occur, and the species' presence an unintended by-product of that process in an uncaring and mechanical universe that was itself accidentally created?
How can we recognize the body's biological integrity and its effectiveness to protect itself from disease when modern medicine regards its natural defense system as at the mercy of alien diseases and viruses that can strike us down without warning and over which we have no personal control, except as it is medically provided, despite our feelings of good health? How can we expect a life filled with exuberance, health, and vitality if we feel alienated and separated from our body, and see it as an unreliable machine and disease-prone adversary that cannot be trusted?

How can we be "good" if our religions tell us that we are bad, born blighted by original sin, created imperfect by a perfect God who then punishes us for our imperfections, and who will one day destroy the world? How can we love ourselves or our neighbor if we are a member of a species of sinners, bound to do wrong regardless of any good intent, and innately driven by evil, sometimes demonic, forces that must be kept in check by prayer and penance? How can we enjoy daily pursuits and activities if we believe that idle hands are the devil's workshop, desire is the source of suffering, and that life is a valley of sorrows?

How can we look at ourselves with self-respect and dignity when the great creative, individual thrust of life within each person, the existence of heroic themes and ideals that pervade life, and excellent performance in any area, are reduced to the chance nature of genes, neural impulses whizzing through brain circuits and the random bubbling of hormones, past conditioning, or a devious unconscious, and have no substantial reality outside of those psychological processes and mechanical structures, as implied by some theories of psychology? How can we believe our lives have intrinsic worth and purpose if we also believe that our exquisite logic and reasoning abilities, emotions of love and joy, virtues of kindness and generosity, all thoughts and wisdom, and self-consciousness itself are mere by-products of the firings of neural impulses and the erratic activity of neurotransmitters? How can we trust ourselves when we are told that the self is simply the accidental personification of the body’s biological mechanisms or an untrustworthy psychic structure capable of the most insidious subconscious fraud?

How can we creatively add to the quality of our lives if we are programmed and conditioned from childhood to fail or succeed? How can we have a sense of control over our private lives when our daily actions and choices are reduced to infantile behavior patterns, environmental contingencies of reinforcement, and automatic cognitive processes and behaviors that rigidly control us for a lifetime, and are told that our feelings of free will are only reflections of momentary brain state activity? How can we get in touch with our impulses and emotions when we believe we are filled with savage rage and infantile impulses, long ago discarded by civilization, that unwittingly reveal not our basic goodness, but the hidden shoddiness of our motives? How can we expect to act rationally or altruistically in a consistent manner if we believe that our nature is so flawed that such behavior is atypical of individuals or out of character for our species?

Yet how can we trust ourselves or live lives of honor when we are tainted with selfish genes and violent impulses from our evolutionary past and that our species has no intrinsic purpose other than a mindless determination reproduce, as implied by some theories of evolution? How can people feel that individual actions matter when they believe they are victims of an indifferent Nature that cares little for the individual, but only for the group? How can we perceive our part in the great cooperative venture that is involved in nature when each individual is in natural competition with one another, with other species, and even the earth itself in a desperate and even deadly struggle to survive? How can we expect moral and virtuous behavior from ourselves or from others if we take it for granted that we are a predatory, blood-thirsty species whose nature is amoral and where there are no standards of right or wrong as anything goes for survival sake. How can anyone believe that each individual has a right to pursue an equitable, worthy life with dignity when people view themselves as members of an aggressively combative race who must seek their own good at the expense of others? How can we learn to
cooperatively work together for a more humane world if we believe that competition is a grand ideal to be pursued and promoted at all levels of activity?

*How can we look upon our physical planet and all of its creatures with a sane compassion* if we project these ideas upon the natural world and view it as equally explainable, dangerous, and threatening? *How can we perceive our connection with nature or understand the great complicated cooperative interactions and communications that are involved* when we regard nature as an impersonal adversary that must be controlled and dominated in a daily tooth-and-claw struggle for survival that is everywhere beset by the threat of illness, disaster, and death? *How can we look upon ourselves not only as loving caretakers but as partners with the other species of the earth* when we regard plants and animals, given their "natural" subordinate position, as mere machines and forms of life literally without a center of meaning or purpose, with no intrinsic worth or value, except to be used as foodstuffs for human consumption or as mere material objects to be exploited for human benefit? *How can we see value in the life of an animal sacrificed in a laboratory experiment* if only humans are granted intent and purpose, any real consciousness, and the dignity of a spirited life?

**Soul sickness.** When the full weight of this multitude of unanswered questions and questioned answers finally fell upon me, a sick and sinking feeling began to well up in the pit of my stomach. Amid such a conglomeration of negative beliefs, the idea of a good and innocent inner self seemed almost scandalous. To encourage expression of that self appeared foolhardy, for it seemed only too clear that if the lid of awareness were opened, so to speak, all kinds of inner demons and enraged impulses would rush forth. This webwork of beliefs had deprived my mind and body of the zest and purpose needed to enjoy pursuits or activities and made any endeavor appear futile. I began to feel adrift, without a higher goal or vision. I felt suspicious, frightened, angry, aloof, and alone. In this confusion of thoughts and fears, I felt my life to be meaningless and hungered for something more sustaining. I was experiencing what William James (1902/1936) called "soul sickness."

**Personal Transformation and Epiphany**

**The kite as my symbol of transformation.** As I lay exhausted upon my bed one spring afternoon in 1970, I slipped into a trance-like state and had a waking dream. My confused and disordered mind suddenly symbolized itself as a kite connected to a long string held by mental hands. The kite was fluttering in fits and starts, buffeted about by turbulent gusts of inner wind that threatened to tear it to pieces. “How can I stop this violent commotion of my mind?” I thought aloud. “Cut the string,” an inner voice replied. “But if I do that, then I’ll lose my mind,” I answered back, fearing that if I cut that string I would release my mind to fly off into some dark, unfathomable and limitless recess of the psyche, forever swallowed up by my own subjectivity. “What else can I do?” I implored. “Pull the kite in,” an answer came. Slowly I began to tug on that mental string, but the more I pulled, the more wildly did that kite toss and turn. Thrown about by the tumultuous energy of some wild psychic wind, my mental kite threatened to tumble and shatter onto that inner landscape. I was at a loss at what to do to end this turmoil of body, mind, and spirit. I feared that I was losing my mind.

At this point, my mind suddenly opened up and leaped beyond itself. Some indescribable element, some spiritual intangible, touched me and said: “If you want to save yourself, you must first lose yourself. If you want to hold onto yourself, then you must let yourself go.” All at once I knew what I had to do. In a moment of faith, instilled by an unaccustomed sense of trust and safety, I slowly let the string out so that the kite ascended higher and higher until it found its way up through the turbulence and turmoil into the calm and peaceful sky above. My mental kite now floated easily and gently with a newfound sense of ease and freedom. I was suddenly filled with an additional energy, a new buoyancy and joy. Sitting up in bed and opening my eyes, I sat transfixed. Another world seemed to shimmer within and around whatever I looked at. Everything seemed to be what it was, yet somehow more. A change had occurred in me. I felt
my personality click into a new focus and become lined up with an invisible part of my own reality that I had barely sensed before. The entire feeling-tone of my personality was changed. In that brief moment of intense, expanded consciousness, I felt and experienced directly a Presence so creative, understanding, and lovingly permissive that its good nature and loving intent could indeed create and maintain worlds. In a way quite difficult to describe, I felt myself to be a part of nature’s framework and one with nature’s source.

**Epiphany.** My earlier psychological reality became meaningless to me. It was superseded by a biologically and spiritually rooted faith that my existence was meaningful precisely because of my connection with nature and with that greater indefinable framework of existence from which all life springs, even though that meaning was not intellectually understood at the time. I felt deeply within myself that the quality of identity and the nature of existence were far more mysterious than I could presently understand. Looking inward and remaining open to my intuitions, I felt deeply within myself indivisible connections not only with the earth itself, but with deeper realities. While in the throes of what seemed to me to be inspiration of almost unbearable intensity, I got the idea that the universe was formed out of what God is, that it was the natural extension of divine creativity, lovingly formed *from the inside out*, so to speak. I felt that in certain basic and vital ways, my own consciousness and being was a portion of that divine gestalt. As philosopher-theologian John Hick (1999) in his book, *The Fifth Dimension: An Exploration of the Spiritual Dimension*, put it:

> There is an aspect of us that is ‘in tune’ with the Transcendent. This aspect is referred to as the image of God within us; or as the divine spark spoken of by Plotinus, Pseudo-Dionysius, Eckhart, Ruusbroec, Suso, Tauler and many other Christian mystics; or as ‘that of God in every man’; or as the *atman* which in our deepest nature we all are; or as our ‘true self’, the ‘selfless self’, or as the universal Buddha nature within us. It is this aspect of our being that is affected by the ultimately Real to the extent that we are open to that reality. (p. 41)

I became aware that God (or whatever term you wish to use for Nature’s source) is so much a part of His (or Her or Its) creations that it is almost impossible to separate the Creator from the creations, that each hypothetical point in the universe is in direct contact with God in the most basic terms, and that this indissoluble connection can never be severed. I got the picture that there is a portion of God that is directed and focused and residing within each of us that is more intimate than our breath. It is the force that forms our flesh and our identities in that it is responsible for the energy that gives vitality and validity to our unique personalities. I perceived all Being to be continually upheld, supported, and maintained by this ever-expanding, ever-creative energy that forms everything and of which each human being is a part. As physicist-theologian John Polkinghorne (1998) in his book *Belief in God in an Age of Science* put it:

> Our moral intuitions are intimations of the perfect will, our aesthetic pleasures a sharing in the Creator’s joy, our religious intuitions whispers of God’s presence. The understanding of the value-laden character of our world is that there is a supreme Source of Value whose nature is reflected in all that is held in being. (pp. 19-20)

I also felt the inconceivable vitality of a God that is truly multidimensional -- a God that is a part of creation and yet is also more than what creation is, in the same way that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. His nature transcends all dimensions of activity, consciousness, or reality, while still being a part of each. Yet this is no impersonal God. Since its energy gives rise to you and me and all human personalities, how could this be? This portion of God that is both aware of itself as you, that is focused within your existence, and that is also aware of itself as something more that you, is a loving and creative, redemptive God that is both transcendent and personal. This portion of God cherishes and protects you and looks out for your interests and may be called upon for help when necessary in a personal manner through prayer that always contains its own answer if you believe and desire to receive it (Mark 11:24).
It is very difficult to try to assign anything like human motivation to God. I can only say that that initial experience revealed the existence of an entity who was possessed by “the need” to lovingly create from His own being – to lovingly transform His own reality – in such a way that even the most slightest thought that emerged within His infinitely massive, omnipotent, superlative, and creative imagination attained dimensions of actuality impossible to describe. This was no static, impassible God that I perceived. It was a vision and version of a God who, seeking to know Himself, constantly and lovingly creates new versions of Himself out of Himself (or Herself). This “seeking Himself” is a creative activity, the core of all action; God acting through creatio continua (Peacocke, 1979). Each creation carries indelibly within itself this characteristic of its Source. Just as one’s awareness and experience of God constantly changes and grows, all portions of God are constantly changing, enfolding and unfolding as the universe does (see, for example, Bohm, 1980).

The loving support, the loving encouragement, the need to see that any and all possible realities become probable and have the chance to emerge, perceive, and love – that is the intent of the divine subjectivity and creativity that I perceived in that state of expanded consciousness. I felt deeply that our closest approximation of the purpose of the universe could be found in those loving emotions that we might have toward the development of our own children, in our intent to have them develop their fullest capabilities. And God loves all that He has created down to the least. He is aware of every sparrow that falls because He is every sparrow. Everything that was or is or will be is kept in immediate attention, poised in a divine context that is characterized by such a brilliant concentration that the grandest and the lowest, the largest and the smallest, are equally held in a loving constant focus. His awareness and attention is indeed directed with a prime creator’s love to each consciousness. God IS Love (1 John, 4:8, 16).

Aftermath and Postscript

Aftermath. The highly charged energy generated by this experience was enough to change my life in a matter of moments. The insights that I received strongly clashed with previously held ideas and beliefs, giving the experience its initial explosive, volatile, and intrusive quality. I had been led by my experience beyond the framework of beliefs that had given it birth. My task was now to correlate the new intuitive knowledge with the beliefs of the Western Creed that I had so willingly accepted before, and to reform my knowledge frameworks to make them strong enough to support the new insights. Accepted frameworks and answers now made little sense to me. I could no longer accept answers given by others, but now insisted upon finding my own. I could no longer continue to think about God in the old ways, for the experience had brought me far beyond such a point. I had now to free myself and be true to my own vision. Shortly thereafter I left the Seminary to see the world firsthand, driven by a fine impatience, a divine discontent that drives me on even today. I felt immeasurably strengthened and supported by an inner certainty that instilled in me a sense of safety, optimism, and trust in my own nature and in that unknown source in which we all have our being and from which our vitality springs daily. I knew somehow that my existence has a meaning and purpose even if that meaning and purpose is not intellectually understood.

Expanding the circle of compassion. The insights that I received during that state of expanded consciousness required me to become more responsive and responsible in my behavior. It also brought with it a sympathy with life that had earlier been lacking, especially for animals – a sensitivity that remains strong, challenging, and intense to this day. I understood for the first time that my humanness did not emerge by refusing my animal heritage, but upon an extension of what that heritage is. It was not a matter of rising above my animal nature to truly appreciate my spirituality, but of evolving from a fuller understanding of that nature. I am not separated from animals and the rest of existence by virtue of possessing an eternal inner consciousness; rather, such a consciousness is within all life, whatever its
form. The consciousness that exists within animals is as valid and eternal as my own, for each individual being is

A vital, conscious portion of the universe [that] simply by being, fits into the universe and into universal purposes in a way that no one else can… an individualized segment of the universe; a beloved individual, formed with infinite care and love, uniquely gifted with a life like no other. (Roberts, 1997a, pp. 147-148)

I also came to understand the symbolism of my kite experience: There is a portion of universal creative energy that becomes individualized to form my being and that sustains and nourishes my existence, and when I become too intent in maintaining my own reality I lose it, because I am denying the creativity upon which it rests.
### Figure 13-1
The Phenomenology of the Three Social Worlds in Time Past, Time Present, Time Future

(Roberts, 1995b, pp. 200-201)

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I BELIEVE…in the material universe…as the only and ultimate reality…a universe controlled by fixed physical laws…and blind chance.

I AFFIRM… that the universe has no creator… no objective purpose… and no objective meaning or destiny.

I MAINTAIN…that all ideas about God or gods…enlightened beings…prophets and saviors…or other nonphysical beings or forces…are superstitions and delusions…Life and consciousness are totally identical to physical processes…and arose from chance interactions of blind physical forces…Like the rest of life…my life… and my consciousness…have no objective purpose…meaning…or destiny.

I BELIEVE…that all judgments, values, and moralities…whether my own or others…are subjective…arising solely from biological determinants…personal history…and chance… Free will is an illusion…. Therefore, the most rational values I can personally live by must be based on the knowledge that for me… what pleases me is Good… what pains me is Bad…. Those who please me or help me avoid pain are my friends… those who pain me or keep me from my pleasure are my enemies… Rationality requires that friends and enemies by used in ways that maximize my pleasure and minimize my pain.

I AFFIRM… that churches have no real use other than social support… that there is no objective sins to commit or be forgiven for… that there is no retribution for sin or reward for virtue… although there may be social consequences of action. …Virtue for me is getting what I want. . . without being caught and punished by others…

I MAINTAIN…that the death of the body …is the death of the mind…There is no afterlife…and all hope of such is nonsense.
Figure 13-3. Some Assumptions of Orthodox, Western Psychology
(Tart, 1992, Chapter 2, pp. 61-111)

The Nature of the Universe
- The universe was created accidentally or created itself or has always been around and there is no purpose or reason for the universe existing.
- The universe is dead; life is only an infinitesimal, insignificant part of the universe.
- Physics is the ultimate science, because physics is the study of the real world.
- What is real is what can be perceived by the senses or by a physical instrument, and what can be perceived by the senses can be detected by a physical instrument.
- Only the present moment exists.
- We can understand the physical universe without understanding ourselves.

The Nature of Man
- Man is his body and nothing more.
- Man exists in relative isolation from his surrounding environment. He is an essentially independent creature.
- Man starts life “fresh,” except for limitations set on him by his genetic inheritance, his cultural environment, and accidental happenings, all modified by his reactions to them.
- Man is completely determined by his genetic inheritance and environment.
- Even though we believe man is completely determined, in practice we must act as if he has free will.
- We have a rather good understanding of the history of man.
- We understand the origin and evolution of man.
- We can’t expect too much from a creature like man, or there are no limits on man’s attainments.
- Each man is isolated from all others, locked within his nervous system.
- Psychological energy is completely derived from physical energy, as expressed in physiological processes in the body.

Man’s Function in the Universe
- Man has no function in a purposeless universe.
- The only real purpose of life is to maximize pleasure and minimize pain.
- The universe is a harsh, uncaring, unresponsive place.
- We are here to conquer the universe.
- We are by far the supreme life form on earth, and are probably the only intelligent life form in the whole universe.
- Lower organisms exist for man’s benefit.

The Nature of Human Consciousness
- Only human beings are conscious.
- Man is conscious.
- Consciousness is produced by the activity of the brain, and therefore the activity of consciousness is identical with the activity of the brain.
Figure 13-3. Some Assumptions of Orthodox, Western Psychology (continued)
(Tart, 1992, Chapter 2, pp. 61-111)

Altered States of Consciousness
- Altered states of consciousness are simply a temporary reorganization of brain functioning.
- Our ordinary state of consciousness is generally the most adaptive and rational way the mind can be organized, and virtually all altered states of consciousness are inferior or pathological.
- A person who spontaneously goes into altered states of consciousness is probably mentally ill.
- Deliberately cultivating altered states of consciousness is also a sign of psychopathology.

Death
- Death is the inevitable end of human life.
- Physical death is the final termination of human consciousness.

Personality
- An individual’s personality is what makes him unique, skilled, worthwhile, and gives him his sense of identity.
- A sense of personality, personal identity is vital, and its loss is pathological.
- The basic development of personality is finished or complete in adulthood, except in the cases of neurotics or other mentally ill persons.
- A healthy personality is one which allows the individual to be well-adjusted in terms of his culture.
- A normal adult has a fairly good degree of understanding of his own personality.
- Personality is a relatively unified structure in normal adults.

Cognitive Processes
- Reasoning is the highest skill possessed by man.
- Developing the logical mind, one’s reasoning abilities, is the highest accomplishment a person can aim for.
- Extension of our basically sound knowledge and cognitive processes is the way to greater knowledge and wisdom.
- Knowledge is a hypothesis, a concept in the mind, and there is no direct, certain knowledge of anything.
- Philosophers are the ultimate authorities about the nature of knowledge.
- Almost all important knowledge can be transmitted by the written word, and the written word is the least ambiguous, most accurate way of transmitting it.
- Logical inconsistencies in the expression of something indicate its invalidity.
- When people agree with me they are being rational; when they disagree they are irrational.
- Fantasy is a part-time cognitive activity, usually done in our leisure hours.
- Faith means believing in things that are not real or that you have no solid evidence for.
- Intuition is a word we use for lucky guesses, coincidences, or rational processes that are outside of conscious awareness but are nevertheless rational.
- Symbols are nothing but physical objects with emotional meaning, or electrophysiological patterns within the brain.
- Our beliefs and psychological experiences affect only ourselves, not the “real” world, except when expressed by motor activities.
Figure 13-3 Some Assumptions of Orthodox, Western Psychology (continued)
(Tart, 1992, Chapter 2, pp. 61-111)

Emotion
- Emotions are electrical and chemical shifts within the nervous system.
- Emotions interfere with logical reason and make man irrational; therefore they should generally be suppressed or eliminated except for recreational purposes.
- Emotions have no place in scientific work, or while they may motivate individuals, they must be filtered out of the final product.
- Negative emotions are the inevitable lot of man.
- There are no higher emotions; all emotions are basically self-serving and animal.
- Play is for children.
- Pain is bad and should be avoided.

The Relationship Between Mind and Body.
- The body is a relatively passive servo-mechanism for carrying out the orders of the nervous system.
- The physical body is the only body we have.

Learning
- Learning is a matter of permanent and semi-permanent electrochemical changes in the brain and nervous system.
- Learning is a matter of accumulating knowledge.
- Intellectual learning is the highest form of learning, and a person with a very high IQ has the potential to learn practically everything of importance.
- Learning is a matter of taking in sensory impressions and applying cognitive processes to them.

Memory
- Memory is not very reliable; it is far better to depend on an objective record.
- The only memory we have is of impressions in this life up to the present moment.
- The only memories we have direct access to are our own.

Motivation
- Desiring things is the basic motivation that keeps a person’s life functioning, and lack of desire for things is pathological.
- The primary motivations affecting people are desires for power and desires for sexual pleasure, along with an avoidance of pain.

Perception
- The only things there are to perceive are the physical world and the sensation from the internal operations of our body and nervous system.
- The nature of our sense organs determines the nature of our perceptions.
- Perception is somewhat selective and biased, but generally gives us a very good picture of the world around us.
Social Relationships
- The selfish, neurotic, unreasonable actions of others are the major source of our personal suffering.
- No normal person likes to suffer.
- Progress comes from improving society.

Miscellaneous Assumptions
- Scientific progress is cumulative.
- Our civilization (and its psychology) is the greatest civilization that ever existed on this planet.
- Our civilization (and our psychology) is steadily progressing.
- An active, conquest-oriented approach is the way to make progress in understanding and controlling the universe.
- Being a scientist and being a mystic are incompatible.
### Figure 13-4

**CONTRASTS BETWEEN INDUSTRIAL WORLD VIEW AND WORLD VIEW OF VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY**  
(Elgin, 1981, pp. 39-40)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Era View</th>
<th>Voluntary Simplicity View</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The overriding goal in life is material progress</td>
<td>The central intention in life is that of evolving both the material and spiritual aspects of life with harmony and balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much emphasis is placed on conspicuous consumption; the &quot;good life&quot; is dependent upon having enough money to buy access to life's pleasures and to avoid life's discomforts.</td>
<td>Much emphasis is placed on conservation and frugality -- using only as much as is needed. A satisfying life arises with balanced growth in cooperation with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity is defined by material possessions and social position; identity is thought to be either static or only slowly changing.</td>
<td>Identity is revealed in the process of living; identity is experienced as fluid, being born anew in each moment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The individual is defined by his or her body and is ultimately separate and alone.</td>
<td>The individual is experienced as both a unique and an inseparable part of the larger universe; who &quot;we&quot; are is not limited to our physical existence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The universe is viewed as material and largely lifeless; it is proper for us, the living, to exploit the lifeless universe for our own ends.</td>
<td>The universe is experienced as a vast living organism; it is appropriate to act in ways that honor the preciousness and integrity of all life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much emphasis is placed on self-serving behavior (get as much for myself as I can while giving no more than is required in return).</td>
<td>Much emphasis is placed on life-serving behavior (give as much of myself to life as I am able and ask in return no more than I require).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Cutthroat competition&quot; prevails; compete against others; strive to &quot;make a killing.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Fair competition&quot; prevails; cooperate with others; intend to earn a living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a &quot;lifeboat ethics&quot; in global relations.</td>
<td>There is a &quot;spaceship earth ethic&quot; in global relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The welfare of the whole is left to the workings of the &quot;free&quot; market and/or federal bureaucracy.</td>
<td>Each person take responsibility for the well-being of the whole and directly participates in promoting the overall welfare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a high level of dependency upon experts and specialists.</td>
<td>Much emphasis is placed on becoming self-reliant and self-governing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much emphasis is on autonomy and mobility.</td>
<td>Much emphasis is on connectedness and community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>